

Have You Prayed for Your Pastor Today?

"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves" I Thessalonians 5:12-13

"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine". I Timothy 5:17

Have you prayed for your pastor today? By reading the bible verses above, it is very clear that we are to esteem him very highly with love and to count him worthy of double honour and to be at peace among ourselves. With all the things that a pastor does he needs our prayers. If you would spend a day with your pastor you would probably go with him to visit the sick in a nursing home, perhaps ride the bus with him to pick up and then take the Sunday school children back to their homes, go on a visit with him to counsel a family struggling with their marriage, go to visit a woman who just lost her husband, attend a funeral of yet another person he came to love in his ministry, go with him to make a visit to a person's home who has never heard of Jesus and sit and listen to him tell them all about Jesus and then see him lead them to Christ. Then he may spend a few hours returning phone calls, answering emails, preparing for his 4th sermon of the week, kneeling in prayer for all the people on the prayer list and asking the Holy Spirit to help him to serve God by delivering yet another sermon, all after he just put in a full week of work at his job and then trying to make time for his family. When you see your pastor on Sunday preaching the word of God, try to think about all that he does and you will want to pray to God for him, his family and for the ministry. It is very important for us to pray for our pastor. Praying for the pastor should be a daily thing because we know the sacrifices he makes by putting the Lord first, trying to meet the needs of his family and the congregation and preach the word to God to everyone he can. As Christians we all need to put the Lord first in our lives. We are to seek God with all our hearts, souls and minds. For a pastor, he is seeking God and God's will in his own life, and teaching and preaching to others to bring them to Christ and help them to grow in their spiritual walk. And once they accept Jesus into their lives he has the responsibility of furthering them in their walk with God. Preaching a sermon on Sunday is not where his job ends. Let us take a look at the heart of a pastor according to God's word. *"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ". Colossians 2:2-5*

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God". Philippians 1:3-11

When we think about the heart of our pastor, to see his heart for having people come to Christ, you will understand that your pastor has a love for you that comes from the very heart of God. He wants to see you have faith in Christ, to see you bear fruit, more fruit and much fruit. He tries to fulfill the needs of all the people in his congregation and bring those to Christ who will hear the word of God.

So, why should we pray for him? For one thing, a pastor has more of a responsibility than we do as a Christian. The following bible verse tells us that he has willingly put himself in greater judgment for us.

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" James 3: 1

We are told to remember our pastors and imitate their faith. If we are in prayer for them we are also in prayer for all those who he will speak the word of God to.

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation". Hebrews 13:7

Our pastors need prayer for many reasons. God's word tells us we are to pray for them, that God would help them to know how to speak and tell of the mystery of Christ.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak". Colossians 4:2-4

Do you bring your pastor joy or do you grumble to him? When you think of your pastor, do you see a person who loves and cares for you or do you just see a person who preaches a sermon on Sunday? Do you appreciate your pastor and all he does or do you complain because you feel it should be your turn to be the usher because you weren't asked to take up the offering this week?

There is another important aspect of praying for your pastor and that is in what prayer does for you! If you find yourself feeling frustrated or angry towards your pastor, you will not be able to stay mad or hold a grudge against someone that you begin praying *for*. I emphasize the word "for," because sometimes when we say we are praying *for* someone we are really praying *against* them. What I mean is that sometimes our prayers are along the lines of "Lord that person is screwing up their lives and everyone else's lives, please stop them." When it comes to praying for pastors, such prayers can be along the lines of "Lord please change him before he ruins our church." Those are prayers that really aren't *for* the pastor, they are against him. We need to pray for his welfare, pray for the fulfillment of his hopes and dreams, pray for his great success. For example, during the Bill Clinton scandal people in prayer circles may have been praying for Bill Clinton, but what they may have been praying for in their heart was that he would be removed from office or that some calamity would befall him. A pastor can disagree with a person's actions and pray for them at the same time. We need to take our pastor's example and follow his lead as many pastors have who prayed asking God to give Bill Clinton wisdom, praying for his health and safety (at a time when I am quite sure that many Christians were secretly hoping he would have a heart attack or be the victim of an assassination attempt). Just like now we need to pray that God will bless Hillary Clinton. My point is that if our pastor prays positively for the welfare of any person without any negativity, the least we can do is to support him in our prayers. If the pastor fails to meet our hopes, needs and our expectations, go to God in prayer. Become less concerned about our own selfish ambitions and become more concerned about the pastor's welfare or success. Let's pray for our pastors and not *against* them. When we pray for anyone this way, God softens our heart. Even if we may be mad at someone, if we pray for them and not against them God invariably warms our hearts toward them and then we can come alongside them and be an encourager to them. Have you prayed for your pastor today?

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