

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY

**"...give recognition to those who labor among you and lead you in the Lord."
I Thessalonians 5:12-13**

Each October, many churches designate a day to show appreciation to their pastor and church ministerial staff member. Need fresh ideas?

One Fishing Lure

Determine one small item your pastor enjoys, such as M&Ms, fishing lures, popcorn, coffee, or golf balls. Ask each church member, including youth and children, to bring one of that item on Pastor Appreciation Sunday. For example, each family member will bring one bag, any size, of peanut M&Ms. Bring extras for guests and forgetful members. As your church thanks God for your pastor on Sunday, each member can walk to the front and place their token of love in a large basket.

The Church Building & the Church

Present your pastor with a beautifully framed photo or painting of the church building. Use an extra wide matting and ask all church members to sign the mat before adding glass.

E-Pounding

Distribute your minister's e-mail address to all church or class members, asking each one to send an e-mail note, describing something specific that they appreciate about their pastor. E-mails should be sent one specific day or week, creating an e-pounding of blessings!

Text-Pounding

Use the same basic idea, but ask each member to send a text-message to the pastor or staff member.

Puzzle Gift

Order a jigsaw puzzle with a photo of your church family or church building. Internet puzzle companies make 100 or 1000 piece puzzles from a photo.

Love Our Pastor

Take out a full-page ad in your local newspaper, featuring a photo of your pastor with each church member's signature around it. Include a declaration of your church's love and appreciation for your pastor.

Lotsa Notes

Give each church member a stamped envelope that is pre-addressed to your minister's home. Ask them to send a very specific, personal note of appreciation this week.

Make It a Month

As a church, deacon body, ladies group, choir or youth group, make October a true *month* of appreciation for your pastor. Ask individual volunteers from the group to write their name on one day of an October calendar. On the assigned day, that person expresses appreciation to the pastor in a unique way. Each day will be different. The pastor might receive a letter or gift. It could be a meal, a shoeshine or a "thank you" balloon bouquet. After a whole month of pleasant surprises, won't your pastor feel appreciated? And won't God be honored by your acts of love for His servant?

While You Were Out

Hanover Baptist in Indiana surprised their pastor with a gorgeous new home office. With his wife's input, of course, they worked with a decorator and volunteers to turn a spare room into a home office while the pastor was out of town. They did paint, wallpaper, window coverings, shelves, desk, chair, computer, and decorator items.

Gift of Prayer

Give your pastor the gift of prayer. Create a chart, and allow members to choose a specific time that they will commit to pray weekly for the pastor this next year. They do not need to come to a specific place—just pray on their way to work or pray each Tuesday at 2 PM. The project could be done by a deacon group, choir, class or the entire church. Present the prayer promise chart to the pastor as a gift. Then remember to pray!

A Class Idea

All the Sunday School classes of the church could pool their resources to purchase a full set of Bible commentaries. Every individual class could sign inside one of the books, then present it as a gift from their class.

Gift from Deacons

Each deacon purchases a gift certificate to a restaurant, carwash, coffee shop, or book store. He writes a personal note on the back, then all coupons are placed inside a card for the pastor.

Gift from Kids

Wouldn't it be fun for every child at church to create a signed bookmark for their pastor or children's pastor, using cardstock paper, crayons or markers? Laminate the bookmarks, and then call all the children forward at the end of worship to put their bookmarks in a basket for the pastor.

Gift from Youth

Create huge poster board hearts and a giant love note for everyone to read. Place them on stakes in your pastor's front yard during pastor appreciation day. You could add balloons, but not toilet paper.

More Ideas for a Gift from the Church

Restaurant certificates, magazine subscription, tires, Bible software, a trip, a book, theatre or sports tickets, flowers for his wife, babysitting coupons, a new car, a grandfather clock, a suit for pastor and a dress for his wife, a new car, a new desk, home landscaping.

Ideas for Individual Members to Honor the Pastor

Your church demonstrates appreciation, but how can you, as an *individual church member*, honor and encourage your ministers? A few fresh ideas:

Say It

Write your minister an encouraging note the first day of every month this year. Tell him how last Sunday's sermon impacted your week. Take him to lunch and tell him how much you appreciate him as your pastor.

