

FATHER, TEACHER, MASTER, LEADER

Father, Rabbi, His Holiness, Reverend, Mister, etc. — Other than our physical father, the Bible states that we are *not* to call anyone “FATHER” (Matthew 23:6-12). Why? Because God is our Father. By calling a priest “FATHER” we are in essence calling him God!

Matthew also states that we are not to call anyone RABBI, MASTER, TEACHER, etc. Why? Because the Bible says that Christ is our Rabbi, our Master, our Teacher (Matthew 23:6-12). If we call others these things, we are in reality calling them Christ!

Matthew also points out that another reason we do NOT call ministers in the church these things is because “*we are all brothers.*” In other words, everyone is on an equal plane. Therefore, no one is to be elevated above anyone else.

Matthew then continues: “But he who is greatest among you shall be your SERVANT. And *whoever exalts himself will be humbled*” (Matthew 23:11-12).

Therefore, ministers in the church should NOT be addressed any differently than you would address others in the church. For example, if you address others in the church by their first name, then you should likewise address the ministers by their first name. They should NOT be called MASTER, HIS HOLINESS, RABBI, LEADER, DOCTOR, FATHER, REVEREND, etc.—or even MISTER (such as *Mr. Jones*). Why? Because: #1—MISTER (or *Mr.*) actually means MASTER; and #2—by doing so you are putting them on a pedestal; you are elevating them to a superior position; you are exalting them above others (which we should NOT do).

Finally, ministers should never forget this warning from God: “*whoever exalts himself will be humbled*” (Matthew 23:12). On the other hand God also promises—but “he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12).

Mat 23:6-12 — “They [the religious leaders in Christ’s day] love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi¹, Rabbi¹.’ But you, do not be called ‘**Rabbi**² [or **Master**³];’ for one is your Teacher, the Christ, and *you are all brethren*. Do not call anyone on earth your **father**; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called **teachers**; for One is your Teacher⁴, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And *whoever exalts himself will be abased*, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

1 — “Rabbi” — Strong’s Concordance #446 — “Master”

2 — Some translations have “Master” instead of “Rabbi” (see KJV, NIV, & JB)

3 — Mister (or Mr.) means “Master!”

4 — Some translations have “Leader” instead of “Teacher” (see PME & TEV)