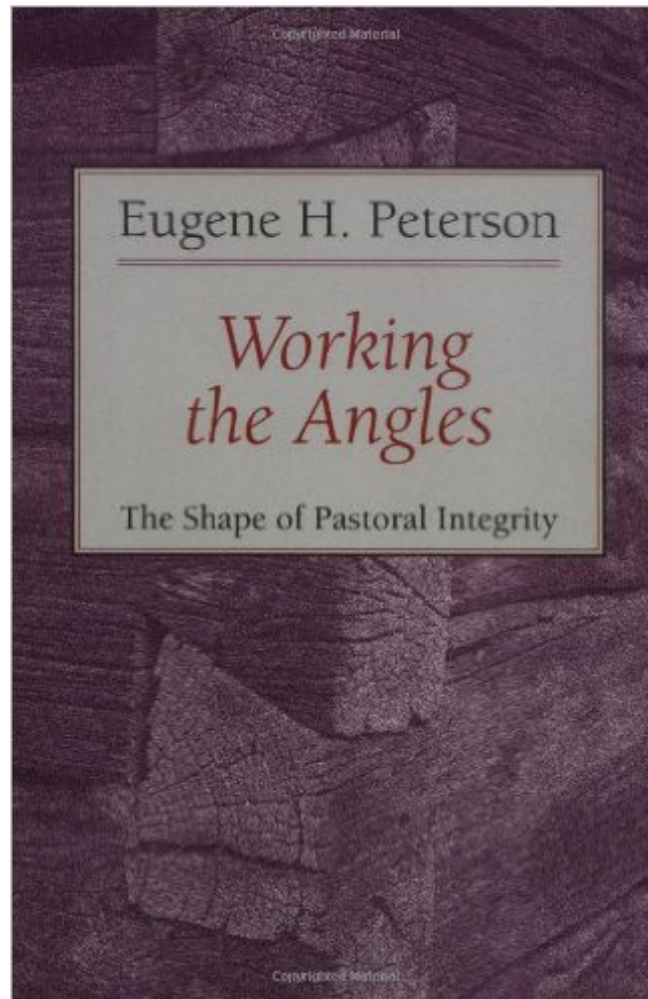


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Working The Angles: The Shape Of Pastoral Integrity



Synopsis

Eugene Peterson issues a provocative call for pastors to abandon their preoccupation with image and standing, administration, success, and economic viability, and to return to the three basic acts critical to the pastoral ministry: praying, reading Scripture, and giving spiritual direction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Working the AnglesEugene PetersonA friend loaned me this book last week. It has been one of the better books on Pastoral Ministry I have read in a good long time and I will undoubtedly be buying it soon. I have to say the introduction scared me a bit, because I recognized much of the same material he covered in "The Contemplative Pastor" a book that I have read and find very useful. I was happy to see though that this was more or less a bring you up to speed introduction. The two books belong together. "The Contemplative Pastor" is a precursor to "Working the Angles." Where the former gives you reason for being a contemplative pastor, the latter teaches you the how of the matter. The idea of "Working the Angles" are there are three things a pastor should be paying attention to in his life if he wants to be a good pastor, the three angles of a true triangle: Prayer, Scripture, and Spiritual Direction. In all these I found the spirit of a seelsorger speaking through. He hits on many of the topics another favorite author and seelsorger of mine, Bo Giertz, hits on often in books like : Then Fell the Lord's Fire, and Hammer of God, and in much the same manner. Concerning prayer he extols the Psalms and shows how important a body of work they were for the praying community of the Old Testament. He also talks about the need for time dedicated to this task, set aside so that you can engage in it properly. He also speaks of the danger

of letting prayer become a Hallmark Greeting, with no thought to it.

Eugene H Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids Eerdmans, 1993 [1987]) Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw Eugene Peterson calls pastors to prayer, Scripture and spiritual direction. These are the three angles, he suggests, that if aligned will ensure the lines of ministry (preaching, teaching and administration) fall properly into place. It is repetitive and hard work, but Peterson is a great coach to keep at it. Peterson was a pastor for thirty years and is my literary mentor as a pastor and a grounded academic. He is a wonder with words and adept at exegesis, but demonstrates a capacity to relate his learning to the world of parish and people. Rather than office management, image projection, voice control and creative plagiarism, all geared to make the pastor look good and the people feel happy, Peterson calls pastors back to their true craft. Pastoral leadership is not merely about satisfying a congregation but attending to God. This is the shape of pastoral integrity, in which he suggests three acts are foundational: * Prayer brings us to attention before God * Scripture helps us attend to God in his speech and actions * Spiritual direction gives attention to what God is doing in a person Contexts vary - from self, to the history of Israel and church, to a person - but it is God to whom pastors pay attention. When daily demands, human needs, career ambition and drivenness to succeed get me out of shape with my calling as a pastor, Peterson comes with welcome re-calibration.

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