

FORTY LESSONS IN LIFE AND MINISTRY – Paul Beasley-Murray

Fifteen years ago, on the occasion of my 25th anniversary in ministry, I wrote an article for the *Baptist Times* listing 25 ‘lessons in ministry and in life’. This October I celebrate 40 years in ministry, so I thought I would add a further 15 lessons that I have learnt in ministry as indeed in life. As I offer this longer list, I do so in the hope that it will provoke my readers to reflect on what they have learnt over the last forty years.

FORTY LESSONS IN MINISTRY

1. The key to pastoring is loving
2. Pastoral visiting has not had its day
3. Everybody is wounded
4. Meaningful fellowship is best expressed in small groups
5. Every church is different
6. Ministers are made by their deacons
7. The local church is the cutting edge of the kingdom
8. The kingdom is not the church
9. Leadership is the task of the ordained
10. Leadership is plural
11. Good preaching entails structured simplicity
12. Great worship climaxes around the Lord’s Table
13. Baptismal services provide the best opportunities for gospel preaching
14. Transfer growth is a bonus, not a goal
15. An office at church allows home to be home
16. A book a week keeps a pastor awake
17. Monday morning blues are par for the course
18. Thank God for friends!
19. The Spirit is no substitute for hard work
20. Hard work is no substitute for the Spirit
21. A spiritual director encourages ministerial integrity
22. Constant change is here to stay
23. No church is immune from power games
24. Ministry is tough
25. Ministry is a high calling
26. Evangelism is a process
27. Actions, not words, are what count
28. Leaders are accountable
29. God is in the business of teams
30. Large is also beautiful
31. People need to be affirmed – constantly!
32. Buildings matter
33. A welcome is more than a hand-shake
34. Churches are best passion-driven
35. Staff blossom with supervision
36. Names are important
37. Communicate, communicate, communicate
38. Pastoral care involves organisation
39. Town-centre churches have a special role to play
40. Excellence is a sign of faithfulness

40 LESSONS IN LIFE

1. Life is a constant adventure
2. Life is to be lived passionate
3. The best is yet to be
4. Mountains are to be climbed
5. Life is about growth
6. Life is a journey in self-discovery
7. Only the self-aware are secure
8. God wants us to be real, not cardboard cut-outs
9. God wants us to be rainbow people
10. Integrity counts for more than success
11. Life can be tough
12. Wounds can make for healing
13. All sunshine makes a desert
14. God is there even in the dark
15. God knows
16. Time brings perspective
17. Friends are often God's agents
18. Iron sharpens iron
19. God's love is experienced in unexpected places
20. Orthopraxy is more important than orthodoxy
21. It's OK to be angry
22. One way to inner freedom is to forgive
23. Children are a great education
24. A capable wife is more precious than jewels
25. Families matter
26. Grandchildren are wonderful beyond
27. Work hard, but play hard too
28. Make any excuse for a party
29. Music expresses the soul
30. Even extraverts need silence
31. Special occasions are all the better for dressing up
32. A glass of red wine enhances the day
33. Cooking is a serious business
34. An open table enriches life
35. Seniors need to power-nap
36. Travel broadens the mind
37. Everybody has feet of clay
38. Life is all the better for laughter
39. A grateful heart leads to great contentment
40. Jesus makes all the difference