Stay Awake In Church

Sit near the front during worship every Sunday during Pastor Appreciation Month. Actively listen during the sermon. Make eye contact. Nod your head. Take notes. Say "amen" at an appropriate time.

May I Borrow Your Car?

As a special surprise during Minister Appreciation Week, borrow your pastor's car and have it detailed, oiled and lubed, washed and gassed.

Brag about Him

Brag about your pastor every chance you get - and not just at church. Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper during Minister Appreciation Month to compliment your minister. Introduce him to your friends and work associates.

"Pastor"

Show respect by calling him "pastor."

Personalized T

During Minister Appreciation Week, present him a "Best Pastor in Madison" t-shirt, substituting your town's name.

Me First

Be the first church member to volunteer for something. Accompany your pastor on ministry visits. Show up early for church and help. Stay late and help. Faithfully and joyfully use your spiritual gifts within the church body.

Take Care

During Minister Appreciation Week, anonymously mow and edge your pastor's lawn. Provide a generous book allowance for him in your church budget. Be sure that he's paid an appropriate salary. If he has houseguests coming again, deliver a great casserole. Exempt clergy from bringing dishes to pitch-in dinners.

Love His Family

Do something special for your pastor's wife. Help pay for his teens to attend the church's youth retreat. Babysit his kids for free during a wedding or funeral. Include his family in your holiday celebration. Help his children apply for college scholarships. Deliver a Thanksgiving turkey to his house.

Quit Complaining.

Quit complaining. Quit complaining. Quit complaining. Quit complaining.

©Excerpt from *Fresh Ideas—1000 Ways to Grow a Thriving and Energetic Church* by Diana Davis (B&H Publishing, 2007)

Fresh Ideas

Gold Apples

by Diana Davis

"A word spoken at the right time is like golden apples on a silver tray." Proverbs 25:11 HCSB

I love hearing how churches honor their pastors and pastoral families for Clergy Appreciation Month each October. But how can you, as an *individual church member*, honor and encourage your ministers? Here are 25 simple ideas. Pick one!

- Write your minister an encouraging note the first day of every month this year.
- Present him a "Best Pastor in Madison" t-shirt, substituting your town's name.
- Actively listen during the sermon. Nod your head. Take notes. Say "amen."
- Write a letter to the editor of the local paper to compliment your minister.
- Brag about your pastor every chance you get - and not just at church.
- Faithfully and joyfully use your spiritual gifts within the church body.
- Provide a generous book allowance for him in your church budget.
- If he has houseguests coming again, deliver a great casserole.
- Borrow his car for an hour, gas it and wash it squeaky clean.
- Sit near the front of the sanctuary each Sunday this month.
- Tell him how last Sunday's sermon impacted your week.
- Be the first church member to volunteer for something.
- Exempt clergy from bringing dishes to pitch-in dinners.
- Show up early for church and help. Stay late and help.
- Pay for his teens to attend the church's youth retreat.
- Baby-sit his kids for free during a wedding or funeral.
- Introduce him to your friends and work associates.
- Help his children apply for college scholarships.
- Treat him for lunch. Listen more than you talk.
- Ascertain that he's paid an appropriate salary.
- Include his family in a holiday celebration.
- Anonymously mow and edge his lawn.
- Show respect by calling him "Pastor."
- Accompany him on ministry visits.
- Quit complaining.

Want to make Clergy Appreciation Month last for a month? Ask volunteers in your church, choir or class to choose one day on the October calendar to show appreciation. Each person plans a unique way to express appreciation on their assigned day -- a note, a gift, a shoeshine, a "thank-you" balloon bouquet, a meal, etc. After a whole month of pleasant surprises, won't your pastor feel appreciated?

And won't God be honored by your acts of love for His servant?

