

Will You Pray for the Pastor and Our Church Leaders?

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. ¹⁸Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. (Hebrews 13: 17-18, ESV)

As a church member, we understand the various roles we can assume in the church; ushering, hospitality, singing, teaching, community work, evangelism, media operations, church staff, or church ministries, etc. Did you know that Pastors have one of the most important roles in the world? Some may think a Pastor's primary role is to deliver sermons, teach Bible studies, and hold prayer meetings. So much more happens during the course of a week. There are business matters and staff meetings which help the church run smoothly and efficiently. Community outreach and liaisons with other churches and Pastors involve time. Above all the Pastor's commitment to his congregation requires a good deal of his time and energy. Pastors carry a heavy burden. Sometimes, the Pastor's schedule could mimic a doctor's when a parishioner makes a late-night emergency call when there is no other place to turn.

How often we have benefitted from sermons and bible studies that required many hours of preparation. How many times have you personally sought the Pastor for prayer, counsel, funeral services, critical decisions, wisdom, sickness, marital, family, or child issues and more. As a church member we are blessed to have these privileges available to us.

"And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3: 15)

Most of us have experienced help not only from the Pastor, but also from Associate Ministers, Deacons, or other church leaders. Some of them have rendered help immediately as a result of a phone call. Perhaps prayer or counsel was needed for a child, spouse, parent, work, home, illness, or financial situation. Sometimes, anxiety provoking circumstances are so overwhelming until we need someone spiritually grounded to hear us and stand with us.

Many hold the misconception that pastors and leaders do not need prayer. We assume their position of leadership means they have it "all together". When we consider the many ways, a Pastor can be called upon or even pulled away from sermon preparation, Bible study, the family, or even personal time, then we can understand why they need and ask for prayer. When we think of all the ways we have benefitted from the ministry of the Pastor and even the services of our Deacons, Trustees, superintendents, teachers, media staff, church staff, and other church leaders who work tirelessly for the continuance of the church, our comfort, and our spiritual edification, we are compelled to pray for them. All of our church leaders need prayers from the church members. Will you pray for our Pastor and our church leaders?

How We Can Pray for the Pastor and Our Church Leaders

The apostle, Paul, in his letters to the many churches, repeatedly appeals to the saints of God to pray for him and leaders in the ministry (*Rom.15: 30; Eph.6:19; Col. 4:3; I Thess.5: 25;*

II Thess.3:1). Paul considered those praying for him as partners in ministry (Rom 15:30). When we pray for our pastor and ministry leaders, we are not only ministering to them but also partnering with them in ministry. We share this sacred burden as we intercede for them in prayer.

Paul's appeal for the fellowship of believers to partner in prayer offers insight into what we should pray for our Pastor and Church Leaders: Here are a few areas that we can commit to the Lord in prayer:

1. **Pray for their spiritual walk.** The vitality of the Pastor's and church leaders' spiritual lives directly affects their ability to minister to God's people. Understanding that no one is immune to the temptations of sin, the weariness of the flesh, or the distractions of this world, pray for their spiritual strength. Pray for a clear conscience and honorable lives (Hebrew 13:18). Pray that their love for the Lord will steadily increase and that they will delight in the spiritual disciplines of grace.
2. **Prayer for their provisions.** Pray that God will supply all their needs according to His riches (Phil. 4: 18-19). Here we are asking for provision of health and strength, in body and mind. Since their responsibilities can be costly physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, ask God to provide needed rest and rejuvenation.
3. **Pray for their relationships.** Pray that God surrounds the Pastor and Church leaders with supportive nurturing and fulfilling relationships. They must strike a positive balance between ministry work and their families and jobs. They need friends and family members who can support and hear them when times get tough.
4. **Pray for their protection.** Satan continually rages hard against those entrusted to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pastors and church leaders walk with a clear target on their backs. Spiritual warfare is an ever-present reality (Eph. 6:12). Satan repeatedly attempts to diminish the reputation of Christ's ministers so that he can neutralize their good work. We ought to pray that no weapons formed against them and all false accusatory tongues will not prosper (Isa, 54: 17).
5. **Pray for the Gospel Ministry** The work of ministry is difficult. It requires lots of prayer, spiritual maturity, wisdom and self-sacrifice. Pray that God will empower the preaching, teaching, and the discipling that they do in service to the spreading of the Gospel for the edification of the saints and the advancement of the kingdom of God.

If we truly want to be a church that wants to live out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20), then we will commit to and actualize our obligation to pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5: 17) for our Pastor and church leaders!