

In Ephesians 6:19, Paul asked people to pray *“that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.”*

From Colossians 4:3-4, pray *“that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; in order that I may **make it clear** in the way I ought to speak.”*

Recall 2 Thessalonians 3:1 again. It refers not only to **connecting** but also to **clarity**. Paul desired the word to spread like the greatest news people could hear. *“Pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified...”* Pray that the Word runs swiftly like an Olympic athlete to WIN, to go home to the heart and so change a person, an attitude, one’s actions... that the person accurately reflects the Person and Character of Jesus, the Wisdom and Wonder of His clear, pure Word.

Paul desired the fruitfulness of the Word taught, preached, and lived out and asked believers to PRAY that for him and his ministry team.

Every pastor, every Christian leader, every teacher, every leader **needs prayer**. Consider these thoughts. **Paul** was an apostle who had actually *seen* Jesus, who had been taught *by Him* in Arabia, who had the evident working of the Spirit in his life, in miraculous ways, in his preaching and teaching, in the fruitfulness of his ministry... and still he **needed prayer**, he **requested prayer!**

Paul—by the authority of the Holy Spirit—**commanded** prayer in 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2—The verb tense is present middle imperative which means **present personal involvement—all of you, pray!**

Jesus Himself prayed often. He was perfect in every detail of life and ministry, yet continually sought the Father in prayer. In the Garden of Gethsemane He pleaded with the three—**“keep watching and praying,” to pray for Him and with Him** (Matthew 26:41).

How much more must **WE** do the same for our lives. How vital that we **pray for** those whom God has called to lead in the local church and in ministries across our world (and in our communities and our nation)!

How will **you** respond to the truth of God’s Word about this vital ministry of praying for **your pastor**—as well as other ministry leaders? The Christian life and one’s prayer life takes **TRUST...** from the **HEART**. It takes **PRAYER... with FAITH** and it takes a **WALK...** with **JESUS** this day, every day. **Pray for your pastor!**

HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR PASTOR

In the New Testament, we find several references to praying for a pastor—or for those involved in ministry, which today would include all the “laborers” in the field, all who teach and lead in our churches.

We all need to pray that our influence will be that of Jesus Christ working in us and through us. We can sum up most of the needs in the church and in the ministries assigned to a local pastor in five key words, words that lead us in praying for him.

Consider these **Five Words—Five Prayer Targets for Your Pastor (and Other Ministry Leaders/Missionaries, etc)**. These also apply in a general way to any leader (in the home, government, education, military, etc.—Romans 13:1-7). Pray these things for yourself, too.

First, Pray for **CARE**—for what he cares about and how he cares. This refers to First things First—Loving God, Loving People. It means doing God’s will with Compassion that comes from Him. It is not just any CARE, but the Can’t-Live-Without-This kind of Care—caring about what God cares about, what Jesus wants. It is Loving God.

How we love someone or something will affect how we order our time, our energies, our resources, all of life. Love leads to the Line up of our Lives. That refers to **Prioritizing**—knowing Who’s First and What’s First, making sure one spends time with the Lord daily, seeking Him, praying in the fear of the Lord, with the heart of **Love First, Work Second**. The motive and the method of what we **DO** should always come out of what or who we **LOVE**, who we **ARE**, Heart to Heart—*our* heart to *His* Heart.

THEN, in the **work, Pray First, Plan Second**. There are three wise questions we need to pray and ask as we seek the Lord and His will for His church. Pray for your pastor to know...

1) What **Now**? What are we to be involved in now? What does God want us prioritizing in this season of my life, of our church?

2) What **Not**? There may be some things that need to be stopped, unplugged, or done differently.

3) What **Next**? What is God doing? Where is He working that we need to join Him? What is the **next step** He calls for?

Second, Pray for **COURAGE**—for God’s Power and Provision in the face of weakness and fear—Pastoring and the Christian life are not for sissies. We pray for boldness, for confidence in God—*“our adequacy is from God”* (2 Corinthians 3:5). This has to do with God’s Empowering. We go forward on our knees, humbly



dependent on God's Spirit for God's Power and the Provision He alone can give.

