

How to Pray for Your Pastor

Behind every great leader, there is someone who is willing to sacrifice for him. This is true of the heroes of the Bible; it is just as true of today's pastors. They need people who will intercede for them in powerful, consistent, specific prayer. An intercessor is someone who bears another's burdens. When Moses' hands were tired, Aaron and Hur interceded by holding up his hands, and the battle was won (Exodus 17:8-13). Likewise, we can hold up the hands of our pastors through prayer and see God win the battle in our churches and cities!

Jesus called three of His disciples to go with Him into one of His brightest hours and one of His darkest hours. Each time the assignment was the same: to pray for Him. Because they were willing to pray, they had the opportunity to minister to the One who ministered to so many others. They saw Him during His struggle and they saw Him in His glory. If Jesus needed men to pray for Him, how much does your pastor want and need your prayers?

If the truth were known, the hearts of pastors all over the world are echoing the cry of the apostle Paul:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:18-20).

There are three reasons why you should pray for your pastor:

#1 Love: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). When you pray for your pastor, you are helping him bear the burden of the ministry. You are showing your love for him, and thereby obeying the greatest commandment—the law of love.

#2 Humility: Intercessory prayer focuses on his needs. This kind of prayer will break the chains of pride that keep so many people from becoming what they could be in God. You will be submitting yourself to him in the true biblical sense, which produces tremendous power.

#3 Unity: Praying for your pastor—his personal and ministerial needs—will bind your heart together with his. As you promote the work of the kingdom and unite with your pastor in his vision for your church and city, you will become a vessel for the Spirit to move through. It was this kind of unity that preceded the first revival of the New Testament church—the Day of Pentecost.

The burden of today's ministers is a heavy one. But you can help your pastor fulfill his God-given call through intercessory prayer. The greatest gift you can give your pastor is prayer.

*Personal Prayer Needs

Humility: Pray that your pastor would walk humbly with His God, seeking His will and direction in all things (Micah 6:8). Pray that his heart would be strong in the midst of trials and accusation and that he would commit himself into the hands of Him who judges righteously (1 Peter 2:23). Pray that he would learn and grow through every circumstance and that he would give God glory for every victory. Pray that he would give thanks in all things, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.

Relationships: Personal contact is a powerful force in our lives, either for good or for evil (1 Corinthians 15:33). Pray that your pastor would not be corrupted by the necessary contact with a sinful world and that his heart would withstand the influences of his worldly acquaintances. More importantly, pray that he would influence every person he meets for good and that he would be a shining witness in his personal life for the Lord Jesus Christ. Especially pray for peace in his dealings with people—his family, friends, business associates, and church members, for disharmony can produce a great deal of unnecessary stress.

Balance: "If you go too far to one extreme or the other, you'll wind up in a ditch." Pray that your pastor would maintain a steady, consistent walk, and that he would not be swayed by dangerous extremes. Pray that his course would be steadfast and unwavering. Pray that his character would combine the strength and gentleness of the Lord—the Lion and the Lamb.

*Family Prayer Needs

Relationships: A pastor's family is usually overworked, under-appreciated, and misunderstood. There is a lot of pressure in being the family of a full-time minister. Late night phone calls, early morning trips to the airport, staying all night with a sick church member—all of these take a toll on a family. Pray for the peace of God to cover and protect the fabric of your pastor's family. Pray that God's anointing would ease the friction and produce a loving atmosphere. Pray that your pastor would be a godly leader of his home, giving his family the love and attention they need to grow. Pray that your pastor's income would meet the needs and realistic desires of his

family.

Protection: Satan has targeted your pastor, and that means his family is under the gun. The enemy will try to get at him through his family. Pray a covering of God's protection over the family of your pastor. Pray against negative pressures and distractions. Pray that as your pastor abides in the presence of God that no destructive force would touch his home and that God's angels would keep his family (Psalm 91:9-11).

*Spiritual Prayer Needs

Power: Pray that your pastor would be energized by the Holy Ghost for his daily pastoral duties. Pastoring means so much more than preaching, and your pastor needs spiritual vitality to help meet the needs of others day in and day out. Bless him with all the strength and power that he needs. Pray that he would be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and that he would be prepared to do all things through Christ who strengthens him (Philippians 4:13).

Holiness: Pray for a hedge of purity around your pastor. Cover his eyes, his mind, his steps, and his heart with holiness that he would not fall into temptation or the snares of the devil. Pray for his words to be seasoned with grace and for his mind to be stayed on the Lord. Pray that he would be well pleasing in all things to God.

Accountability: God's ministers must be accountable. Many of the attacks of the enemy can be warded off or avoided completely if the man of God is protected by being transparent with another strong man of God. Pray that God would bring such a man into your pastor's life and that God would continue to cultivate that relationship. Pray that your pastor will remain open to such a friendship.

Warfare: Jesus said, "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Mark 14:27). Satan knows that if he can bring down the man of God, the work of God will be severely hindered in your city. Pray the armor of God over your pastor (Ephesians 6:10-18). Quote Scriptures for his protection (Psalm 91; Luke 19:10; etc.). Pray that no weapon formed against him would prosper (Isaiah 54:17), that he would not be ignorant of the enemy's devices, and that the enemy would not gain advantage over him (II Corinthians 2:11).

*Leadership and Church Work Prayer Needs

In the City: Pray that God's people would be called forth from every corner of the city and even from without the city and be gathered together to your pastor. Pray that every one that God has ordained to ministry will come and submit themselves to him (Psalm 18:44). Pray that he would be anointed to be a leader in your community.

Pulpit Ministry: Pray for God's anointing to rest heavily upon your pastor and that God would be prepared to prepare him for that anointing. Pray that the Word of God would come alive as he preaches. Pray for a burning conviction to grip the hearts of everyone—saint and sinner alike—that is not right with God. Pray that his study of preparation time would be protected so that he can receive from God the message He has for your church. Pray that his preaching would magnify Christ in all things and that as Christ is lifted up He would draw all men unto Himself.

Vision: Pray that your pastor would receive God's direction and vision for your church. Pray that he would be sensitive to the needs of the congregation as he leads and that he would feed the flock that which they need of.

Counseling: Pray that God's wisdom would flow through your pastor as he deals with the problems of people. Pray that he would be protected from the pressure of sinful, negative, and antagonistic spirits that he may encounter during counseling. Pray that he would be anointed to give beauty for ashes and the oil of gladness for those that mourn (Isaiah 61:3).

Finances: Pray for wisdom in handling the church finances and for strength to bear the pressure of financial responsibilities. Pray for God's blessings on your church that you might be the head and not the tail. Pray that the church's stewardship over money would glorify God and help establish the work of God in your city.

Be assured that praying for your pastor is both necessary and biblical. It is also a source of blessing in your own life, if you labor and faint not. God Himself will reward your labor of love as you follow the biblical mandate to support leadership.

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