

FIRST PERSON: Champion your pastor during Pastor Appreciation Month in October

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The month of October is Pastor Appreciation Month. This is the time to champion your pastor.

Pastors are God-called servant-leaders who feed the people of God through the ministries of preaching the Bible and leading the people of God by providing spiritual oversight of the church. In his shepherding role, the pastor prays for the people regularly, and especially when they find themselves in a time of great need.

There is nothing like the pastor-church relationship. One of the most special relationships on this earth is the relationship between the pastor and the church he serves. Each week when he delivers the Word of God in an effective manner, the people receive the Word from their God-called pastor.

No pastor is perfect. He knows it and his wife surely knows it, but through the ministry of preaching the people learn to receive him as he is.

The pastor's relationship with God's people is taken to a more personal level when he celebrates in their successes and

grieves with them in their losses. Through these times, trust is built in his relationship with the people of God. Living life together with God's people and worshipping the Lord with them weekly is, for the pastor, indescribable.

Four ways to honor your pastor this October. Regardless of the size of your church, the length of time the pastor has served, or whether the relationship is healthy or not, honoring your pastor is the right thing to do. He is not an idol. He is a man. He needs you. You need him. Here are a few ways to honor and encourage your pastor:

– ***Recognize the pastor and his family one Sunday in October in a public manner.*** Honoring your pastor and his family is more about honoring the calling of this gift to your church, given to you by the Holy Spirit. Make them feel special. Verbally recognize them in an encouraging way. Whether by video or in person, have two to three church members bless them publicly.

– ***Give the pastor and his family a special gift this October.*** It's not about the amount of the gift you give; it's about making them feel special and appreciated. This has been a difficult season for every pastor and his family. Blessing them with a special gift says thank you in a respectable way. In whatever you do, do it in a generous way. Honor those to whom honor is due.

– ***Pray for the pastor and his wife in a prevailing way one Sunday morning in October.*** Plan a focused prayer time in a worship service one Sunday morning. Have the pastor and his wife come before the church for an intentional time of prayer for each of them. Give five to ten minutes for this prayer time.

You could have the men come to pray for the pastor and women come to pray for the pastor's wife. You could have two to four people publicly call out to God in prayer while those gathered around them, as well as the church, agree in prayer.

Praying for the pastor and his wife demonstrates your faith in the Lord alone who will use them, anoint them, and empower them to serve with faithfulness.

– Present the pastor with the special blessing of thirty-one members who will own one day a month in October, specifically praying for him and his ministry to the church. In the assigned day of the month, whether it be Day One or Day 16, this is your day to focus your prayer upon him and his ministry to the church. Write him a note or send him a text asking him for three specific prayer requests for himself, his family, and/or the church. Whatever his burdens are, you are there to pray him through.

One Sunday morning about twenty-five years ago, thirty-one men walked into a private prayer room during my regular prayer time with men from our church. A spokesman for them said, “Pastor, we’re giving you a special gift today. Each of us will pray and fast for you one day each month. Here is a commitment we are making to you.” They presented me with a framed commemorative letter that had each of their names on it. This is one of the greatest gifts I ever received. Friends, champion your pastor. Love him. Honor him. Respect him. Pray for him. Bless him. Do this daily throughout the year, not just in October.

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