Fresh Ideas© are shared by Diana Davis, wife of Indiana Baptists' State Executive Director. Email her at jesuslivesindiana@gmail.com

Fresh Ideas

Worthy of Double Honor

by Diana Davis

No one in ministry serves because of earthly rewards, but because they are called of God. October is designated as Pastor Appreciation month, and even a small acknowledgement can mean the world to your beloved Pastor! Below are a few ideas to get you started. Select one, or make up one even more personal for you Pastor.

- Distribute stamped envelopes to each church member, pre-addressed to your Pastor's home. Ask them to send a very specific, personal note of appreciation this week.
- Present your Pastor with a beautifully framed photo or painting of the church building. Use extra wide mat and ask all church members to sign the mat before adding glass.
- Consider one small thing you Pastor enjoys--M&Ms, fishing lures, popcorn, coffee, etc. Ask each member, including youth and children, to bring the item on Sunday, i.e. one bag, any size, of M&Ms. As you thank God for you Pastor on Sunday, each member can come to the front and place their token of love in a large basket. Bring extras for guests and those who forget.
- Take out a full-page ad in your local newspaper, featuring a photo of your pastor with each church's member's signature around it. Include a declaration of your church's love and appreciation for your pastor.
- Sunday School classes idea: Purchase a full set of Bible commentaries, presenting one or more books of the set from each Sunday School class, with class members' signatures on the front page.
- Deacon idea: Each deacon purchases a gift certificate to a restaurant, carwash, coffee shop, etc. and writes a personal note on it. Present a card with all the coupons.
- Children idea: All children create a signed bookmark for their pastor, using cardstock paper, crayons or markers.
- Youth idea: Create huge poster board hearts and a giant love note for everyone to read. Place them on stakes in your pastor's yard. You could add balloons, but not toilet paper.
- Do a "While You Were Out" office makeover (with the Pastor's wife's input, of course.) Hanover Baptist Church in Hanover Indiana surprised Pastor J.D. Traylor with a fabulous new home office, converted from an unused bedroom. While he was out of town for a few days, new paint, wallpaper, draperies, shelves, desk, chair, computer and decorator items were added.
- A trip. A book. A suit for Pastor, a dress for his wife. Theatre or sports tickets. Flowers delivered to his wife. Babysitting coupons. A new car (Had to throw that one in!) Restaurant certificates. Magazine subscription. Tires. Computer software. You could even "borrow" his car, have it detailed, oiled and lubed, and fill it with gas.

But most of all include a sincere note with specific reasons you appreciate his spiritual leadership, dedication, time and commitment. God's Word says, "Let the elders who rule well be consider worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." I Timothy 5: 17.

Excerpt from Diana's book, *Fresh Ideas—1000 Way to Grow a Thriving & Energetic Church* (B&H 07).

Flood your pastor's mailbox with cards. Choose a week and get the word out quietly...this pastor appreciation idea works best if it's a surprise. You could choose a week that you know will be especially difficult for your pastor. Or, flood his mailbox while he is away on vacation or at a conference so that he is welcomed home by an avalanche of greetings.

Plan a special appreciation service on the second weekend of October.

October is the official pastor appreciation month. And most churches try to focus their celebrations on the second Sunday of the month.

Work with your worship leader to brainstorm pastor appreciation ideas in order to create a memorable service. Sing pastor appreciation songs, read appropriate Scripture passages, select a few individuals to share a tribute to the pastor.

These pastor appreciation ideas for services may also be helpful.

Toward the conclusion of the service, allow your pastor some time to respond.

Plan a beach party or bonfire. Use these pastor appreciation ideas only if this is something your pastor enjoys... if he hates bugs and picnics...you might want to come up with other pastor appreciation ideas!

Have a plaque made with an inscription such as,

In Deepest Appreciation of
[Pastor's Name] and [His or Her] Family
for Sacrificial Service to the Body of Jesus Christ at
[Church Name]
October [Year]

You may also want to see these other [pastor appreciation ideas for gifts.](#)

Plan a special banquet. Invite a guest speaker and prepare a program that fits the personality of your pastor. A "This Is Your Life" DVD or celebrity-style roast are two of many pastor appreciation ideas you could include.

