

Seven Things Pastors Would Like Church Members to Know about Their Children

June 5, 2013 by Thom Rainer

I was serving a church in St. Petersburg, Florida, when it hit me hard. One of my young children had playfully fallen on the floor in the foyer after a worship service. A deacon in the church came up to me and spoke forcefully: “You need to tell your kid to get up. Pastors’ children aren’t supposed to act that way.”

My internal emotional reaction was carnal. I’m just glad I held my tongue. I was really mad. I can still remember my thoughts: “How dare this man hold my young son to a standard different than other kids! My boy really didn’t cause any harm. He was just being playful.

I recently conducted a Twitter poll of pastors and their spouses about this very issue. Though the poll was informal and not scientific, the responses were nevertheless fascinating. Here are the top seven responses in order of frequency. A representative comment or combined comments are given with each of the seven.

1. **Don’t expect more out of pastors’ kids (PKs) than any other kids.** “My children need to have the same expectations as the other children in the church. They are not some kind of spiritual superstars because their dad’s a pastor.”
2. **Please offer encouragement to my children.** “It’s not always easy to be a PK. The glass house thing is real. I am so thankful for the church members who go out of their way to encourage my children.”
3. **Realize that they are kids.** “I know a few church members who seem to think my kids are miniature adults. They expect them to act like a 40 year old instead of a 4 year old.”
4. **Please don’t call them “PKs.”** “Their identities should not be based on their father’s vocation. They have their own unique and special identities.”
5. **Please pray for my children.** “I am blessed to have this one lady in my church who prays for my three children every day. She knows the special challenges of being a PK.”
6. **Our kids see and hear more than you may think.** “After one particularly tough church business meeting, my seven-year-old boy asked me if I was going to get fired.”
7. **Don’t make me choose between my kids and the church.** “Too many PKs have grown up bitter and disillusioned about the church. Dad gave more attention to church members than his own children.”