

# Lifelines

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Topic: Pastor Appreciation

## **Why should you value your pastor or priest?**

**By Dr. Ed Jordan**

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. It is a month when Christians are reminded to realize that our pastors work harder than people in most other positions in life. Pastors, especially in single-staff churches, work themselves into exhaustion, because much of the church work falls upon them and their spouse. We ought to have a Pastor's Spouse Appreciation month as well! Spouses work hard in the background to help the pastor carry out the hundreds of things each week that need to be done, because the pastor can't do it all. I generally work 60-hour weeks, with a partial day off, and still can't stay caught up.

Does anyone ever consider all the things their pastor does each week? Truthfully, the answer is "No." Very few people give a second thought as to all that their Pastor does. Furthermore, a non-pastor can't know the pressure and workload dumped upon a pastor every week, because it hasn't been dumped upon you. You can't know unless you pastor for a year: working all week to prepare and deliver a fresh, helpful sermon each week, preparing Bible studies, choosing new music for services, getting music ready for the practices, making orders of service, communicating on behalf of the church, representing the church at meetings, planning outreach efforts, weekly enlisting singers for the service, and then making sure they have the accompaniment needed. After all that, as you are trying to catch a breath, you get flack over something you didn't get done, or something done that fizzled.

The pastor, as Shepherd, must set the direction for the church to go, so it can grow and be spiritually healthy. Pastors also provide crisis intervention, encouragement for people who need a positive influence. Pastors are there for hospitalizations, sudden deaths, and terminal illness support. They are on call 24/7. Pastors listen and are exposed to lots of pain in people's lives, either in the congregation or in town; and Pastors have no one with whom to share that pain but Jesus, or their spouse, since what they hear is often confidential. Pastors become a lightning rod for people who are upset about the way something was done, or wasn't done. Pastors live their lives having people insinuate that any inadequacy in the church is the pastor's fault. And their wives get crushed every time they hear a cruel or unjust comment about their spouse. The spouses know how much sacrifice goes into every week and year of church life, because a lot of that sacrifice was theirs.

Being a pastor is being chosen by God, to speak for God to the people. Try to fulfill that requirement, without knowing that God has chosen you to do pastoral ministry. Churches don't call pastors; God does. When people attack the minister, they are slapping God in the face. All of these things go into the life of being a pastor, and some of this sort of thing was probably in the background when the Apostle Paul gave instructions to congregations about valuing and taking good care of your pastor.

Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 (NASB95), speaking on behalf of God, tells believers: "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. Live in peace with one another.”

Appreciate them! Esteem them very highly in love, because their work is impossible. Value them, delight in them, and don't let them be degraded by others. Pastors, and their spouses, are a treasure entrusted to the church by God. Love them, nourish them, for they love you and sacrifice for you daily. One of the wonderful characteristics of love, is that it conveys value to the person loved. When we cherish or treasure someone, we hold them in highest appreciation and convey that they are worth more to us than all the gold in the world. To be loved like that, helps make difficulties worthwhile. Loving someone conveys that they are much more important than any secondary things.

Jesus loved your pastor so much, that He gave up His own life so that your pastor could know God, love God, and desire to invest their life in honoring God. If God loves pastors to the moon and back, can't we love them also? The same God who loves you, and loves your pastor, lives in you.

Take some time reflecting on all your pastor does every week, week after week, year after year, to bless you! Then treasure them, and love and bless them!

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