

## I Am a Church Member - Session 4

Being a fully functioning, unifying, servant spirited church member has been the call of the first three sessions. We are called to find our place, play our role, and give our all to being a part of the body of Christ. There are individuals that are called to be accountable for helping us to achieve these goals.

The Bible often describes the disciples of Christ as sheep. Those who are called to guide them are often referred to as shepherds or pastors. In Jeremiah 3:15, God says, "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding." The task of being responsible for the spiritual growth and maturity of a group of disciples is a tremendous blessing and a heavy cross to bear. Check out some of the statistics about pastors from the Schaffer Institute on Church Leadership Development:

### *Hours and Pay*

- **90%** of the pastors report working between **55** to **75** hours per week.
- **50%** feel unable to meet the **demands** of the job.
- **70%** of pastors feel grossly underpaid.

### *Training and Preparedness*

- **90%** feel they are inadequately trained to cope with the ministry demands.
- **90%** of pastors said the **ministry was completely different** than what they thought it would be like before they entered the ministry.

### *Health and Well-Being*

- **70%** of pastors constantly fight depression.
- **50%** of pastors feel so **discouraged** that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way of making a living.

### *Marriage and Family*

- **80%** believe pastoral ministry has **negatively** affected their families.
- **80%** of spouses feel the pastor is overworked.
- **80%** spouses feel left out and **under-appreciated** by church members.

### *Church Relationships*

- **70%** do not have someone they consider a close friend.
- **40%** report serious conflict with a parishioner at least **once a month**.
- **#1 reason pastors leave the ministry** — Church people are not willing to go the same direction and goal of the pastor. Pastors believe God wants them to go in one direction but the people are not willing to follow or change.

### *Longevity*

- **50%** of the ministers starting out will not last **5 years**.
- **1** out of every **10** ministers will actually retire as a minister in some form.
- **4,000** new churches begin each year and **7,000** churches close.
- Over **1,700** pastors left the ministry **every month** last year.
- Over **1,300** pastors were terminated by the local church **each month**, many without cause.
- Over **3,500** people **a day** left the church last year.

Looking at these statistics, it is clear that our church leaders need us to pray for them. Being a biblical church member means that we intercede in prayer on behalf of those whom God has placed to be accountable for our spiritual growth.

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### 1 Timothy 3:2-7 - New International Version

<sup>2</sup> Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. <sup>5</sup> (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. <sup>7</sup> He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

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### ***I Will Pray for My Church Leaders***

→ *Pray for the Pastor and Other Church Leaders - 1 Timothy 3:2-4*

◆ Accountability Factor: Hebrews 13:17, Ezekiel 34:10

→ *Pray for Him/Her and His/Her Family - 1 Timothy 3:5*

◆ Family Frontline: Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9

→ *Pray for His/Her Protection - 1 Timothy 3:2, 6-7*

◆ Above Reproach: well thought of, without fault, blameless

◆ Avoiding the Traps: Ephesians 6:10-20, Psalm 91

◆ Remember the Enemy: 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

→ *Pray for His/Her Physical and Mental Health*

◆ Physical Health: 1 Corinthians 6:19

◆ Mental/Spiritual Health: 1 Timothy 4:8, 13-16

### ***Session 4 Pledge :***

I am a church member.

I will pray for my pastor every day. I understand that the pastor's work is never ending. His days are filled with numerous demands that bring emotional highs and lows. He must deal with critics. He must be a good husband and father. Because my pastor cannot do all thing in his own power, I will pray for his strength and wisdom daily.

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Sign & Date