



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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THE HEDGEBUILDERS

My heart is broken for pastors and their families. I'm burdened for the leadership in churches. This brokenness and burden has only increased in the last couple of years.

As an evangelist, I have the privilege and opportunity to meet numerous pastors, their families, and the leadership of many churches. I also receive numerous calls, letters, and e-mails from them. I believe that God has called me to intercede specifically for pastors and their families. It is a crucial part of my ministry from God.

Yet, you may be wondering, "Why are you so brokenhearted concerning pastors? Why are you so burdened concerning leadership in the churches?" There are numerous reasons:

- Beat up and bruised pastors
- Frustrated and discouraged pastors
- Terminated pastors and those who are on the verge of termination
- Disheartened and frustrated leaders
- Families of pastors hurting and lonely
- Pastors and leaders falling into sin and disgrace
- Unregenerate leaders and church members who attack the pastor and/or church leaders
- Pastors and leaders who cannot work together – even oppose one another

- A lack of genuine concern for pastors and leaders
- A lack of fervent prayer for pastors and spiritual leaders

I could go on. Yet, this is sufficient to make the point. Our churches are in crisis. It doesn't matter what denomination you belong to or if you are an independent church. Pastors and leaders are facing unprecedented attacks and obstacles in leading our churches and accomplishing the will of God. There is a raging battle for the lives and ministries of our pastors and leaders.

This crisis must be met with faithful and fervent prayer for pastors and spiritual leaders. It is only through prayer that pastors and leaders can experience protection from these attacks. At the same time, the only way that they will be able to lead our churches and accomplish God's will is through the praying of God's people. It is time for the church to humble itself before God and pray fervently for its leadership. We must lay hold of God and plead with Him for those who lead us.

In this issue, I want challenge you to become a "hedgebuilder" – a believer who prays fervently for your pastor and leader. I long for you to become a believer who builds spiritual hedges around your pastor and leaders. My fervent prayer is that the Spirit will

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use you to plead for your pastor and leaders with fresh power and insight.

Why Should I Become A Hedgebuilder?

The Bible reveals some reasons why you should pray for and build spiritual hedges around your pastor and leaders. *First, God desires that you to pray for your spiritual leaders.* The apostle Paul knew the value of prayer for his ministry and his life. In his writings, he revealed that many believers were praying for him. He also asked for the prayers of believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:25: "Brethren, pray for us."

Romans 15:30: "Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."

Philippians 1:19: "For I know that this will turn out for my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

Philemon 22: "But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you."

2 Corinthians 1:11: "You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many."

From these verses, we can see that God longs for us to pray for our pastors. Paul did ask believers to pray for his ministry and him. Yet, the Holy Spirit generated this request. God desires that we cover our pastor's lives and ministries.

These verses reveal God's heart for our prayers for pastors. He yearns for believers to cry out to Him in their behalf. This extends to the leaders who serve with our pastors. Whether you have deacons, elders, or other types of leaders, they should be covered with prayer. Building spiritual hedges around your

pastor and leaders is part of your prayer responsibility for them.

Second, pastors are the special targets of the enemy. The Word of God says, "Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into the reproach and snare of the devil" (**1 Timothy 3:7**). Paul indicates that the devil is seeking to snare and destroy pastors. He longs to lead them into reproach – ruin their influence and reputation. He desires to snare them with sin. He wants to trap them in discouragement and frustration. This is the devious plan of the enemy for pastors and leaders. The only way to defeat it is through fervent prayer for them.

Satan's attack on pastors and leaders is real – this is the teaching of the Word of God. The devil is out seeking whom he may devour – pastors are his special targets (**1 Peter 5:8**). He is looking for opportunities to snare them. Paul reveals that Satan is actively seeking to snare and lead pastors into disgrace. This is why building spiritual hedges around your pastor and leaders is crucial. It is wonderful to support and love your pastor. But it is not enough. You must also **pray** for your pastor!

Building spiritual hedges around your leaders is essential for the health of your church. A church cannot be spiritually healthy if it does not cover its leaders in prayer. It is impossible for a church to reach its full potential if there is no fervent intercession for its leaders. When the leaders are covered in prayer, the church can expect God's blessings and power. A prayed-for leadership will have a righteous and powerful influence on the body.