I would also suggest a caution, at this point. It may be tempting to have one banquet for the Senior Pastor and a separate celebration for the Worship Pastor or the Youth Pastor. While I would encourage the Worship Team and/or the Youth Group to use separate events separate pastor appreciation ideas for their pastoral leaders, there should be one main event where all the pastors are recognized together.

This will help the congregation see that no matter the particular emphasis of a pastor, each of the pastors is a minister to the entire congregation. It also helps the associate pastor(s) feel part of the whole church rather than just their particular department.

Give a big gesture. Large gifts are not necessary...simple things often have the same affect as high-priced items. But when considering pastor appreciation ideas, we have to include the extravagant.

Send the family to Disneyworld or the couple on a cruise.

One year my wife received airfare to visit a friend she hadn't seen in years.

Membership at the local golf or health club might also be appropriate.

What has your pastor dreamed of doing that he never really considered possible? Would he like to tour the holy land, Israel? Or would he rather read a book on a beach in Aruba?

Perhaps he's always wanted to return to graduate school and earn his Doctorate...can you afford a scholarship?

You may want to also see these other pastor appreciation ideas for gifts.

If you have a Youth Pastor, have everyone involved with the Youth Group wear matching T-shirts to a service. The shirts could have a big picture of the Youth Pastor, or they could have a funny saying on them...

Send a pastor appreciation letter to the people in your church explaining what Clergy Appreciation Month is all about. Include an offering envelope for a special appreciation offering.

You might want to include a reference to this site in your letter: www.my-pastor.com so that they can develop and implement more pastor appreciation ideas.

Pastors feel appreciated when their families are cared for. Take the pastor's kids to a water park. Or pick them up and go out for bowling and pizza. Take the kids shopping for school supplies before the start of school in the Fall. Upgrade the family computer or pay for high speed internet access.

Adopt a child. Have seniors "adopt" each of the pastor's kids. The adopted parents or grandparents would commit to pray daily for their adoptee, send them birthday cards and Christmas presents.

A senior in my church intentionally seeks one of my daughters out each Sunday. This grandpa gives my daughter a hug and asks her how her week went. She feels special without being self-conscious.

Make repairs to or paint the pastor's house. Some pastors are skilled at home projects. Some are skilled and enjoy home projects. Some just enjoy home projects. Then there are pastors like me...I'm neither skilled at nor do I enjoy home projects.

Depending on which category your pastor falls into he might be very grateful for help around his house or yard.

Give your pastor and his family an extra weekend off to visit friends or family. This is one of those very special pastor appreciation ideas.

If you think about it, pastors generally don't have the flexibility to travel for a weekend get-away to see family and friends. Most families take short weekend trips several times a year, especially over holidays.

However, because pastors generally work six days a week and, of course, work weekends, short trips are not possible. When they do have a day or two off, it is usually during the week...when their friends and family members are working.

Because of this, Pastors normally have to take vacation time to visit people out of town. So when it comes to spending time on vacation, a pastor's family has to choose between seeing people they haven't visited for a year, or going on a "real" family vacation.

By giving your pastor an extra weekend or two off a year, you allow him to enjoy spending time with friends he rarely sees. That benefits his family. But it will also benefit you and your church.

Give your pastor a cell phone and pay the monthly charges.

I would encourage you, though, to not publish his cell phone number. Let him choose who he wants to give the number to.

But please don't take offense if he doesn't give you his number...or if he uses caller ID and screens his calls. It in no way means that he doesn't want to be available to you. He does...his home and office numbers are probably published in several places.

You probably have a cell phone. You did OK without it. People just understood that they needed to call you at home or work. As such, they didn't usually call unless they had something to say. But when you got your cell phone, over time people began calling you more frequently.

That's not a problem for you or me. But our pastors have (on average) 100 people who each think of themselves as their pastor's friend, employer, and ministry partner. As people go about their day, an idea or thought hits them. Normally they would wait until the next meeting or service to talk to the pastor. But since he has a cell phone...you get the idea.

Pastors do want your ideas and thoughts. They do want you to be involved. And they do want you to know that they are available for you. But there needs to be a balance. A cell phone is an essential tool for pastors. However, he needs to be allowed to control it or phone calls will overwhelm him.

