

# WHY PASTORS NEED INTERCESSION

Excerpts from Chapter Three of the book, *Prayer Shield*, written by C. Peter Wagner, used by permission.

I am convinced that most church members have little or no appreciation of the cost of being a pastor. They know what their pastor looks like and sounds like on the outside, but they have little more idea of what is happening on the inside, than they have about what is happening on the inside of their digital watch they look at many times a day. If God is going to raise up a new army of intercessors who will support pastors and other Christian leaders in effective, fervent prayer, these intercessors need to know both the scope and the urgency of the task ahead of them.

I believe that intercession can not only be therapeutic for pastors' spiritual and emotional maladies, but much more importantly, I believe prayer can be preventative.

The pastor most church members see, know, and relate to over a period of time conforms to a well-established social role mode. Certain things are expected of pastors that are not necessarily expected of an automobile mechanic or a lawyer. The title "Reverend" carries strong social connotations. Church members tend to take this for granted. Not pastors! Pastors constantly work at projecting a suitable image for a clergy person. They are trained to do this in seminary and Bible school. It does not come naturally. The pastors church members see week in and week out are on their best behavior. They are appropriately dressed, they have a cheerful disposition, and they are affirming, they do not lose their temper, they watch their language, they treat their spouses well, they are unselfish, they work hard, they keep smiling and they hope their people see them as Christ like. But this is only part of the story. Pastors are also human beings. They are saved by grace, but they are saved and sanctified no differently from the auto mechanics and lawyers in their congregations. Many, if not most pastors will actually remind their people of this in their sermons from time to time.

In a word-pastors need help-at least more help than they have been getting. In the course of a year, I meet and interact with hundreds of pastors. Even though I do not relate to them as a counselor or a pastor to pastors, I find that many are beat up; spiritually, emotionally and sometimes physically.

The enemy knows pastors are beat up; he knows they are vulnerable, and he attacks them at their weakest point. This is not to say those who have fallen are not themselves guilty and do not have character flaws that need to be repaired through humility, repentance, reconciliation, restoration and holiness. But I do hope and pray we will learn how to use our spiritual weapons more effectively in putting a stop to these blatant and all too successful attacks of the devil.

Pastors and Christian leaders need intercession more than ordinary members of the Body of Christ. This may sound strange and even arrogant at first, but let me propose five reasons why I believe it to be true.

## **1. Pastors Have More Responsibility and Accountability**

Most of us Christian leaders get chills up and down our spines when we read James 3:1, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." All Christians will come before the judgment seat of Christ, but pastors and other leaders have been forewarned that there is a divine double standard; one for "teachers" and one for all the rest. Accepting a position of leadership in the Christian world is running a risk. Sin becomes more dangerous than ever before. And this is one reason why pastors have a greater need for intercession.

## **2. Pastors Are More Subject to Temptation**

Make no mistakes about it, the higher up you go on the ladder of Christian leadership, the higher you go on Satan's hit list. The devil is characterized as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. If he has a choice, he

will devour a leader before he will devour anyone else. And he will use every weapon in his arsenal to do it. Satan uses the world (Eph 2:1, 2); Satan uses the flesh (Eph 2:2,3) and Satan uses the Devil (1 Pet 5:8, John 13:27) It is true that all Christians are subject to all of the above. But Satan is more specific, persistent and intentional when it comes to pastors and other leaders.

### **3. Pastors Are More Targeted by Spiritual Warfare**

It has now become known that over the last several years satanists, witches, new-agers, occult practitioners, shamans, spiritists and other servants of darkness have entered into an evil covenant to pray to Satan for the breakdown of marriages of pastors and Christian leaders. The spiritual warfare has intensified.

### **4. Pastors Have More Influence on Others**

The fourth reason why pastors need intercession more than other Christians is that by the very nature of their ministry they have more influence on others. If a pastor falls, more people are hurt and set back in their spiritual lives than if others fall. The ripple effect is incredibly devastating. Strong Christians are crushed by the hypocrisy and betrayal they feel. Weak Christians take the pastor's behavior as a license for them to do likewise.

### **5. Pastors Have More Visibility**

Because pastors are up front, they are constantly subject to gossip and criticism. When church members have Sunday dinner, the pastor and the sermon of the morning are frequent topics of conversation. People talk about the good and also the bad. The pastor is closely observed and it is no secret. Just knowing this places a difficult burden on pastors and they need supernatural help to handle that situation well. Intercession opens the way for them to receive this help.

Pastors and other Christian leaders are needy people. But they are God's chosen ones to move His Kingdom forward. Faithful and intelligent intercession can release them to be all God wants them to be.

I hope you found this information useful as you pray and fast for Pastor Ray and for the other pastors and staff members of our church. For your further study on the subject of interceding for your leaders, you may want to pick up the book *Prayer Shield*, ISBN # 0-8307-1514-2