This is illustrated in **Exodus 17**. Israel is going into battle against the Amalekites. Moses declared that he would go to the top of the mountain with the rod of God (**17:10**). As long as Moses was able to hold up his hands, Israel prevailed. But the moment he let his hands down, the Amalekites began winning the battle (**17:11**).

When Moses could no longer hold up his hands, Aaron and Hur did a remarkable thing. They got a stone and allowed Moses to sit on it. They then held Moses' hands up for

the rest of the day (17:12). Because of this, the people of Israel won the battle.

This should give you some picture of how important it is to cover your pastor in prayer. An embattled pastor is in danger. And not only is he in danger, but the whole church is. There is an intimate connection between the pastor, leaders, and the congregation. When the leaders are not covered in prayer, it will affect the whole congregation. It does make a difference when you pray for your leaders. It could be the difference between victory and defeat, courage and compromise, and obedience and mediocrity. Spiritual hedges around your pastor will bless your leaders and your church.

The greatest damage done to pastors is often accomplished by those the closest to them. It is rare for a pastor to be wounded or brought down by outside forces. It is often by those in the church – by those who are the closest to them. It may be a leader or a member of the church. But, the majority of damage done to pastors is from inside the church. ~~This is a sad indictment but it is true.~~ The apostle Paul had much damage done to him by someone who was close to him, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works" (2 Timothy 4:14). It must also be remembered that Judas, one of his own disciples, betrayed Jesus.

This is why building spiritual hedges around your pastor and leaders is a necessity. Great damage can be done if your pastor is not covered by prayer. Fervent prayer can prevent much of the damage inflicted on pastors. Faithful praying can protect your pastor from the attacks that come from inside the church.

How Can I Build Hedges Around My Pastor And Leaders?

You can build spiritual hedges around your pastor and leaders through prayer. Prayer releases the power of God into their lives and provides protection for them. You can pray for them in a variety of ways:

- *Pray the Scripture.* Search the Word for those Scriptures that speak concerning pastors and leaders. Pray the great truths of the Scripture for them. If you need help in this, you can get the "Praying For Your Pastor" and "Praying For Your Deacons" key rings. These provide a variety of Scripture prayers that will help you plead the word for them.
- *Ask them what you can pray about for them.* Ask your leaders how you can pray best for them. Share with them your burden to pray for them.
- *Seek the Holy Spirit's leadership.* The Holy Spirit can provide you with insights that you can pray for your leaders. Call on Him to speak to you concerning your leaders and their needs.
- *Keep your eyes, ears, and heart open.* You will discern a variety of issues to pray about as you listen, watch, and discern. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you open eyes, ears, and heart in this matter.
- *Pray about the weaknesses and struggles of your leaders.* I always get strange looks when I mention this. But, you know it. And I know it. Every leader has weaknesses and struggles. These should be prayer concerns. Not only do we know this, but Satan also knows it. He will try to exploit and use these things against our leaders. Call on God to touch and work in your leaders' lives – especially in their vulnerable areas.

The Hedgebuilder's Prayer Guide

As I've prayed for pastors and leaders through the years, I've developed a series of Scripture prayers to build spiritual hedges around them. These prayers focus on a crucial area that needs prayer covering. It's nitty-gritty praying – it is praying about those areas where Satan can attack. I offer these to you in order to help you build spiritual hedges around your pastor. You can adapt these to apply to your leaders also.

Father, I plead that You would grant physical health to _____. Provide healing in _____'s body for anything that is not right. Grant rest and strength to _____ (**Exodus 15:26**).

Father, grant emotional healing to _____. I plead with You to heal the wounds and hurts that _____ has experienced. Deliver _____ from those hurts and wounds that would hinder or damage _____'s ministry (**Psalms 147:3**).

Father, I pray that _____ would pursue holiness with all _____'s being. I ask that _____ will confess and repent of sin daily. Cause _____ to hate sin and to pursue a righteous life (**1 John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13**).

I plead that _____ would yield _____'s whole life to the reading and study of the Word. Create a deep and abiding love for Your Word in _____. Grant _____ time to read, study, memorize, and meditate on the Word. I ask that _____ will hear and obey the Word (**1 Timothy 4:15-16**).

