

How to Pray for Your Pastors **Romans 15:30-33**

If anything is clear in the Bible, it is the direct connection between effective spiritual leadership and prayer. We all understand how important prayer is to leadership, and Paul understood that. In Romans, he was writing in anticipation of a visit to Rome. He was collecting money to deliver to the Christians in Jerusalem who had authorized his ministry, and were in great need. He planned on delivering the offering, then planned to go to Rome, and ultimately to Spain, but he knew that apart from the prayers of God's people for him, his task would fall short and his efforts would lack the supernatural power of God. You see, somehow, in the providence of God, he has called us to join him in his work in a way that will produce results that we cannot explain. It is the greatest invitation in the universe. And so Paul writes to the Romans and says, *"I desperately need your prayers, because I can't do this without your prayers."* Paul said earlier in this book, *"I am constantly praying for you."* He also said that to the Philippians, the Colossians, and the Thessalonians. He said it to Timothy and Philemon... Paul labored in prayer on behalf of the churches. He knew the importance and power of prayer. But he also pleaded with the churches to pray for him. Eph 6 "and please pray for me." He said to the Colossians *"devote yourselves to prayer and pray for me."* He said in 1 Thess and 2 Thess "pray for us." In 2 Cor 1 Paul is speaking of his battle in Asia, "I thought I was going to die, the pressures were so great and the struggles so severe, but the Lord strengthened me, *"but you have helped me in your prayers, that there might be great thanksgiving offered to God."* One of the great benefits of our prayers is that we get in on what God is doing, and the gratitude level of the church rises higher than it's ever been before.

Praying for Your Pastors:

1. Pray for my PROTECTION.

What kind of protection do I need? Not physical protection, but Spiritual protection. I need protection from the temptations of the Devil. I believe that the more we do as a church toward *"Connecting our Community to Christ"* the more Satan will want to mess us up—and one of his major strategies will be to try to attack me as your Pastor.

1 Peter 5:8 warns us to, *"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour."* 1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

Anyone doing God's work becomes a target for Satan. I believe that anyone, given the right set of circumstances, can commit any sin. If I fail, the whole church will be impacted. I don't want to fall, and ruin my *marriage* and my *children* and my *church*, and so I need you to pray for me.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 6, *"A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."* Ephesians 6:10-12 (NLT)

2. Pray for my PEOPLE. (My wife and children)

One of the key ways Satan goes after spiritual leaders is to go after their families. If he can sow discord in a pastor's marriage, or bring strife into his family, he knows that the pastor will be either disqualified from his role of spiritual leadership, or at least so distracted that he's ineffective.

Paul writes to Timothy about the expectations and qualifications of pastors and says,
"Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife." 1 Tim 3:1-2 (NIV)

"He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?" 1 Tim 3:4-5 (NLT)

3. Pray for my PREACHING.

God has ordained the preaching of the Word, commanded it for his body, the church. According to Acts 6, the priority task of pastors is to give themselves to prayer and preaching the Word.

"Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God." Colossians 1:25 (NASB)

"God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe." 1 Corinthians 1:21 (NIV)

"Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should." Ephesians 6:19-20 (NIV)

"Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you." 2 Thessalonians 3:1 (NIV)

4. Pray for my PERCEPTION.

1 Kings 12:3-8 *Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked. They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants." But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.* Foolish decision!

Pray for my wisdom in leading Bethany Baptist Church (the Elders and Staff).

Pray for the key decisions that need to be made (in Ministries, in Finances, etc...).

If I make wrong choices in leadership the consequences can be significant.

"For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may

please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."
Colossians 1:9-10 (NIV)

5. Pray for my PASSION.

Depression, discouragement and emotional exhaustion are very serious problems. Pray for my energy levels. Physical and emotional energy are two different things. If I were to go out and shovel a dump truck load of gravel that would be an exertion of physical energy. But unfortunately it doesn't work that way with preaching. When I preach a sermon, there's a significant emotional energy loss. All of that is energy loss and when I get to the end of Sunday, there is an emotional energy loss. It's a form of a depression. Monday is my emotional hangover day. I don't want to talk to anyone on Mondays. I don't actually like people on Mondays. (Monday fills my gas tank)!

Listen to Paul's words in Colossians 1: *"So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ. That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me."* Colossians 1:28-29 (NLT)

6. Pray for PERSEVERANCE

Most things of importance take time and God blesses faithfulness. The problem with us is that we rarely do anything long enough to experience the blessings of God. We're so impatient that we're not willing to wait on God, so we rush ahead and fail.

Look at Hebrews 12:1, *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us."*
Hebrews 12:1 (NLT)

"Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there." Romans 15:31 (NIV)

7. Pray for my PRIORITIES.

"So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."
Acts 6:2-4 (NIV)