

PASTOR/STAFF RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION

The Bible admonishes us to show love, respect and appreciation for our spiritual leaders.

“We beg you, brothers, to pay proper respect to those who work among you, those whom the Lord has chosen to guide and instruct you. Treat them with great respect and love, because of the work they do.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13)

“Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard.” (Philippians 2:29)

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor....” (1 Timothy 5:17)

Recognition and affirmation is of critical importance to each of us. How easy it is to give appreciation, and how meaningful it is to be the recipient. And yet, how often we take our spiritual leaders for granted and forget to say, “thank you”.

Hopefully, our appreciation and support for staff members will be more than that which was received by a leader of a large company who entered the hospital for an operation. When he came out from under the anesthetic, a card was waiting for him. It read: “The board voted eight to six last night to wish you a speedy recovery.”

Ministers deserve and need affirmation from the people they serve. Members of the congregation need a special occasion to say, “We love you and appreciate what you are doing as our spiritual leader.” Pastor and Staff Recognition is designed to give the church an opportunity to say, “Thank you for your labor of love.”

A survey by CLSD of LifeWay revealed only 17% of Pastors receive any kind of annual recognition. Less than 17% of staff members received some recognition.

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WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Deacons and/or Personnel Committee should initiate the planning for Pastor/Staff Recognition, since they have a close working relationship with the pastor and staff. A recommendation should be brought to the church in business session specifying that a representative committee is formed to lead out in the planning process. In order to have a cross section of the church membership represented, the committee may include persons from the following organizations and groups:

- Chairman of deacons
- Sunday School director
- Church clerk
- Discipleship Training director
- WMU director
- Brotherhood director
- Personnel Committee Chairman
- A young person
- Pastor/Staff member's family member

WHEN SHOULD YOU HAVE THE RECOGNITION?

Each local church should choose the date and time which is appropriate for the local situation. You may consider the following possibilities:

- The pastor and staff anniversaries with the church
- Pastor and staff's birthdays
- National Clergy Recognition (usually in October)
- Other times deemed appropriate by church
- Significant milestones and accomplishments

Should you have the day on a Sunday, a Wednesday or Friday evening? There are advantages and disadvantages either way. On Sunday, you will likely have more people present. On a weekday you may be able to surround the staff member being honored with family members, friends, denominational leaders and community leaders who may not be able to attend on a Sunday.

Sunday provides a natural time to make the experience an occasion of worship, praise and thanksgiving. A weekday may be more conducive for a banquet, "This is Your Life" skit and/or reception.

You will not likely have a Pastor/Staff Recognition every year. Some churches recognize staff members at significant stages of ministry – 5, 10, 15, 20 or 25 years of service. Churches filled with gratitude for the ministry of its pastor and family may choose to affirm him on his first anniversary.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO ON PASTOR/STAFF RECOGNITION?

Deciding what to do and how to do it may be the most crucial questions for a committee in planning for Pastor/Staff Recognition. The committee should seek to get as many suggestions as possible from as many individuals as possible. Once you have a list of possibilities, you will choose the one(s) that seems appropriate for your congregation.

The following list may help as you search for the appropriate thing to do:

- Plan a worship service led by a layman or denomination leader.
- Celebrate the pastor's ministry in context of worship.
- Host a church-wide dinner for the pastor and his family.
- Invite different members of the congregation to share a testimony of appreciation. The testimony could be from someone he baptized, a couple he married, a person he visited in the hospital, a family or individual he counseled.
- Present spouse and family with gifts.
- Set aside extra vacation time and make arrangements for another person to cover the work in his absence.
- Give trip to the Holy Land.
- Give them one of those things that they have been wanting, but they delayed obtaining for themselves.
- Arrange for Sabbatical study.
- Present to him a gift certificate or a plaque.
- Begin or increase retirement planning.
- Give him a new car.
- Sponsor Pastor/Staff on a mission trip.
- Provide allowance for books or computer equipment needed
- Provide finances and permission for continuing education.
- Make a gift of money (special offering, money tree).
- Make donation in honor of staff members to organization or ministry.
- Secure a book of letter of recognition.
- Make a video of pastor/staff member's ministry.

WHAT ABOUT THE PASTOR'S FAMILY?

The pastor/staff's family needs to be included in expressions of appreciation. Family members are indeed involved in their calling and ministry. Showing love and respect for minister's family is an appropriate way to honor those who give leadership to the church.

When you need help in deciding what to give him on this special occasion, go directly to his family.

The pastor, staff members, and members of the congregation need to feel that God has drawn them all together to glorify the Father and serve Him in love. Pastor/Staff Recognition provides a meaningful way of showing love and respect for the faithful servant whom God has called into ministry, and who has been called by the congregation.

Staff members need to be included in an appreciation day honoring them for their calling and ministry. These same ideas for pastor would be appropriate for other staff members as well.

Romans 12:10
Hebrews 13:17