



Showing Our Pastors and Church Workers Love and Respect Devotion

We ask you brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13a).

“There goes Pastor, skating in at the last minute again,” joked a member of the evangelism committee. I wasn’t there, but I can just imagine my husband’s neck get red as he tried to remain calm and respond to the ill-timed, less-than-appropriate attempt at humor in a loving, pastoral manner. Little did the parishioner know that my husband had just stayed up until 3:00 in the morning the night before, was juggling work between two church campuses, had just come from two previous meetings (both of which had gone long), was trying to handle all the congregational responsibilities while the other pastor was gone for a week, and had just received a disappointing email from our son’s teacher just a few minutes before the meeting.

Oftentimes, I get the impression that most people don’t really realize how a pastor (or other church workers) put their heart and soul into their work. A common joke is that pastors “only work two hours on Sunday,” because that’s when they are in front of the congregation, but let me assure you that pastors and church workers take sharing the Gospel very seriously. Saving souls is no laughing matter. Pastors see themselves as shepherds of their congregation, and they truly do not want any sheep to be lost and fall away from Jesus, the Good Shepherd. And like any service occupation, church workers have an emotional investment in those to whom they minister because they truly care. Such Christ-centered empathy is powerful, yet also can be exhausting.

More often than not, our family has been blessed by parishioners who make us smile, and some with whom we can truly let our hair down, relax, and laugh. We are grateful for those who bring over meals when they know it’s a busy week, or those who have shared a gift card to express appreciation, or those who just make our day as they recognize something we’ve done or when they say, “You know, you’re really good at what you do.” These caring individuals seem to realize what the apostle Paul meant when he said, *We ask you brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13a).*

Because we live in a broken, sinful world (and we all are, indeed, sinners) we may say inconsiderate things to one another and often don’t realize how these words may hurt. We all are tempted to look at situations through our own perspective and not consider others’. Our culture feeds the selfish attitude that finds it more and more difficult to hear when we do something wrong or make a bad choice.

Thankfully for us, Jesus humbled Himself and came to earth to be one of us. Jesus understands our feelings. As our sinless substitute, Jesus took all our sins, shame, and selfishness upon Himself. Through His sacrifice on the cross, we are forgiven and set free from those sinful tendencies that cloud our perspectives.

That is why pastors and church workers continue to do what they do, day in and day out. They will continue to work diligently, knowing that their labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58), because they want all people to know Jesus, to be saved through faith in Him alone, and to experience the eternal joy, laughter, and happiness we will one day all share together in heaven. That is what truly gets my husband's heart racing and makes him passionate. Knowing others are growing in the knowledge and love of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ puts a smile on his face any time of the day.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank You for humbling Yourself to become true man and understand our human frailties. Thank You, most of all, for humbling Yourself to die on the cross to forgive our inconsiderate and disrespectful attitudes. Restore to us all the joy of Your salvation! Amen.

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