I ask that _____ would be fervent in prayer. I plead that _____ would seek You daily. Deliver _____ from prayerlessness. Grant _____ times of prayer and the Word without any interruption (**Colossians 4:2**).

Father, I pray that You would meet all of _____'s needs. Deliver _____ from being snared by the love of money. I ask that _____'s financial condition would be honest, right, and pleasing in Your sight (**Philippians 4:19**).

Father, I ask in the name of Jesus that You would set _____ free from fear. I pray that _____ would have boldness and courage to preach Your Word and do Your will in this church. I plead that fear would have no place in _____'s life (**1 John 4:18**).

Father, set _____ free from pride in all its forms. I ask that _____ would be

humble, receiving Your grace and power (**James 4:6**).

Father, I pray that _____ would not worry or be filled with worry. Cause _____ to cast all burdens and concerns on You. I ask that _____ will not be burdened down by worry. I do ask that _____ would not be anxious about anything but will pray and depend on You (**Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7**).

Father, I ask that _____ would daily experience the peace of God. Let this peace guard _____'s heart each day (**Philippians 4:7**).

Father, protect _____ from loneliness. I ask that this will not be a hindrance to _____'s ministry. Cause _____ to sense and know Your presence daily. O God, deepen _____'s relationship to You. Grant _____ godly friends who will help and encourage _____ (**Matthew 28:20; Psalm 73:25-26**).

Father, I ask You to protect and strengthen _____'s marriage. Protect this marriage and keep Satan from building any strongholds in their relationship (**Ephesians 5:22-33**).

Father, I plead with You to put a hedge about _____'s family. Grant this family all that it needs – physically, spiritually, emotionally, and financially. Protect and strengthen this family against all the attacks of Satan (**Psalms 127**).

Father, I pray that You would set _____ free from discouragement. In those moments when _____ is discouraged, fill _____ with fresh power, help, and strength. I ask that _____ would not grow weary in the work of the ministry but that _____ would not faint but would reap a harvest (**Galatians 6:9**).

Father, I plead that _____ would stand firm. Let nothing move _____. I ask that _____ would always be fully committed to the work of the Lord and would

know that _____'s labor in the Lord is not in vain (**1 Corinthians 15:58**).

Father, I pray that depression would never have any room in _____'s life. I ask that _____ would hope in You and would praise You, the true Savior and God (**Psalm 42:11**).

I pray that _____ would not give into spiritual laziness. I plead that _____ would be fervent and diligent in the Word, prayer, and the ministry. Grant _____ power, love, and self-discipline (**2 Timothy 1:6-7**).

Father, I ask that the congregation will have an ever-growing love for _____. I plead that the congregation will grow in following _____. I plead that _____'s ministry in this body will be a joy and not a burden to _____ (**Hebrews 13:17**).

Father, I plead that _____ would love ~~You above all things and people~~. I ask that _____ would not love the world or the things of the world (**Matthew 22:37; 1 John 2:15**).

I ask that there would be godly, healthy relationships between _____ and the other leaders. I pray that You would enable them to resolve any conflicts or problems that they might have. Grant them the grace and humility to support _____ and to work together in harmony (**Psalm 133:1**).

Father, deliver _____ from the attacks of unregenerate leaders and/or members. I ask You to stop anyone who attempts to wound or destroy _____. By Your mighty power, set _____ free from the attacks of those who have impure, selfish motives (**Psalm 115:3**).

I ask that _____'s ministry would be received and would be fruitful in this place. I plead for this on the basis of the love of the Spirit (**Romans 15:30-32**).

Father, I ask You to protect and grow _____'s reputation in the church and

community. Grant _____ greater influence in the church and community. I plead that Satan would not be allowed to damage either (**1 Timothy 3:7**).

I plead with You to grant _____ clear leadership from the Spirit. Grant _____ a hearing ear (**John 10:27**).

Father, You declare that You hate lying lips. I ask You then to deliver _____ from all the lies and gossip that is spread about _____. Cause the truth to be known about _____'s ministry (**Proverbs 12:22**).

Father, I pray that You would set _____ free from every snare that the devil sets for _____. Deliver _____ from the disgrace that Satan wants to place in _____'s ministry (**1 Timothy 3:7**).

