



THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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VOLUME VII

MAY/JUNE, 2004

ISSUE 3

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