

5 Ways To Support Your Pastor



Many people recognize the stress and pressure that can build up around people with important jobs. No one is surprised when doctors, lawyers, accountants for large firms, or financial advisors experience stress. High intensity jobs take a toll physically as well as mentally and physiologically on the practitioner and often his or her family.

So while we expect professionals who care for our earthly and temporary health, finances, and legal problems to suffer from work-related stress, why do we forget those who care for our immortal souls? Pastors are prone to high rates of burnout and are not immune to stress-related problems from their work such as anxiety or depression. Here are five ways to support your pastor.

1. Build up your pastor with words of affirmation.

Pastors who love their flocks and truly seek to serve the Lord and faithfully preach his word and care for his flock often spend many hours on sermon preparation. Some pastors preach two different sermons a week, which means two different texts to translate and study, pray over, and seek to explain and apply to their particular congregation.

There isn't a cookie cutter formula for faithful exegesis. Every text has its own particular challenges and must be prayerfully, thoughtfully, and studiously examined and prepared. Thus, while it's easy to criticize a sermon, it is important to show love to your pastor with encouraging words of thanks for the time he spent preparing the sermon for you and even by asking follow-up questions.

Often what a pastor is able to put into a sermon is just a sliver of the work he covered for that week. Thoughtful and thankful interaction from the congregation is a wonderful blessing.

2. Show kindness to your pastor.

While you may only see your pastor once a week, it's important to keep in mind that pastors are very busy people. They are constantly on call (or text) for anyone and everyone who needs help, comfort, or counsel. Much of their time is spent with people in the congregation as counselors or mentors.

Pastors pour out a lot to their congregations, and just because you may not see some or most of what they are doing, it doesn't mean their work isn't benefiting you. Guarding, protecting, and building up God's church means they are always on call, no matter what. They are constantly giving of themselves to those who need them.

It's good to take a moment to give them a call or email them—not to ask for something but rather just to say you appreciate what they do. Perhaps offer to help them out with something they have been trying to accomplish but keep getting stalled at finishing because of church related work. Ask them if there is anything you can do to be of assistance to them.

3. Encourage your pastor to fellowship with other pastors.

You may wonder about pastors getting together. Is it a waste of time? Most of us don't get paid to have breakfast meetings or do Bible study with our "pals." Ministry is hard, and it is often solitary work. There are things pastors can't discuss with their congregants, including struggles they may be having or church related business that is unwise to share with others.

Encourage your pastor to regularly meet, pray, and fellowship with other pastors so they can minister to each other and support each other. This may one of the few places that he can speak freely and get help, counsel, and encouragement. All of us need that person with whom we can share our struggles. Pastors need the close friendship of other pastors. Support your pastor in making time frequently to connect with other pastors.

4. Pray for your pastor.

Prayer is a mighty tool the Lord uses. Please don't neglect praying for your pastor. He needs all the help he can get from his congregation, and prayer is something everyone can do. Whether you are a busy mother, a hard-working dad, a college student, or a child, everyone can say a prayer for the work the Lord is doing through their pastor.

God's enemies never stop trying to tear down Christ's church, and God's people must remember that prayer is a weapon against such attacks. Use your most handy weapon on a daily basis for your pastor, whether you are an aged saint or a little child.

5. Be gracious.

Pastors are held to a high standard, and they should be. Yet, we must also remember that they and their families have normal decisions to make like other families: where their kids should go to school, what movies they watch, and when and how they vacation. As those in the public eye, pastors (and their families) are constantly reminded that people are onlookers to their life and their life decisions.

They are probably more aware than you think that their decisions will be judged by others, and they often will decide to do or not do something with their congregations in mind. Please be gracious when something they do doesn't seem to line up with your expectations. Realize that pastors are also humans who need patience, love, and understanding, just like their brothers and sisters in Christ to whom they are ministering.

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