



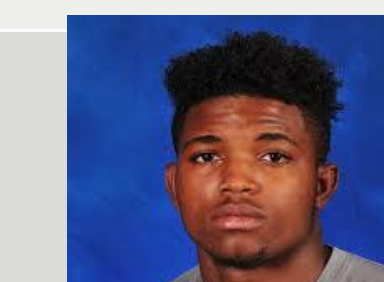
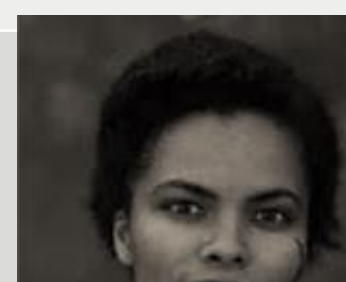
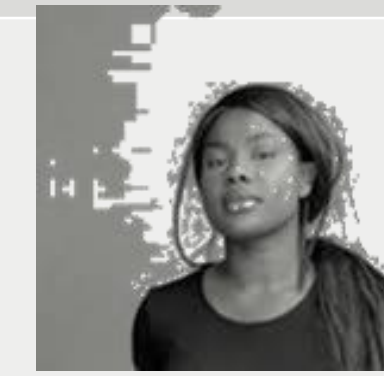
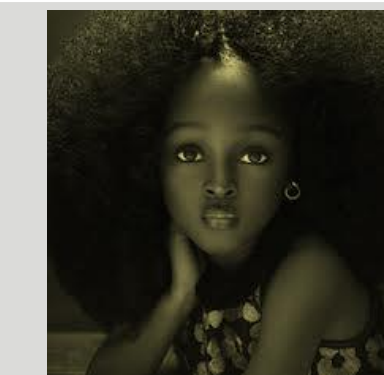
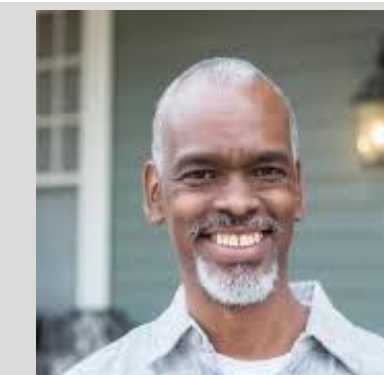
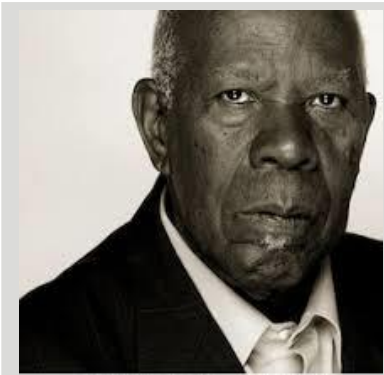
# LESSON 4



# I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

Thom. S. Rainer

Clabon Bogan    c.bogan2@gmail.com    609-230.5809



## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

“It’s Thursday morning. Pastor Mike has a clear calendar, an aberration in his busy schedule. Actually, the calendar is not really clear. He has set aside time to finish his sermon for Sunday. His Bible is open. Study aids are nearby. He begins to study. Then the phone rings. His assistant tells him about a car accident involving a family in the church. The ambulances are already on the way to the hospital. Mike leaves all his study material on his desk and jumps into the car. On the way to the hospital, his assistant calls him again. The entire Godsey family of five were in the car. None are seriously hurt except Gary, the father and husband of the family. His condition is grave. Pastor Mike walks into the emergency room.

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Rainer, Thom S.. I Am a Church Member (pp. 43-44). B&H Publishing Group]

# I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

Rainer goes on in telling this *day in the life of a Pastor*:

- The family was told the father did not survive the accident and the family seeks consoling from the Pastor
- He stays with the family for three hours until other consolers come
- He leave, stops by home and grabs a sandwich before returning to Church to continue on his sermon preparation.
- As he walks back into the Church he is informed two people need to speak with him
  - 1) The 1<sup>st</sup> is the worship leader, struggling with his ministry and wants to quit
  - 2) The 2<sup>nd</sup> is a key lay leader in the church whom the Pastor considers to be a friend. George informs the Pastor his (George's) wife is having an affair. The pastor spends two hours with him crying and praying together.
- It's now nearly 5 PM, and too drained to finish his sermon, he looks at his crowded e-mail folder; and cringes when he sees the name of one of the senders. She has 2 complaints (1) Something he said in last weeks message (2) Failure to visit her sister-in-law who had surgery.

## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

- He shuts his laptop and slowly moves to his car – purposing to stop by the house to grab a quick bite to eat before checking back in the family in the accident
- Leaving them a little before 7:30, he heads to the local high school to give the invocation at the game.
- Cornered by several people at the game, he does not get home until 9 PM. He goes to his study, shuts the door and begin to cry – for the man who died in the accident was his best friend.

All church leaders, especially the Pastor needs prayer and without knowing the totality of the burden in the assignment, we often misunderstand when Pastors go off the rail and even quit .

Barna Research and Fuller research reported hat 1,500/1,700 pastors leave the ministry every month. However, Lifeway research as disputed this claim.

- They did find that number to be around 3,000 annually (250 per month)  
[\[https://factsandtrends.net/2019/07/10/pastors-are-not-quitting-in-droves-2/\]](https://factsandtrends.net/2019/07/10/pastors-are-not-quitting-in-droves-2/)

# I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

## 1. PASTORS AREN'T QUITTERS.

Current pastors say a change in calling is the top reason their predecessors left the pastorate. There are many pastors who aren't a good fit for that role.

## 2. MINISTRY IS TOUGH, BUT SO ARE MINISTERS.

In talking to many pastors and having served as a Pastor for 35 years (25 years full time), Lifeway surveys relate the following facts:

- 84% say they're on call 24 hours a day.
- 80% expect conflict in their church.
- 54% find the role of pastor frequently overwhelming.

## 3. MINISTERS NEED ENCOURAGEMENT.

53% are often concerned about their family's financial security.

48% often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle.

21% say their church has unrealistic expectations of them.

[<https://factsandtrends.net/2019/07/10/pastors-are-not-quitting-in-droves-2/>]

## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

As Pastors we must encourage our comrades “**in season and out of season**” (II Tim. 4:2), for every pastor needs a pastor in their life and ministry.

- Who can you be a Barnabas to?

If you're a lay-leader in your church, treat your Pastors like friends or family members, because they're both.

Provide a listening ear and a safe place for your pastors to share their dreams, as well as their nightmares.

- **Heb. 10:24** *“And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works”*
- **Heb. 13:17-18** Obey (*peithō*) your spiritual leaders and recognize their authority (*hypeikō*--submit; surrender), for they keep watch over your soul (*agrypneō* = sleepless; keep awake) without resting since they will have to **give an account to God** for their work. So it will benefit you when you make their work a pleasure and not a heavy burden.

## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

At the end of the day, most ministers consider it a great privilege to serve the Lord and His beautiful bride. We understand the price of pastoring and are more than willing to pay it.

- **I Tim. 1:12** *“I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry”*
- **II Cor. 4:1-2** Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not **lose heart** (*Faint not*).<sup>2</sup> But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
  - Merchants sometimes “adulterated” substances by mixing in something cheaper to cheat their customers;
  - Philosophers often accused professional speakers of doing the same, because they were more concerned about speaking ability than about correct content.
  - Paul denies either charge applies to himself or to his colleagues.

# I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

There are some critical areas in which we can and should pray for Leaders

## 1. Pray that leaders can remain steadfast.

Everyone, especially those in people helping professions, can feel like **their labors are in vain**. Pastors and church leaders are no different in their vulnerability to discouragement!

- **Galatians 6:9** And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.
- *The word faint is **eklyō** which was used of **reapers overcome by heat and toil; whereby they would “to relax effort, becoming physically exhausted***
- **The incentive to keep working** was the outlook for the harvest in due season

## 2. Pray that leaders can diligently stay the course.

As a pastor or leader, one can get called to serve but in serving, you can actually forget to feed the spiritual gift that was entrusted to you. Pastors get pulled in so many directions, so that the importance of their calling can get lost in the shuffle of all the other demands.

## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

- **I Tim. 4:14-15** Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.  
<sup>15</sup> Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.
- the gift is represented as **a spark of the Spirit** lying within him, and **sure to smolder by neglect**
- the **stirring up** or keeping lively thru exercise, depends on the will of him on whom it is bestowed (Matt. 25:18, 25, 27, 28)

### 3. **Pray for their confidence.**

Leaders often are thought of as confident, but the reality is that leaders get their confidence pulled through the wringer constantly. It might even be argued that some of the worst behavior you see from people is when their confidence is crumbling and they are grabbing hold of anything and everything to stay emotionally afloat.

## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

- **Hebrews 10:35-36** Therefore do not cast away your confidence, (*parrēsia* – assurance; boldness; *freedom in speaking*) which has great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

### 4. Pray words of encouragement.

So often we see encouragement fuel the family of Christ on in their journey of faith. A simple word from a brother or sister sparks another on to grow in sweet and beautiful ways.

- **Eph. 4:1-3** I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, <sup>2</sup> with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- “Walk” is *peripateō* (“to walk about; to conduct one’s self) in a manner that is “Worthy” (*axiōs*) of the **calling** (*klesis* – vocation)
- See that your Christian life weigh as much as the profession of Christianity

# I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

## 5. Pray for their growth in wisdom.

One of the warnings Paul gave Timothy was to avoid the battle of words that simply results in wounded hearts and churches. Not only might the leadership in your church need prayer covering for this matter, but the church as a whole does as well.

- **Titus 3:9-11** But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. <sup>10</sup>Reject a divisive man (*heretic*) after the first and second admonition, <sup>11</sup>knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.
- Avoid heedless disputes about traditions Stupid questionings and quarreling and controversy in matters of nomikos (ceremony; rules), for they are without profit and in vain.
- *A heretic is one therefore who refuses to accept true doctrine as it is revealed in the Bible, and prefers to choose for himself what he is to believe* (Wuest, K. S. (1997) (Vol. 9, p. 201).

## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

### 6. Pray that leaders can fulfill the mandates of Scripture.

Sometimes it can be tempting to fill needs with people only because those people are available. Sometimes, leadership roles are filled with people who at one point did meet the scriptural requirements but are now struggling.

➤ **Titus 1:7-9** For a bishop must be **blameless**, as a **steward** (*fiscal abilities*) of God, not **self-willed** (*arrogant*), not **quick-tempered**, not **given to wine**, not **violent** (*quarrelsome*), not **greedy for money**, <sup>8</sup> **but hospitable** (*philoxenos*), a **lover of what is good** (*promoter of virtue*), **sober-minded** (*sound in mind*), **just, holy, self-controlled**, <sup>9</sup> **holding fast the faithful word** as he has been taught, that he may be able, by **sound doctrine**, both to **exhort** and **convict** those who contradict.

➤ Thus, a bishop must **live an exemplary life** that there is no occasion to call him to account or bring a charge against him

➤ They should not be empty talkers, and deceivers of the mind; tricking by their much speaking, but not sound doctrine

## I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

### 7. Pray for their equipping and growth in the knowledge of God

Not only the Pastor and leaders, but their helpmeets ought to be equipped to do the work of ministry. Those called to spiritual leadership are called to be lifelong learners.

- **Hebrews 13:20-21** Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, <sup>21</sup> **make you complete in every good work to do His will**, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be glory forever and ever*. Amen.
- The writer uses one of three titles given to Christ: (1) **Good Shepherd**, who dies for the sheep—Psl. 22; (2) **Great Shepherd**, who **perfects the sheep**—Psl. 23; and (3) **Chief Shepherd**, who will come for the sheep—Psl. 24.
- The words “make perfect” (KJV) are the translation of *katartizo* which speaks to a future “**equipping of one for service**”

# I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

## 8. Pray for the women of the church.

The saying goes that behind every amazing man is an even more amazing woman. But one thing for certain is that women play a vital role in the church.

- Jesus was supported by a large group of women.
- Elijah was supported by a woman at Zarephath.
- David was guided into wisdom by the wise woman Abigail.
- Paul addressed relational issues between two women who served in the Philippian church (C 4)
- **Titus 2:3-5** "...the older women likewise, that they be **reverent** in behavior, **not slanderers**, **not given to much wine**, **teachers of good things**-- <sup>4</sup> that they **admonish the young women** to love their husbands, to love their children, <sup>5</sup> **to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands**, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

# I WILL PRAY FOR MY CHURCH LEADERS

## 9. Pray for the fulfillment of fellowship.

We live in a culture that struggles to personally connect; and when we do it's of the impersonal nature. Of course we must adopt to a changing world, but special attention should be paid to fostering methods of fellowship.

➤ **Philemon 1:6-7** “..that the sharing of your **faith** (*communication; koinonia*) may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup>For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

➤ Paul's prayer was that Philemon's faith might “go to work” (*be effectual*) and be a blessing to others.

## 10. Pray for your benefit and joy.

The Pastor and leadership team are human just like you and may require your patience as they grow through something. They grieve, their hearts get weary, they are sometimes wrong. But at the end of the day God has chosen so graciously to work through leaders as humans.

# *“Open Church – Open Bible”*

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