Father, grant _____ a distinct sense of purpose and calling. I pray that _____ will know that there is hope and that You desire to prosper _____. Cause _____ to know that You have a purpose and a future for _____ (**Jeremiah 29:13**).

Father, I pray that You would strengthen and increase _____'s faith. Protect _____ from those things that would hinder and weaken _____'s faith (**Hebrews 11:6**).

Father, deliver _____ from any misunderstandings between _____ and the members. Grant _____ a compassionate heart and a servant spirit. I ask that any misunderstandings will be dealt with quickly and in a godly way (**Matthew 20:28**).

Father, I plead that _____ would abstain from immorality. I ask that _____ would pursue sexual purity in all areas of life –

thinking, speaking, and acting (**1 Thessalonians 4:3**).

Father, I plead that You would deliver _____ from the enemy. You know the devious plans that Satan has for _____.

I pray that he would have no success in attacking _____ (1 Peter 5:8).

Encouraging Your Pastor

Christian pollster George Barna has discovered that "pastors are the single most occupationally frustrated professionals in America." Yet, this should not be the case. God desires that we minister encouragement to our pastors on a regular basis. The Bible teaches that we are to affirm and encourage our spiritual leaders (1 Timothy 5:17).

When Paul went on his first missionary journey, Joseph of Cyprus accompanied him. This man's nickname was "Barnabas" or "son of encouragement." He had this nickname because of his willingness and labors to encourage others. He stood with Paul through all things and provided great encouragement to his ministry and to him. Will you become a Barnabas for your pastor and spiritual leaders? Will you stand with your leaders and offer encouragement to them?

The following are some steps that you can take to encourage your pastors and leaders:

- ✓ *Pray for your pastor and leaders.* This is the best and most powerful way to encourage your pastor and leaders. Share with them your willingness to pray for them.
- ✓ *Attend church.* An empty pew speaks loudly. Someone has said that an empty pew has an eloquent tongue. Be faithful to attend church and to give attention to your pastor's preaching and teaching.
- ✓ *Volunteer.* Be willing to serve. Make yourself available to take an active role in your church.
- ✓ *Share your spiritual growth with your pastor.* Tell your pastor how his ministry has affected you and your walk with God. Let him know how a sermon blessed you, convicted you, or encouraged you. Even better, write it in a letter so that he can read and re-read it.

- ✓ *Take your concerns to your pastor directly.* If you have concerns, take them to your pastor. Don't go to others throughout the congregation. Don't spew your criticisms about your pastor into the congregation. Go directly to your pastor. If you can't talk with your pastor, go the Lord and leave your concerns there. God can handle whatever concerns you bring to Him.
- ✓ *Invite others to church.* This always blesses and encourages pastors.
- ✓ *Remember your pastor on special days.* Your pastor celebrates birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, and other significant times. Use these times to acknowledge your pastor with a gift, a note, or a card. Plan and observe Pastor Appreciation in October.
- ✓ *Befriend and encourage the pastor's family.* According to a Fuller Institute survey, 80 percent of all pastors feel their jobs have a negative effect on their families. Pastors' wives and children often feel isolated and pressured by high expectations. Show love and concern for your pastor's family. Pastors and their families are people – people with needs like others. Be sensitive to these and strive to help.
- ✓ *Be an advocate.* Be a steadfast encourager of your pastor especially in difficult times (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). You don't have to agree with you pastor about everything. But you can stand with you pastor and provide encouragement when others may be criticizing and complaining.
- ✓ *Learn to say "Thank you" to your pastor.* Pastors have many responsibilities. They are in a high expectation environment and their lives are continually scrutinized. They are rarely applauded. Encourage your pastor by saying thank you. It won't cost you anything but it will be of great value to your pastor.

Praying For A Hearing Ear

It is crucial that your church hears and obeys the Word of God. The following is a prayer guide to help you pray for this. Your church needs a hearing ear – a willingness to hear and obey the truth. You can use these Scripture prayers to plead with God for this.

Father, I pray that people will faithfully come to _____ Church in order to hear the teaching and preaching of the Word (**Hebrews 10:24-25**).

Father, enable my pastor to prepare powerful and life-changing messages. I ask that _____ would deliver these in the power of the Spirit (**2 Timothy 2:15**).

