

20 Ways to Encourage Your Pastor

When was the last time you let your pastor know how much you appreciate him?

By Dennis Rainey

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Peter Drucker, a leading authority on management, once made a profound observation on what he believed were the four most difficult jobs in America today: The President of the United States, a university president, a hospital administrator, and a pastor of a local church.

Does this surprise you? Many people might respond, "You've got to be kidding!" A few people may even think a pastor's job is one of the easiest.

Maybe something else will surprise you—pastors may soon be an endangered species! Every year thousands of pastors are leaving the church and terminating their ministries. Exhausted and emotionally threadbare, many are leaving either because they are discouraged or because they have fallen into a baited trap of the enemy. It is a fact that there are fewer churches today than in 1900 . . . and even fewer men to lead them.

Pastor appreciation

Why is this so? Especially now? Isn't a preacher supposed to get his strokes from God and not look to receive them from men? Well, I have a hunch that the enemy of God, the devil, has created an incredible climate of skepticism and cynicism toward those who represent God. Satan is constantly hurling feelings of unappreciation at the man who has poured his life into others.

So with all the negative press printed about preachers over this past year, I have decided to use the power of the press too, and press you to some positive action for your pastor. The need for action is a 2000-year-old problem—look at what Paul writes: "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

I want to encourage you with is a list of ways on how to appreciate and esteem your pastor.

1. Surprise him and his wife by taking them out to a nice place to eat. Talk with them about something other than your problems.
2. Schedule a Sunday (well in advance) when the laymen take the Sunday services and give him a long weekend away with his wife (Friday 'til Monday)—arrange babysitters, too.
3. Find out from his secretary what books or periodicals he's been wanting for his library; order a few and sneak them in after he's gone.

4. Over lunch, ask him how many free evenings he has each week to be with his family. If it isn't enough considering the age of his children and the needs of his wife, engage in some straight talk about the pace he keeps.
5. Perk him with a two-week study time at a seminary during early January or in the summer. No major corporation in existence spends less on the continued training, education, and care for their staff than does the church.
6. Force him and his family to take a one-month authentic sabbatical at least once every 3 years. No ministry. No giving. Just pure fun with the family, refreshing time off to read and re-vitalize his relationship with Christ.
7. Give him and his wife free sessions with a financial planning consultant, who will help him budget and anticipate college education for children and retirement.
8. Write him a hand-written note of appreciation for who he is and how God has used him in your life. Be specific; avoid broad generalizations.
9. Pray for him daily. Then call him and tell him you're doing just that and ask him for his prayer requests—pray for his wife, too.
10. Offer to meet him at his house on his day off to help fix things around the place. Some ministers are all thumbs when it comes to working with their hands ... (like me). Others are too busy to take the time!
11. Occasionally send him a clever cartoon or joke that mirrors a point he made in a sermon—just so he'll know that you're listening!
12. Do a "This is Your Life" program at church one Sunday evening—don't roast him, but refuel his spirit with testimonies and a fun time. He'll be embarrassed, but that's okay! It is biblical to receive rewards on this side of eternity (see Mark 10:28-31).
13. Find out what problem in the church that, if solved, would move the church forward in the coming year. Then, roll up your sleeves and offer to help the leadership solve it.
14. Help him get some exercise by either meeting him 3 or 4 times a week at a health club or jogging with him in the morning.
15. Clean his car while he's at the church office one day. (One of the pastors at our church even told me where he leaves his keys!)
16. Call and express appreciation to the pastor who started you on your spiritual pilgrimage, or who helped you at a critical time in your life. Be specific about how he helped you.
17. Let him know that you appreciate the load he carries: the pressure of caring for sheep, the pace of a growing ministry and the daily sacrifices he makes for ministry. Communicate that you understand he does more than just show up and preach.
18. If you're an elder or deacon, then why not schedule annual job performance evaluations, walk through his year and express appreciation for a job well done. How about a bonus if he's really been effective ... and a raise! After all, just think how much a raise encourages you.

19. Go to your pastor and ask him where you can assume a position of responsibility. As one pastor put it, "A position in the church where I can learn the fellowship of Christ's suffering—you only suffer for what you care about and you can only prove you care by taking responsibility" (See Philippians 3:10-11).
20. And don't forget your pastor's wife. She makes many sacrifices too in giving up her husband to ministry opportunities. Send her notes of appreciation, flowers or a gift certificate. Express gratitude for the part she plays in the teamwork of pastoring your local church.

Why not take some time right now to consider how you can esteem your pastor? Then do it.

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