Purchase the phone...pay for the service. Call him if you want to. Just remember that you are one of 100 people he is ministering to.

Upgrade your pastor's office Churches, because of restricted budgets, notoriously have out of date office machines. It is very frustrating to have to take the bulletin to Kinko's on Saturday because the church copier is broken again.

Other pastor appreciation ideas for his office: a plain paper fax machine, a scanner, at least two telephone lines, a folding machine (unless you'd rather volunteer to fold the bulletin, calendar, bulletin inserts, mailings, etc.), a shredder, a business printer, high speed internet access, and a computer (his choice of either a laptop or desktop) that is upgraded annually with both new hardware and software.

Many churches won't be able to do all these things. But think small steps. You can get a shredder for \$15. You might be able to lease a copier for a low monthly fee. And eBay is a great source for other office machines.

Give tickets for sporting events, concerts, a play, or even the annual boat show.

When we lived in Dallas the annual State Fair was something our whole family looked forward to. If you live near such an event, you might buy two-day passes for the family.

Pastors are people too...well...some must be angels given that they put up with us! As humans, they enjoy going out for a relaxing evening to a favorite event. But income limitations often prevent this. That's what makes this a perfect pastor appreciation idea.

Concerts, sporting events, or other similar outings are extra special things that a pastor's family can look forward to and remember for a long time.

Be sure to think about the composition of your pastor's family. Does he have young children? Does he have teenagers? Or is his nest empty? If he has young children, it is helpful if you can give them the gift of two events: one for the entire family and one for the pastor and spouse.

Don't forget to provide for babysitting if that will be necessary.

Show your appreciation to your pastor's children too. Preachers Kids have a unique lifestyle that can only be understood by those who've experienced it. Here are a few suggestions:

1) Don't single them out in front of the congregation. Being "different" than any of the other kids is often part of their lot in life.

2) Do give each of them unique gifts...gifts that show that you know what each child really enjoys.

3) Don't get them a Bible or a Christian book. Many pastor's kids feel that church dominates their lives and they just want to be "normal." Check with their parents first, but purchase things that you buy for your own kids at Christmas: video games, gift certificates to clothing or music stores, toys, bicycles, etc.

4) You might also pay for a year of music lessons, or karate lessons, or gymnastics. Or you might pay to send a child to basketball camp, or some other unique opportunity.

5) It might help you generate ideas if you ask the question, "What do my kids have or what have they done that my pastor's son or daughter does not have or has not done?"

6) Make sure that the pastor's children know how much you genuinely love and respect their parents. Pastor's kids see their pastor/dad come home from a stressful meeting. They hear people complain about their dad or mom. They attend congregational meetings where people get upset with each other and with the Leadership. They see their mother's tears.

And yes, *your* children tell them what you *really* think of their parents!

Do everything you possibly can to prove that you genuinely appreciate your pastor and his wife.

There really is an endless supply of pastor appreciation ideas. Use your creativity...brainstorm with others in the church.

Be creative—it doesn't have to be a big deal. There are all sorts of things you can do for your minister and spouse—and a few you shouldn't do.

- Take them to a nice restaurant.
- Bake them a cake—triple chocolate might be a nice choice.
- Provide child sitting so they can have an overnight getaway.
- Write them a letter of appreciation. Emails are impersonal. Cards are okay, but—no matter how clever their commercials—you can say it better than Hallmark.
- We expect ministers to be spiritually full vessels every week so that we can have the benefit of their spiritual overflow and scriptural insights. So, to be sure that happens, pray for your ministers.
- Don't compare your pastor to some flamboyant television personality. There may be some very good TV ministers, but—trust me on this—they'll rarely show up to visit you in the hospital.
- Tell your ministers how much you appreciate them, and let them know—specifically—how they've helped you.
- Make a point to be a positive example of our Lord (and your church) to those who visit your worship services, because a warm and loving spirit in a sanctuary welcomes visitors. Caution: Such random acts of affection may also encourage your minister.
- Ministers have a tough job. A “thank you,” refraining from criticism, and refusing to gossip won't cost you much—but it sure can pay off in helping to build up your pastor.
- One of the best ways to show the clergy your appreciation is to be sure that your minister's spouse receives appropriate attention and frequent honor too.