Father, I plead that _____ Church will repent and forsake anything that would hinder it from receiving and obeying the Word of God (**James 1:21**).

Father, I ask that _____ Church would be hearers and doers of the Word. Deliver us from simply going through the motions of hearing the Word without obedience (**James 1:22-25**).

Father, I pray that _____ Church will love Your Word. I ask that it will be our great desire and our great pursuit (**Psalms 119:97**).

Father, open our eyes to the truth of Your Word. Grant _____ Church greater understanding and obedience to Your Word (**Psalms 119:18**).

Father, I ask You to bind and stop the enemy's plans to keep _____ Church from hearing and obeying Your Word. I plead that he would not hinder the truth from taking root and changing lives (**Matthew 13:19**).

Saturating Your City Or Community With Prayer

Churches need to develop a strategy for saturating their cities and communities with

prayer. God has placed each church in its place for a reason. Through prayer, the church can have powerful influence for God and His kingdom in that place. He desires that the church be a house of prayer for the variety of needs in an area (**1 Timothy 2:1-2**). In order for a church to cover its city in prayer, there must be a Spirit-guided strategy for doing this.

The following are some suggestions on developing a prayer strategy for your city or your area:

- ⇒ *Ask God for insight concerning your city or community (**Proverbs 3:5-7**)*. Call on God to help you develop a strategy for covering your area with prayer. He is the One who can reveal what your plan and focus should be.
- ⇒ *Believe that God can and will touch your city through prayer (**Hebrews 11:6**)*. You must trust that God is going to work through your intercession. Pray that He would strengthen your faith and help you rid yourself of doubt in this matter. God will hear and answer when you intercede for your city or community.
- ⇒ *Plead that a spirit of repentance in your city or area (**Acts 19:18-19**)*. Call on God to grant genuine repentance to all the people in your area. Ask that the Spirit would work mightily, convicting and leading people to turn from their sins and to God and His Word.
- ⇒ *Ask that the Lord will cause the Word of God to grow mightily and to prevail (**Acts 19:20**)*. Pray that the Word of God will penetrate every area and heart in your city or area. Plead that it would gain strength in lives as it is proclaimed and believed.
- ⇒ *Cover the spiritual leaders in your area*. Churches should be interceding for the other pastors in the area. These spiritual leaders are crucial for the health and the growth of the churches. The churches should therefore make intercession for the other pastors of the churches.
- ⇒ *Pray for the other churches*. We are not in competition with other churches.

They are our brothers and sisters in Christ. They are co-laborers in the kingdom. We must pray for God's blessing and protection on the other churches in the area.

- ⇒ *Identify with the sins of your city (Nehemiah 1:6-7; Ezra 9:6).* What are the dominant, prevalent sins in your area? Ask the Spirit to convict you concerning this. As you determine this, confess these sins to God. Use this as a way to plead for mercy and for God's intervention.
- ⇒ *Pray the opposite spirit.* Where you see anger, pray for love. Where you see immorality, pray for purity. Where you see lostness, plead for spiritual life. Call on God to remove the wickedness and replace it with godly virtue.
- ⇒ *Identify the strongholds in your city.* What is the enemy doing in your city or area? How is he hindering people from coming to Christ? What is he using to attack and wound the church? Call on the Spirit for discernment. Pray for the destruction of all the evil one's schemes for your city or area.
- ⇒ *Systematically prayerwalk your city or area.* This is one of the best ways to cover your city with prayer. Develop prayerwalking teams who will systematically cover your city or area.

- ⇒ *Adopt streets.* Ask believers to adopt streets or neighborhoods that they will pray diligently for.
- ⇒ *Pray the phonebook.* Divide the names among intercessors so that you can cover the people in your area.
- ⇒ *Pray regularly for the schools and businesses in your area.*

New Prayer Products

Prayers For Powerful Preaching

This brochure provides Scripture prayers that a pastor can use to pray for powerful preaching. They can help you pray faithfully for your ministry. It would be an encouraging gift for the pastors you know.

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This prayer manual will equip you to pray for the worship services of your church. It will help you pray for your pastor's ministry and fruitfulness. It can also be used as a guide to pray during a worship service! Through prayer, you can encourage and strengthen the worship and the preaching of the Word in your church!

Suggested Donation: \$8.00, Ten or more: \$7.00.



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