

Take Time to Pray for Your Pastors!

British pastor Charles Spurgeon, who lived from 1834 to 1892, was known as the “Prince of Preachers,” but he was candid about his struggle with depression. That’s one reason his written sermons are so popular today. He didn’t pretend to be perfect, and his admission of human weakness made his words all the more powerful.

Like Spurgeon, all pastors struggle with emotional and spiritual brokenness. The typical pastor in the United States today faces overwhelming challenges. They struggle to pay the church’s bills, they deal with complaints and dissension in the congregation, they feel inadequate when comparing their churches to bigger ones, they often feel drained after caring for others, and they face invisible attacks from spiritual forces.

Spurgeon wrote about a pastor’s thankless job:

All mental work tends to weary and to depress ... but ours is more than mental work—it is heart work, the labor of our inmost soul. How often, on Lord’s-day evenings, do we feel as if life were completely washed out of us! After pouring out our souls over our congregations, we feel like empty earthen pitchers which a child might break.

Most of my best friends are pastors, and I have seen them at their lowest point when they are washed out and ready to flee to Tarshish like the prophet Jonah. Your pastors, if they are human, need the prayers of the saints to sustain them. Since October is Pastor Appreciation Month, I’m sharing a list of things I pray for the pastors in my life. But please don’t just pray for them in October—pastors need to be undergirded

constantly!

Breaking News. Spirit-Filled Stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

– **Pray they will be surrounded by wise counsel.** Pastors make hundreds of decisions, and even the best leaders can forget to consult the Lord about a situation. Proverbs 15:22 (NASB) says: “Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.” Pray that your pastors will invite the wisest advisers into their lives and that God will guard them from making foolish choices.

– **Pray they will have friends to encourage them.** So many pastors tell me they feel lonely. Often this is because a trusted member of the congregation suddenly left the church, or another pastor hurt them. Many leaders have felt betrayed so often that they close their hearts to friendship and live in a cave like Elijah—feeling depressed and isolated. That is not healthy! Pray that God will send Aarons and Hurs to hold up your pastor’s arms during the battle.

– **Pray they will be shielded from spiritual attacks.** The devil’s attacks can be relentless—and hell’s flaming arrows are often aimed at those who are on the front lines. This is why the great apostle Paul wrote: “Brethren, pray for us!” (1 Thess. 5:25, NASB 1995). Paul coveted the prayers of the people because he faced invisible opposition on a daily basis.

– **Pray for supernatural boldness.** In today’s hostile culture, many leaders feel intimidated—and fear can tempt them to compromise the truth of God’s Word. Timothy must have felt the crushing weight of intimidation in Ephesus, where he was surrounded by idols and witchcraft. But Paul told Timothy: “God has not given us a spirit of timidity” (2 Tim. 1:7a). Pray that your pastor will never compromise God’s Word to please people.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with

current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

– **Pray they won't compare themselves with others.** The average church in America today has fewer than 70 people in attendance on Sundays. But when we look at social media or the bestseller lists, we get the impression that megachurches and celebrity pastors are the norm. Pastors of smaller congregations can easily feel like failures. Pray that your pastor never falls into the comparison trap. God doesn't measure success by crowd size; He rewards faithfulness and obedience.

–**Pray for unity in the church, and for conflicts to be resolved.** There's nothing more discouraging to a pastor than constantly playing referee as church members backbite and gossip. It's even worse when toxic people in the congregation stir up dissention or try to stage a coup. We will never see an end to church drama until Jesus returns. But you can pray that the Holy Spirit will calm the conflicts and strengthen the bonds of love in the church.

– **Pray for sufficient rest.** Burnout is one of the most common reasons pastors quit. A pastor's job isn't 9 to 5. Ministers are never allowed to clock out. Many leaders are frazzled, and some even develop sleep deprivation or other stress-related health problems. Charles Spurgeon told pastors in the 19th century: "It is wisdom to take occasional furlough. In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less. ... We must every now and then cry halt and serve the Lord by holy inaction and consecrated leisure."

– **Pray they will maintain real intimacy with God.** This is the best thing you can pray for any pastor. The door to the Lord's inner chamber is always open, but a busy pastor must learn to leave the needs of the people and hide in the secret place to find fresh strength. We can't minister in the Holy Spirit unless we are constantly filled with His power; if pastors never spend time in the holy place, where there is always

fresh bread, the bread we give others will be dry and stale.

Please pray for the pastors in your life. Don't assume they aren't struggling, even though they seem strong and full of faith. Your prayers will result in protection, blessings and increased impact.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

J. Lee Grady is an author, award-winning journalist and ordained minister. He served as a news writer and magazine editor for many years before launching into full-time ministry.

Lee is the author of six books, including "10 Lies the Church Tells Women," "10 Lies Men Believe" and "Fearless Daughters of the Bible." His years at Charisma magazine also gave him a unique perspective of the Spirit-filled church and led him to write "The Holy Spirit Is Not for Sale" and "Set My Heart on Fire," which is a Bible study on the work of the Holy Spirit.