Who encourages *your* pastor?

Christian pollster George Barna has discovered that "pastors are the single most occupationally frustrated professionals in America." Yet that needn't be so. Scripture makes it clear that we are to give special affirmation to our spiritual leaders. In 1 Timothy 5:17 we read, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."

You needn't risk life and limb to be a modern-day Barnabas to your pastor, but there are some simple ways you can encourage him all year long.

Attend church. In another Barna survey, only 40 percent of the American public claims to attend church every Sunday. Only 60 percent of Christians are part of those weekly congregations.

"The empty pew has an eloquent tongue," said one writer in *Gospel Banner*. "To the preacher, it says, 'Your sermon is not worthwhile.' The empty pew is a weight. The occupied pew is a wing."

Pray. Many pastors pray regularly for members of their congregations. Who prays for those in ministry?

"I am most grateful for each layperson who has ever prayed for me," says longtime pastor Terry Teykl in his book *Your Pastor: Preyed on or Prayed For?* "Only through their spiritual support has my ministry been able to endure its darkest days. When a layperson told me that he or she was praying for me, I felt sustained."

Volunteer. Tracey had just begun attending a new church and decided to call on the minister. "Put me to work," she said. "What do you need done around here?" The pastor's jaw dropped.

His reaction is understandable. Only about one-third of all Americans donate their time and talents to their church home. In a Gallup poll, pastors cite this apparent lack of commitment as one of their biggest frustrations with the ministry.

Share your spiritual growth. Perhaps a particular sermon convicted you in a way you didn't expect. Or your pastor pointed out Scriptures that became your lifeline during a time of crisis. Tell your pastor how his ministry has affected your walk with God. Better yet, write it in a letter so he can reread it.

Invite a friend to church. "Most people are intimidated if a clergyman invites them to worship," my pastor says. "They are more likely to come if invited by a friend." A leader is buoyed when he sees his congregation reach out and grow.

Criticize privately. Don't spout your criticisms to others in the church. The Rev. A. Frederick Walz Jr. of Smithville United Methodist Church in Dunkirk, Md., frequently tells his congregation: "If I am doing something that bothers you, please come to me. I need to hear it from you, not from someone else." Take your concerns to the pastor directly. He'll appreciate your honesty and the opportunity to share perspectives.

Befriend his family. According to a Fuller Institute survey, 80 percent of all pastors feel their jobs have a negative effect on their families. Pastors' wives and children often feel isolated and pressured by high expectations.

Small gestures can ease this burden. Invite his family for a meal. Offer to baby-sit his preschoolers so he can have some private time with his wife. Pastors and their families are people—and people need friends.

Remember him on special days. Pastors celebrate birthdays, wedding anniversaries, Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter. These are wonderful opportunities to acknowledge your spiritual leader with a card, note or gift.

Mobilize your congregation to express its gratitude to your pastor with a special event during October, Clergy Appreciation Month. Consult a copy of the *Clergy Appreciation Month Planning Guide* for suggestions to encourage your leader. Said an Illinois pastor

after one such celebration, "I have never heard of a church going to such extremes to show gratitude. . . . I'm ready to go for a long, long time."

Be an advocate. "One of the saddest times in my career was when a beloved parishioner turned his back on me," a 30-year ministry veteran said. "Yet I can remember the affirmation from one member who stood by me when others sought my demise."

Paul rejected John Mark as a team member on his second missionary journey, but Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement, stepped in and gave the young man another chance (Acts 15). You needn't agree with clergy members on everything. As your spiritual leaders, however, they deserve your steadfast encouragement, especially during difficult times (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Say thank you. A pastor is not just a preacher. He is an administrator, teacher, fundraiser, janitor, counselor, arbitrator, leader and visionary. He works in a high-expectation environment in which he is constantly scrutinized and rarely applauded. It costs nothing to say, "Thank you for everything you are doing. I can see the Lord working through you." But those words are priceless to your pastor.

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