

How to Encourage Your Pastor This Summer

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Attendance, and unfortunately enthusiasm, is significantly lacking in most local churches during the summer months. Vacations, reunions, camps, and



other activities take people out of town, leaving even the main worship service of the week with gaps in the pews wider than a dump truck. A pastor typically prepares for this, yet he still might become significantly discouraged.

Have you considered the possibility that you could be a great encouragement to your pastor this summer? Consider these four ways to bring him joy:

- **Engage the preaching better than you ever have before.**

In the first church where I was the main preacher, I can remember several Sundays during the summer months when at least half of the regular congregation was gone. The atmosphere was far from “electric.” Nevertheless, I had a responsibility to “preach the word . . . in season and out of season.” I was bound to “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Timothy 4:2).

During those summer months, the Lord used certain individuals, and their hunger for Scripture, to keep me positive. In my mind’s eye, I can still see a lady named Mary Jane captivated by the teaching of the Bible. I can still hear a gentleman named Jeff, after the service, asking insightful questions about the biblical text. Their love for the Bible was a great strength.

For your pastor’s joy, you could make an extra effort to eagerly listen to, discuss, and then live out what is preached this summer.

- **Increase your giving through the summer months.**

Summertime is often a fiscally lean stretch for a local church. In a “perfect” church, the members would compensate for their absences (for example, giving twice as much if they missed the previous Sunday), but this is rarely the case. The financial crunch that ensues can become a major stress in the life of a pastor, especially if the church has a building that requires regular upkeep, or a monthly rent payment. Plans and dreams for the church might have to be delayed because of the shortfall.

How might you be an encouragement in this area? Imagine this scenario: Ten families in your church each determine to give an extra

ten dollars a week for the summer months (approximately 12 weeks). By the end of the summer, each family will have given \$120 more than normal. When you multiply that by ten families, you get \$1200. Though that may not seem like much money to a large church, most of us are part of smaller churches where even \$100 is appreciated. Imagine the joy the Lord might bring to your pastor and church if many of you are cheerful givers this summer! (cf. 2 Corinthians 9:7)

- **Attend the typically smaller Bible study and/or prayer meeting.** Unfortunately in most churches, the meetings other than the main service are significantly less attended throughout the year, and this problem is magnified in the summertime. You might be tempted to skip some of these meetings this summer because, you say to yourself, “How enjoyable will it be if only a few people come?”

But think about this: Those meetings will potentially be even *less* pleasurable if you are not there. Determine to go, participate, and speak words that are “good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear,” including your pastor (Ephesians 4:29).

- **Pray for your pastor, and tell him about your prayers.** Pray in light of certain truths in Scripture, such as Psalm 147:5, “Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.” Pray also with God’s promises in mind, like Romans 8:31-32, “What then shall we say? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” Regularly share with your pastor about what you have been praying, even sharing key verses with him.

Similarly, call upon the Lord regarding the unique challenges that summer brings. For example, pray that when your pastor preaches to a half-full congregation, he would still “preach the word” in view of the coming judgment (2 Timothy 4:1-2). And then a Monday morning e-mail to your pastor about how the Lord answered your prayers for his preaching would be treasured immensely.

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

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