



PASTOR APPRECIATION

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Pastors today are faced with more work, more problems, and more stress than any other time in the history of the church. 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches. 4,000 new churches begin each year, but over 7,000 churches close. 50% of pastors' marriages will end in divorce. 80% of pastors and 84% of their spouses feel unqualified and discouraged in their role as pastors. 50% of pastors are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could but have no other way of making a living. 80% of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the ministry within the first five years. 90% of pastors said their seminary or Bible school training did only a fair to poor job preparing them for ministry. 85% of pastors said their greatest problem is they are sick and tired of dealing with problem people, such as disgruntled elders, deacons, worship leaders, worship teams, board members, and associate pastors. 90% said the hardest thing about ministry is dealing with uncooperative people. 75% of pastors feel grossly underpaid. 90% said the ministry was completely different than what they thought it would be before they entered the ministry. 75% felt God called them to pastoral ministry before their ministry began, but after three years of ministry, only 50% still felt called. (Research: Life Line for Pastors, Barna, Focus on the Family, and Fuller Seminary)

In appreciation for who our Pastors are:

Pastors are Saved. Jesus said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, "You must be born again" (SAVED). Men of God must have a personal salvation testimony of a Damascus Road experience if they are to have a shoulder against the severity of ministry. Hang your Spiritual Birth Certificate on your wall in your office along with your degrees!

Pastors are Shepherds. Shepherds do not bear sheep, sheep bear sheep. Christ alone is the Chief Shepherd. Pastors are under shepherds, being shepherd by the Good Shepherd, to lead the flock, keep the flock, and feed the flock. Shepherds are not sheep-stealers, they do not build on another's fold, and they are not hirelings. They are

men of God who will not quit until the tally of 100 is safe in the fold. Put a staff in your office.

Pastors are Servants. That is, servants of Christ. When pastors lose sight of this, they are soon to be a ship gone aground. If Christ has called you, dear pastor, to walk on water, keep your eye on Him alone. Put a towel and basin in your office to be visible every day.

Pastors are Scholars. Paul told Timothy to “study to show thyself approved unto God...rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). The majority of pastors only study the Word of God for sermon preparation, not for spiritual growth. An old anvil is needed in your office.

Pastors are Soldiers. Ministry is a fight (it is not a place for cry-babies), there is blood to wade, and there are bruises to prove it. AWOL is not an option. “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:4). Put some bullets in that coin dish in your office.

It seems to me...men of God are not born; they are born-again and made in ministry.

(Excerpt from [Five Things about 365 Things](#) by retiring Director of Missions Cliff Hartley. You may contact him at cwhartley43@gmail.com.)