

# The Duties of Presbyters

by St. Polycarp of Smyrna

---

*As presbyters, we are called to serve God with compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, while avoiding wrath and unjust judgment, and being held accountable for our actions at the judgment-seat of Christ.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:14, Romans 14:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:22, 1 Peter 3:8, 1 John 4:1

**Topics:** "Church Leadership", "Christian Ethics"

---

## Description

St. Polycarp of Smyrna emphasizes the importance of compassion, mercy, and forgiveness in the Christian community, urging presbyters to care for the vulnerable and avoid wrath, unfair judgment, and covetousness. He reminds believers of the accountability we have before God and the need to forgive others as we seek forgiveness from the Lord. Polycarp encourages a life of reverence, following the teachings of Jesus, the apostles, and the prophets, while being vigilant against false brethren and those who lead others astray.

---

## Transcript

And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always "providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man ; " abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unjust judgment; keeping far off from . all covetousness, not quickly crediting [an evil report] against any one, not severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin.

If then we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and "we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must every one give an account of himself." Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord [have alike taught us].

Let us be zealous in the pursuit of that which is good, keeping ourselves from causes of offence, from false brethren, and from those who in hypocrisy bear the name of the Lord, and draw away vain men into error.

---

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**