

Lifting the Pressures of Ministry off Your Pastor's Shoulders

by Melanie Imel

I want to share with you some things that can help you be a tremendous blessing to your pastor and your church.

It's no secret that pastors and other spiritual leaders live with continual pressure. Pastors are under satanic attack and it seems to be increasing in these last days. Leaders have tougher paths to walk than those who follow behind. I have met pastors who have quit the ministry or secretly want to quit because of the constant battles. The harvest fields they work in are often booby-trapped with spiritual and emotional landmines hidden there by the enemy.

Having been involved in pastoral ministry for over 23 years, I believe I can share with you from the perspective of both a sheep and a pastor. Here are six keys to help lift this pressure from your pastor and see God pour out greater blessings in your local church.

* Only for ease of writing, I am referring to pastor in the male gender; I believe a woman can operate fully in the pastoral calling.*

1. One of the most important things you can do for your pastor is to PRAY! We are in a season of spiritual destiny and the enemy knows it. That is why it is so important to pray for our leaders. Scripture commands us to cover our spiritual leaders with protective prayers. "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth..." (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

We must be watchmen and cry night and day to heaven, calling out the name of our pastor and praying for him to have wisdom, that he would hear God's voice clearly, that he would be delivered from wicked and unreasonable people, and that he would preach the gospel with boldness. Our pastors are not the only ones who benefit from this type of strong prayer covering. Our leaders take us spiritually where we need to go. When leaders are properly under girded in prayer, the entire congregation steps into victory and spiritual promotion.

This principal is clearly seen in the story of Aaron and Hur. It shows them supporting Moses' hands as Israel fought against the Amalekites. It is an unmistakable truth that Israel was victorious precisely because they were supporting divinely appointed leadership (Exodus 17:10-12). As Moses' heavy hands were lifted, the entire nation moved forward in victory, but when they let his hands fall, their battle automatically turned against them. This principle is so significant that after that victory, God revealed Himself to all of Israel in a brand new way. He became Jehovah Nissi, The Lord Our Victory Banner and instructed Israel never to forget what had happened that day.

I am convinced that we will see more reconciliation, financial provision, miracles of healing, and personal breakthroughs than ever if we will learn the secret of supporting those whom God has connected us with.

2. Another way to bless your pastor is to get involved with the ongoing ministry of the church. Your pastor needs you, your church family needs you. Ephesians 4:16 From

whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This scripture tells us that every joint supplies and brings increase to the whole body. You have a supply to bring to your local church and when you step up and obey God, the church family, as a whole will profit or increase because of it. How sad that in most churches a handful of people do all the work and the rest come in and never bless their church family with their supply. If you are reading this right now and you are not involved in some ministry of helps in your church, please call your pastor and offer your help. Time is so short, We must be about the Father's business.

3. Receive your pastor as YOUR pastor. Over the years when my husband and I pastored, we had many people that attended our church, but a smaller number of them really received us as their pastor. When you receive your pastor as YOUR pastor, you will listen to what he has to say because you take it as personal for you. You are open to his instruction and yes, even his correction because you know he loves you and want you to grow as a believer. You are not just attending a church to hear Pastor Joe share a few minutes before you head to lunch. You actively pray to receive everything that God has for you in each service from your pastor. You want your pastor to pastor you. That means when you don't show up for church, you won't be offended if he or another leader calls to check on you. You want them to check on you! You want them to look out for you. This is the difference between just attending church and really spiritually receiving the pastor and church family and YOUR pastor and YOUR church

4. See your pastor by the Spirit. 11 Cor. 5:16 tells us that as believers, we are to no longer look at people by a mere outward or flesh assessment, relying on what we see or feel. We are to go deeper and see each other and our pastor, by the spirit. Some church members have never been correctly taught the scriptural placement of your pastor in your life. 1. More than clothes and hair: It's nice if you like your pastor's tie selection or her hair, but that is not the most important quality of your pastor. See them according to the Spirit of God and the spiritual example that they set for you. Follow after their spiritual traits not just their natural traits. Your pastors are human and if you just look at them in the natural you may be disappointed . 2. Don't Compare: It is so important that you see the gift of God in your pastor and not compare him with your former pastor, or your favorite television minister. Each pastor is unique and flows differently. This is especially important for staff and assisting ministers to understand; learn how your pastor flows and hook up with him/her.

3. Not your buddy: Also, your pastor is called to touch your spirit, not your emotions. Do not expect your pastor to be your buddy. Your pastor is not called to be your buddy but your pastor. Yes, you may have some level of fellowship, but I have seen church members expect their pastor to fill the void of a need for a close friend, when the role of a pastor is your spiritual shepherd. Also be sensitive to your pastors need for privacy and family time. I remember telling my church congregation to please call before just showing up at the door. They didn't listen, so next time I answered the door in my gown! Your pastor wants you to call them when you have a need, but be sensitive how much you call them and when. One night, we had a member of our

church call us at 12:15 a.m. and wake us up to ask us if he should tithe off the gross or net of his income! Couldn't that wait until morning? I know that this sounds like common sense and courtesy, but it is surprising how many people don't follow courtesy in their relationship with their pastor. Your pastor loves you, but be sensitive that they have more members to talk with and pray with, not just you.

5. Financially support your pastor. Your pastor gives you spiritual treasure each and every week from the word of God he/she preaches. It is our responsibility to financially give back to our pastor so he does not have to work a secular job that takes them away from prayer and study of the Word. We should of course give our tithe and offering to support the work of the Lord. But I also think we should be led by the Lord on financially blessing our pastors. Also consider ways to personally bless you pastor and I might add his family, (especially the kids.) Take them out to dinner or give them a gift card so they can have a date night. Be led by the spirit on this and you can really have a wonderful time doing it.

6. Be a refreshing to your pastor not add to their burden Anybody use fabric refresher? What a great product; just a squirt of the button and this wonderful, lasting fragrance comes out and refreshes your whole house. Spiritually, we are to refresh the house of God, opening up our mouth and releasing words of encouragement, showing love, grace and mercy. I have met people who are just a refreshing to everyone they meet. If your spiritual cup is low, they fill you up! They are such a blessing to be around. Then there are other people who seem to have a way of putting a hole in your spiritual cup and everything just seems to drain out. Maybe that's a good name for them, spiritual drainers! I don't want to be a drainer, but a refresher. Paul had people in his life who refreshed him. 1 Corinthians 16:17-18 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied. 18For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Determine right now that you are going to be a refreshing to your pastor not a drainer.