

# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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## PRAYED FOR OR PREYED ON?

Your pastor is either prayed for or preyed on. Either your church is covering your pastor in prayer or you have opened the door for his ministry, his family, or his life for attack. It's one or the other. There is no middle ground. Churches have to decide – are we going to stand in the gap for our pastor or are we going to hope for the best?

I am convinced that this is one of the most important issues any church can face. It is the crucial need of the hour. The termination of pastors, the lack of long, fruitful pastorates, and the spiritual mess that many churches find themselves in often has its roots in a failure to stand in the gap for its pastors. You cannot expect God to bless and empower a church if it will not stand in the gap for its pastor and leaders. What is needed is regular, scriptural, passionate prayer for pastors.

We cannot expect genuine revival in our churches without prayer for our pastors. How can we expect God to grant revival if we are not interceding for those whom God has placed in leadership? We are wasting time praying for revival if we are not also faithfully interceding for our pastors and leaders. This is not a sideline issue. It is of utmost importance. If we desire revival, we must stand in the gap for our pastors.

As I travel and minister in churches, it breaks my heart to see how many pastors and

their families are wounded and struggling. It is an epidemic. In addition, it often results from a lack of fervent, loving intercession on the part of God's people. Now I will be the first to admit that there are false shepherds. There are pastors who have moral failures. There are pastors who have deviated from sound doctrine. There are pastors who have made mistakes in leading congregations. I understand that this happens.

Yet, the numbers of godly men who love Christ and faithfully serve Him far outnumber those others. Many more are struggling and battling for Christ and His truth. This issue of *The Prayer Closet* focuses on praying for your pastor. It is our aim to equip you to pray scripturally and powerfully for your pastor.

### Why Should You Pray For Your Pastor?

The following are some reasons why you should pray for your pastor and pastors around you. You may already be familiar with these, but it never hurts to have a reminder.

*Your pastor is a person.*

A pastor is a person and therefore has the common frailties as all other fallen persons do.

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This is not an excuse for bad behavior but a necessary acknowledgement. It can also encourage you to pray for your pastor. The Word of God calls ministers "jars of clay" (**2 Corinthians 4:7**). This means that pastors are men – sinful, weak, and frail. They struggle with the same temptations as other. They have the same battles as others. A pastor faces the process of aging, physical illness, marital problems, problems with children, misunderstandings with others, car problems, financial struggles, and so on. Yet, the difference is that a pastor has to deal with the pressures of ministry along with all the other struggles and battles of day-to-day life.

*Your pastor is growing.*

Your pastor is growing in his understanding of the Word. He does not have all the answers. He struggles to interpret the Scripture. He has to study and strive to understand what Scripture teaches and then faithfully present that to the congregation. His life work is to grow in his knowledge and application of the Word. This requires the church to pray and to be patient. Your pastor needs your prayers and your support as he seeks to understand and proclaim the riches of God's Word (**Acts 6:4**).

*The pastor is not a savior.*

A pastor cannot be a savior because he needs a Savior himself. With Paul, every minister cries out, "O wretched man that I am (**Romans 7:24**)!" People often put pastors on a pedestal. The only problem is that pastors are sinful men who need Jesus and who need to grow in the faith. No pastor is perfect. No pastor is going to say and do everything right. No pastor by himself can make a church grow. No pastor can measure up to every member's standards. Pastors are flawed. This should drive us to pray for our pastors. They need to grow in sanctification. Our prayers will aid in that process of spiritual growth.

*The pastor needs the respect and support of the congregation.*

Though a pastor is growing up in Christ and is not a savior, he still needs the respect and support of the congregation. The Word of God says, "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 works' sake. And be at peace among yourselves" (**Thessalonians 5:12-13**). The Word encourages us to "esteem them very highly for their works' sake." In order for them to carry out their ministry, they need the congregation's willingness to hear and follow them. Without this, they cannot effectively minister to or lead the church.

*Your pastor leads a busy, complicated life.*

Your pastor has to deal with the day-to-day responsibilities of life. He also has to spend time in prayer and preparing sermons. He has to counsel others. He has to attend meetings. He has to go to homes and hospitals for visitation. He will have funerals and weddings. The list could go on and on. Moreover, your pastor is on call twenty-four hours a day. He never knows when his schedule will be interrupted and everything will have to change. He will have to adjust to what is going on in the church and the lives of the members. He will have to answer phone calls, deal with emergencies, and minister in all kinds of situations that the congregation will never see. Pastors need the prayers of God's people for spiritual strength and stamina. No pastor can stand up to this task apart from supernatural power from God. He can experience this power as God's people pray.

