

## SHOWING APPRECIATION FOR YOUR PASTOR

By Pastor Gary G. Dull

The month of October has been designated as “Pastor Appreciation Month,” and many local congregations will make efforts to show their pastors respect and love. In doing so, various acts of kindness will be conducted, such as having a special service to honor them, giving them nice gifts, sending them on a trip, giving them time off and a list of many good things that could go on and on.

Recently, I saw a list of 30 things a church can do to show appreciation to pastors, all of which were all very kind and good. Certainly, every pastor who is a recipient of these things will be appreciative of the gestures made for them, and it is good for local churches to do so. But showing appreciation to your pastor should be more than just honoring him in a special way once a year. Appreciating your pastor should be a continual attitude with regular actions to express that appreciation.

A study of the Bible gives not only suggestions, but also directives on how a church fellowship should show appreciation for its pastor. Those directives are many, but please allow me to share just a few. I would encourage you then to take some time to consider how you can put these directives to practice with the pastor of your church and in doing so, you will be obeying God and honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. **KNOW YOUR PASTOR.** 1 Thessalonians 5:12 says, “*Know them which LABOR among you, and are OVER you in the Lord, and ADMONISH you.*” Without a doubt, this verse describes the response to pastors who work spiritually to give godly direction to the flock. Biblically speaking, every congregant is to get to KNOW his pastor. That is, build a relationship with him so as to know his likes and dislikes, as well as his weaknesses and strengths in order to be able to pray for him and encourage him in a more effective way. The more you know your pastor, the more you will appreciate his ministry and the more effective his ministry will be to you and your congregation.

2. **LOVE YOUR PASTOR.** 1 Thessalonians 5:13 says, “Esteem them VERY highly in LOVE for their work’s sake.” Many pastors are lonely due to the weight of the spiritual leadership they bear. Often, that weight is so heavy, they cannot even share it with their spouse and close friends. Many pastors go to bed at night with tears in their eyes and hurts in their heart. By consistently loving your pastor through acts of kindness, you will be more of an encouragement than you can ever imagine, and he will have a greater motivation to serve the congregation to the glory of God.

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3. **SUPPORT YOUR PASTOR.** 1 Timothy 5:17 says, “Let the elders (pastors) that rule well be counted worthy of DOUBLE HONOR, especially they who labor in the WORD and DOCTRINE.” The phrase “worthy of double honor” literally means “double remuneration.” In other words, pay your pastor well. Many pastors and their families suffer financially because the congregation does not see the need to pay them adequately. Such a situation does not honor God at all. As a member of your church, do what you can to encourage your fellowship to give your pastor a salary and additional benefits that will enable him to live comfortably so as not to be burdened or get distracted from the ministry to which God has called him. God will bless you if you do so.

4. **PRAY FOR YOUR PASTOR.** 2 Thessalonians 3:1 says, “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the WORD of the Lord may have FREE COURSE, and be GLORIFIED, even as it is with you, and that we may be DELIVERED from unreasonable and wicked men: for all have not faith.” There are many things for which a congregation can pray for their pastor. But that he may be able to preach the Word of God with power and be protected from them that would harm him is a very significant prayer to consistently take to the throne of grace on his behalf. Doing so will guarantee that your pastor will be much more effective in the pulpit and community ministry.

5. **FOLLOW YOUR PASTOR.** Hebrews 13:7 says, “REMEMBER them that have the rule (spiritual) over you, who have SPOKEN unto you the word of God: whose FAITH FOLLOW, considering the end of their conversation.” Pastors who offer genuine spiritual ministry, who preach the Word of God clearly and who manifest biblical faith are to be followed without resistance or rebellion by each member of the congregation. Those who refuse to do so will answer to the Lord and according to Hebrews 13:17, that will be “unprofitable” for them when they stand before the Lord. Churches do not hire their pastors. It is the Lord Jesus Who places pastors in church pulpits. The congregation simply recognizes God’s call to the local assembly as the under-shepherd of Jesus Christ to equip and lead the church into more effective and fruitful Christian service. The congregant who follows the faith of his pastor will be blessed by God on earth will be rewarded by God in heaven and encouraged by his pastor in the church.

Indeed, there are many things I could add to the list of how to show appreciation to pastors. But perhaps the points I have given will be something for you to consider, not only in October, but all 12 months of the year. Because each of the above principles is truly biblical, those who practice them will be truly blessed by God, and in the long run, their pastor will be a more effective shepherd in the local flock where the Lord places him, resulting in the edification of the believers, the strengthening of the church and glory to Almighty God.