

**The PIPE Line**  
**A Prayer Ministry for the Pastoral Staff**  
**By Kim Johnson**

The greatest gift anyone can offer their pastor and pastoral staff is prayer. While a congregation will never hear a sermon from their pastor entitled, “How to Take Care of Me,” Scripture teaches that *we need to support our spiritual leaders:*

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

*“Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”*

1 Timothy 5:17

*“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”*

Galatians 6:6

*“Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.”*

Too often, however, their prayer and/or encouragement needs are forgotten or completely ignored. For some reason, church members have a misguided perception that their pastor(s) are spiritually superhuman and have no significant needs. Yet, they are people, too. It is only their role in the church body that is different. (Romans 12:4-7).

Implementing a church ministry dedicated solely for the purpose of praying for the pastoral staff would serve two purposes. First, it would educate the congregation on this subject. Satan is “seeking whom he may devour” and he will pass over the most spiritual saint in the congregation to get his hands on the pastor. Just as the terrorists on 9/11 didn’t attack some small building in the middle of Kansas, Satan’s targets are just as visible. Our pastor(s) and pastoral staff are always his first choice for an assault. This makes it crucial that we pray for them.

Second, it offers the encouragement that also is often missing and provides an organized opportunity to accomplish this responsibility. Hebrews 3:13 directs us to “*encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness;*” and 1 Thessalonians 5:11(a) says, “*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.*” Even something as brief as a “thank you” can be surprisingly inspiring to a pastor and/or the staff.

While we may believe that praying for or encouraging our pastors is no big deal, there is one more reason to contemplate. According to Paul, it is considered a sacrifice of praise. Philippians 4:14-18 indicates:

*“Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have*

*received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.*

While Paul was on his missionary journey, only one church took the time to send something to help him on his trip. It could have been some food, a new pair of sandals, or maybe a new blanket. Yet it wasn't the supplies that mattered. Paul was most thankful for the love they showed by taking the time to send it, and he calls their action an "acceptable sacrifice" (not as an atonement for sin). As we know from the Old Testament, sacrifices were extremely important in the spiritual life of the Jews and there were specific sacrifices for atonement. However, there were also other sacrifices that were made for other reasons. One of these is referenced in Leviticus 7:11-12. There we find the regulations for the fellowship offering a person could present to the Lord if it was offered as an expression of thankfulness. So, Paul considered their act of giving a sacrifice of thankfulness or praise. Of course, sacrificing is no longer a practice today, but God still desires our praise and thanksgiving. By doing something as simple as praying for our pastors, it is a "fragrant offering" pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:16 *"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."*

Establishing the PIPE Line prayer ministry would meet this significant yet overlooked need as the primary focus is praying for, and ministering solely to, the pastor and pastoral staff. Attached is a summary sheet which outlines the purpose as well as listing suggestions for its practice. While we may feel our prayers and encouragement are unimportant to our pastor/staff, Scripture clearly indicates they are profoundly needed. By ignoring these instructions, we miss the opportunity of offering God pleasing praise (Hebrews 13:16), as well as depriving our Pastors and Pastoral Staff of much-needed support. Prayer and encouragement; simple actions with huge results.