*Your pastor is vulnerable.*

From Satan's standpoint, every church is an enemy stronghold that must be hindered and rendered ineffective if he is to carry out His wicked plans. Because pastors are the leaders of the church, he targets them. He knows if he can attack and render the pastor ineffective he has gained ground in rendering the church ineffective. Satan is a roaring lion who seeks to attack and wound pastors (**1 Peter 5:8**). Through the prayers of God's people, a pastor can experience protection, strength, and courage in and through the attacks of the enemy. Every church must keep watch and be alert for these attacks. When they come, the church must stand with the pastor and his family through intercession and support.

*Your pastor has a family.*

Pastors have the normal and usual experiences of family life like anyone else. Every pastor is keenly aware of **1 Timothy 3:4-5**, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" I take that passage seriously. If a pastor's home is out of order, the church may be also. These words of Scripture are the revealed will of God, yet, does it demand perfection? Does this then mean that a pastor will never struggle with problems in his own family? When Paul gave this command, he did not describe what it would look like. I seriously doubt if children in the first century were always well mannered and perfectly obedient. I doubt that first century children always made the right decisions and lived perfectly. The pastor is to strive to raise his children in a godly way. He is to have a godly marriage. Yet, there will be struggles. He will have difficulties in his family life. A pastor's family is often expected to be perfect; to live to a standard that no family could live up to. This is why prayer is essential. A pastor's family must be covered in prayer – both for the everyday struggles and the pressure that comes from being involved in ministry.

*"If some Christians that had been complaining about their minister had said and acted less before men and had applied themselves with all their might to cry to God for their minister – had, as it were, risen and stormed heaven with their humble, fervent, and incessant prayers for them – they would have been much more in the way of success" (Jonathan Edwards)*

### Scripture Prayers For Your Pastor

Father, I ask You to make \_\_\_\_\_ in a man after Your own heart who will do all Your will (**Acts 13:22; 1 Samuel 16:7**).

Father, cause \_\_\_\_\_ to love the Word of God with all his heart and enable Him to memorize and meditate on it all day (**Psalms 119:97**).

O Lord, I plead that You will guide \_\_\_\_\_ in all that He says and does (**Psalms 37:23**).

God, I ask that You would make \_\_\_\_\_ into a mighty man of prayer (**Mark 1:35**).

Father, I ask that You would continually control and empower \_\_\_\_\_ for his own Christian life and the task that You have given him (**Ephesians 5:18**).

Lord, I ask that the fruit of the Spirit would be powerfully and clearly displayed in \_\_\_\_\_'s life (**Galatians 5:22-23**).

Father, I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ will be humble, depending totally on You and remaining useable by You (**1 Peter 5:5-6**).

God, I plead that You would make \_\_\_\_\_ into a holy and godly man that You can use in a dynamic way (**1 Timothy 4:7, 6:11; Hebrews 12:14**).

Father, enable \_\_\_\_\_ to overcome temptation and give him a hatred of sin in any form (**1 Corinthians 10:13**).

Lord, teach \_\_\_\_\_ the truth of the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit so that \_\_\_\_\_ can explain, proclaim, and defend the Word of God (**1 Timothy 3:1-7, 15; 1 Peter 5:1-4**).

Father, I plead that You would give \_\_\_\_\_ a servant's heart and enable \_\_\_\_\_ to compassionately minister to this congregation and the lost in this community (**Philippians 2:5**).

I plead that \_\_\_\_\_ would be a Christ-centered and Christ-exalting preacher (**1 Corinthians 2:1-4**).

Father, I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ would remember that God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the angels are listening to His preaching (**2 Timothy 4:1**).

Lord, I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ would preach all of the Word of God (**Acts 20:20-21**).

I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ would preach in the power of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 4:8-12**).

God, I plead that \_\_\_\_\_ would preach the Word of God boldly and fearlessly (**2 Timothy 4:1-2**).

I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ would have the time and the discipline to study the Word of God (**1 Timothy 4:15**).

I pray that the Word of God would be central and absolute in \_\_\_\_\_'s preaching and ministry (**2 Timothy 3:15-16**).

Lord, I plead that \_\_\_\_\_'s preaching would be used by You to save the lost, mature the believers, and build up Your church (**Ephesians 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:5**).

I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ would be faithful to preach the truth in spite of opposition or indifference (**1 Timothy 6:12, 20-21; 2 Timothy 3:13-14, 4:2-4**).

Father, I plead that \_\_\_\_\_'s ministry would be fruitful and would glorify You (**John 15:16; Colossians 1:28**).

I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ would be devoted to praying and preaching (**Acts 6:4**).

Enable \_\_\_\_\_ to intercede for and instruct the congregation according to Your will (**1 Samuel 12:23; Romans 1:9-10**).

Enable \_\_\_\_\_ to equip the saints for service and discipleship (**Ephesians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 2:12**).

