

Love Your Pastor: 7 Helpful Tips

Here are some tips on how to love your Pastor. Most disciples of Christ know that they should love their Pastor, but often no one actually pointed them in the right direction. I hope that the following is helpful:

1. Respect the high office that he occupies. Every human being has some faults (see Rom. 3:10), including the Pastor. However, the faulty Pastor sits in a seat that demands respect. Just like George Bush was still our President, in spite of our differences with him, so it is with the Pastor (see I Thess. 5:13). Don't compare him to previous or other Pastors. God has not sent you a copy of anyone else. He has sent you an original. Call him "Pastor," or whatever he prefers, and respect him as such.

2. Demonstrate love towards his family and him. Not only does the Pastor have faults, but his family has faults as well. However, you should demonstrate love towards the Pastor's family. It is hard to feed and lead people who mistreat or ignore your family (see I Thess. 5:13; Eph. 5:31). Invite the Pastor over or out to eat. Take his wife around to the various places of interests. Introduce yourself by name, until they learn your names. Come shake his hand, smile, and let him know that you are praying for him and his family. Ladies respect his wife. Respect her unique ways, instead of trying to get her to fit some stereotype. Don't spend unnecessary time with her husband. Don't entertain any negative talk about the Pastor or his family. If you cannot shut the gossipers up then you should at least leave.

3. Grow in faith. Learn what the Pastor is preaching and teaching. Use the language that God is giving him for the church. Every Pastor does not use terms like administrative agenda, status reports, resource reports, superintendents, project proposals, etc. Every Pastor does not pound away at what I call the Membership Orientation material. Strive to say the same thing and be of one mind (see I Cor. 1:10). Over and beyond language, trust that God will bless those who walk by faith in God.

4. Follow leadership. Respectfully share your opinions at the appropriate time, but obey your Pastor, as long as he is not leading you contrary to God's will (see Pro. 11:14; Acts 5:29, 38-39). This is more than important for those who have leadership responsibilities in this church. If you cannot follow the Pastor's leadership, sometimes it is better to resign from office and even find a better church than to stay and cause trouble for the Pastor that God sent. You put yourself in all kinds of danger with God, when you cause grief for the God sent Pastor (see Num. 12; 16; Heb. 13:17).

5. Defend his reputation. Don't let people talk your Pastor down and disrespect him (see Jos. 1:16-18). If someone acts a fool in a church meeting, you should try to counter the foolishness

with support. Not only should you offer words of encouragement to the Pastor, but often those who act foolish need to hear how wrong they are from supportive members (i.e., sometimes in or after the meeting; silent friends can be worst than vocal enemies). As you interact with other members and those outside of the church, try to make people stop talking your Pastor down or leave the conversation. Don't be a "murmuree."

6. Don't waste his time and energy. Feeding and leading the church with all things going well is a full time job. However, when additional duties come into play, it becomes even more draining. A funeral or two each month, three or four weddings a year, a revival here and there, community work, denominational work, a few counseling sessions a month, not to mention critical hospital visits can be overwhelming. And then the Pastor has family responsibilities – nuclear and extended. And then the Pastor is getting older, which has its challenges. The last thing the Pastor needs is unreasonable expectations regarding his hospital visitation, home visitation, funeral visitation, supporting the choirs, unnecessary extra services, and unnecessary meetings and counseling sessions. Learn to accept the leadership of his team for small things, so he can give big issues his best (see Ex. 18:25-26; Acts 6:1-6).

7. Support his compensation and acts of kindness. Trust God enough to stand on passages like I Timothy 5:17-18; Numbers 18:21; Matthew 10:40-42. These passages support the idea of generously compensating your Pastor, in proportion to the church's revenue. Furthermore, since love gives (see Jn. 3:16) and location of treasure indicates location of heart (see Mt. 6:21), financial gifts on special days (e.g., anniversaries, birthdays, and Christmas) have their place. Don't wait until he dies or leaves to tell him how much you think of him (see Lk. 23:46-47). Tell him and even write it down, when things are well. It would be better to not have a special day, if you are not going to support it.

I pray that these few tips help members in their efforts to love their Pastors. I pray that Pastors would be inspired to serve the Lord, by not only the love that is show to them, but by the blessed hope of a crown that fadeth not away (see I Pet. 5:1-4). Woe unto anyone who causes harm or grief for the Pastor that God has sent. And woe unto any Pastor who abuses the love of those whom God has placed in his trust.

Discussion:

1. What tips would you add to this list, subtract from this list, or modify on this list? Why?
2. How well are you doing in showing love to your Pastor? What are you committed to doing to improve in this area?