That means **personal** provision—*first*, being right in heart, dealing rightly with offenses so that one has a clear and clean conscience toward God and toward all people (Acts 24:16). If a person is bitter, it can poison thinking, doing, planning, attitudes, ministries, and relationships.

Pray for **ministry** provision—courage, boldness, and **confidence—God-confidence**—needed to preach, teach, counsel and encourage with the Word of God (Ephesians 6:19-20; Colossians 4:2-6; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

It means **physical** and **financial** provision, the power to do the will of God with the resources He provides. That includes the creativity to minister when “the brook” seems to be drying up or when the “oil in the jar” looks like it is running out (1 Kings 17:1-16). God must lead us. We look to Him for His creative provision—He has many ways to accomplish His purposes.

Most of all, we need **His spiritual and mental empowering**, His wisdom from above, His **insight** into the Word, the fullness of His Spirit for each day, each encounter, each ministry opportunity, each relationship in life—at home, in the neighborhood, in the community, and on the job—balancing multiple responsibilities (see Acts 4:24-31; 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; 3:3-6; Ephesians 5:15-21).

Third, Pray for **CONNECTIONS**. Connections refer to Open Doors and Open Hearts. Think of Appointments—Daily schedules can be challenging. We can plan ahead and then, some need arises, a legitimate need that must be attended to. It changes the schedule completely. The “to-do” list goes begging.

Pray that your pastor clearly **hears God** for his schedule and then follows God, in the open doors He gives and in dealing with the closed doors each of us faces.

Pray for his use of **time and** for His sensitivity to the **timing of God** in ministry, in family, in community matters, even in those things occurring in the nation and in the world (Matthew 9:37-38; Acts 17:17, 26-31).

Pray for Divine Appointments—as Paul requested prayer—*“that God may open up to us a door for the Word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ...”* (Colossians 4:3)—to share and show the love of Christ, the message of the Gospel, and wisdom from the Word of God.

Paul expressed his intense desire in 2 Thessalonians 3:1—asking prayer *“that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly/run swiftly and be glorified/crowned with glory, just as it did also with you.”* Like an Olympic runner connecting to the finish line to the praise of those observing, so pray the Word runs to receptive hearts, connecting, changing lives—bringing praise to Jesus—*“What a Change, What a Savior!!!”*—*as* it did in Thessalonica. They turned the world upside down (right-side up) (Acts 17:2-4, 6)—the Lord and His Word connecting to hearts in daily life.

Fourth, Pray for **COVER** for your pastor—for Protection at every level—within and without. “Cover him (and me), Lord.” Paul prayed in 2 Thessalonians 3:1-3, *“Brethren, pray for us... that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.”* Then, he stated confidently, *“the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”*

That echoes Jesus instruction on how we ought to pray—*“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil [the evil one]”* (Matthew 6:13). In **John 17:15**, Jesus prayed for His disciples **AND** included us, you and me, *“I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”*

We need protection from evil people, from the evil one, and from any and all evil influences. The Lord provides that protection. He wants us looking to Him for that—*“be strong in the Lord”* and *“put on the full armor of God”* (Ephesians 6:10-20)—to deal with the *“schemes of the devil”* (Greek—*methodeias* = methods, schemes, wiles, tricks, **customized** desire-bait with hooks to drag people down).

We need to stay alert, watchful. We need to pray for one another. We need to pray especially for pastors—for **your** pastor—he is a bigger target, just as other leaders are targeted... the enemy seeks to bring down as many as possible.

Fifth, Pray for **CLARITY**. This refers to Precision/Wisdom in every communication—To communicate clearly all the Will and Word of God. Pray for *precision* in the words he speaks and writes.

Pray for the pastor (and any teacher, counselor, parent, leader) to have and say the right words, at the right time, at the right place, with the right spirit and attitude.

Proverbs 25:11-13 speaks of the beauty, the value, and the refreshing of *“a word spoken in right circumstances,”* of *“a wise reprover to a listening ear,”* or of *“a faithful messenger to those who send him.”*