Father, I ask You to protect \_\_\_\_\_ from Satan and all his attacks. I also ask You to protect and strengthen \_\_\_\_\_ during the attacks of unregenerate church members (**2 Timothy 4:15-18; 2 Corinthians 11:26**).

Lord, I ask You to give \_\_\_\_\_ insight and direction into the solutions for the problems of the church (**1 Kings 3:7-9**).

God, give \_\_\_\_\_ wisdom and discernment in counseling those who come to \_\_\_\_\_ for help or advice (**Proverbs 2:6**).

I plead that \_\_\_\_\_ would have a strong, close, harmonious relationship with those in leadership in the church (**Psalms 133:1; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Amos 3:3**).

Father, I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ will be able to respond to criticism and opposition in a gracious and Christlike way combined with a determination to be faithful to God and His Word (**Matthew 5:10-12, 43-48, 10:28; Romans 12:14, 17-21**).

I ask that the congregation will be stirred by the Holy Spirit to pray for \_\_\_\_\_ (**1 Thessalonians 5:25**).

I pray that the congregation will have a growing love and hunger for the Word of God (**Psalms 119:97**).

I plead that the leadership of the church and the membership of the church will be committed to \_\_\_\_\_'s ministry (**Hebrews 13:17**).

Cause this congregation to respect and love \_\_\_\_\_ (**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13**).

Father, I ask You to silence any rumors, gossip, or slander that is being spread about \_\_\_\_\_ (**Proverbs 15:28, 20:19, and 21:28**).

I ask that \_\_\_\_\_'s family would be loving, unselfish, respectful, and understanding to each other (**Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:33; Ephesians 6:1-4**).

Father, I plead that You would strengthen and bless \_\_\_\_\_'s marriage and family life (**Proverbs 5:15-20**).

I pray that \_\_\_\_\_'s family would be a source of joy and blessing to one another (**Proverbs 23:24, 31:28-30**).

I pray that the \_\_\_\_\_'s family will experience constant peace and protection, especially from the attacks of Satan (**Psalm 91:1-8**).

## Praying For Your Pastor's Wife

When you pray for your pastor, you do not need to forget your pastor's wife. She needs your prayers just as your pastor does. The following are some suggested prayer requests that you can use to intercede for your pastor's wife. You can use these or develop your own requests from this material.

I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ will have a growing and intimate relationship with You (Psalm 42:1-2).

Father, I ask You to teach \_\_\_\_\_ how to pray. Enable her to find the time to spend with you daily (Colossians 4:2).

Father, I ask You to grant \_\_\_\_\_ a deeper, ever-growing knowledge of the Word of God (1 Peter 2:2).

Father, I plead that \_\_\_\_\_ will confess and repent of sin and experience Your cleansing daily in her life (1 John 1:9).

Father, I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ will be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

Father, I ask that \_\_\_\_\_ will be a powerful witness for the Lord Jesus Christ through her words and her life (Acts 1:8).

Father, I plead that \_\_\_\_\_ will know that it is her first priority to please You; help her live a life pleasing to You (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Father, create a servant's heart in \_\_\_\_\_'s life (Matthew 20:28).

Father, I pray that this congregation will have a deep, sacrificial love for \_\_\_\_\_. Grant

her the grace and power to love this body of believers (1 John 3:11; 4:7).

Father, enable \_\_\_\_\_ to use her spiritual gifts and to have spiritual impact in this congregation (1 Corinthians 12:7).

Father, I plead with You to grant \_\_\_\_\_ wisdom in her relationships. Make her as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove (Proverbs 2:9-11; Matthew 10:16).

Father, I ask You to protect \_\_\_\_\_ from loneliness. Grant her Your presence and strength day-by-day (Hebrews 13:5-6).

Father, I pray that You will raise up friends for \_\_\_\_\_, friends that she can lean on, depend, and trust (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

Father, give \_\_\_\_\_ the grace and courage to cope with the struggles and difficulties associated with being involved in the ministry (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Father, provide \_\_\_\_\_ with the grace and power that she needs in order to deal with difficult people (**Proverbs 18:19**).

Father, I ask you to strengthen their marriage and that You will produce a deep and powerful intimacy between the two of them (Proverbs 5:15-18).

I pray that my pastor will have a special sensitivity to \_\_\_\_\_'s needs and a willingness to meet those needs (1 Peter 3:7).

Father, I ask You in Jesus' name to create within my pastor a deep, passionate love for his wife \_\_\_\_\_ (Proverbs 5:20).

I ask that the pastor and his wife the wisdom and discernment that they need to raise their children (**Ephesians 6:4**).

I plead in Jesus' name that You will transform \_\_\_\_\_ into the wife and mother that You desire and can use (**Proverbs 31:10-31**).