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5 Ways you can show love to your Pastor & Local Church

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In this booklet I want to give you 5 ways that you, as a member of your local church, can tangibly express love to your Pastor. As a former Pastor, I have seen the good, the bad and the ugly of what it means to be in Pastoral leadership so I write this from experience. To be honest, I praise God that I am no longer in the Pastoral position; the Lord had me there for a few years to prepare me for my calling and ministry... and it wasn't easy. Those who think being a Pastor is all glitz and glamor are highly mistaken! Pastors have to deal with rejection, rebellion, division and a host of other threats from the evil one coming against him, his family and the church. That's why I've written this article; to give you some very practical ways that you can be a blessing to your Pastor and to your local church. With that, let's begin:

1- Submission: This is almost a cuss word in many circles today but don't let that stop YOU from embracing it. Biblical submission shows tangible love to your Pastor. While others are walking in rebellion, you're called to walk in submission and humility. There are those within our churches who feel that they're being stifled by their leadership and as a result they go out on their own to preach, teach, prophesy, heal the sick and cast out demons... and yet their lives are a mess of chaos, pride, division and rebellion. Submission to a Pastor is easy when all is going well but when you're asked to grow in spiritual maturity before launching out, then your true character will come out. When your Pastor sits you down and says, "Listen... I've been in prayer for you and feel led to tell you that..." then you should take heed. A praying Pastor who loves his sheep isn't out to stop you; he's out to see the fruit of the Spirit grow in your life. Gifted people who walk in pride hate being told to sit down and grow; they want to be seen by men for their many giftings and when a Pastor says, "Your life is not order and we're here to help you grow" these people become offended, bitter and hop from church to church until they find a weak Ahab Pastor who'll bow to them. Don't be like this! Your Pastor has been put in his position by the very calling of God to watch over your soul. In submitting, you show a Christlike attitude and a heart that seeks to walk in love more than a heart that "wants to be right".

2- Attend regularly and participate often: There are two types of church attenders; those who show up whenever the doors are open and those who make excuse after excuse on why they can't be there. Be the one who shows up! Yes, there are most certainly exceptions like sickness, work, etc; yet for the most part, it's rare that a person cannot attend church at least once a week. To say otherwise is to be dishonest and shows a lack of integrity. I find that those who make the most excuses are those who are most offended when you bring this subject up. They're selfish and will openly lie in order to justify their lack of love for the People of God. Don't be one of them! Show up often! After all, the local church is your spiritual family! Again, there are legitimate reasons for not being at church; there are those who simply cannot be there much due to obligations yet these people are few and far between. As for you, show love to your Pastor and to those whom you say you love by being there for them in order to be used by God in the Gifts and in ministry. Set your alarm clock and get up in the morning and get to church. If there's a prayer meeting, get there. If there's an event, be there! Many people will say, "I don't feel loved" yet these same people never show their faces. How can you be loved on when you're not there to be loved on? Participate in the life of the church and be a part of it in a way that's real, genuine and permanent.

3- Give materially: Everyone wants and loves to partake of the church's resources like food, clothing, heat and electricity but not many want to give financially or materially! In giving of your finances, food and clothing, you're showing your Pastor and the church as a whole that you're not merely a taker... you're a giver. Whether you have a lot to give or only a little, the amount makes no difference; the fact that you're giving and doing so sacrificially speaks volumes about how you view the church. Christians will

spend money on movies, restaurants and hockey games yet they won't give financially or materially to the church unless it's from their leftovers. You know; the things they're throwing away and place no value on. Don't do that! If you're giving clothing, give nice clothing you still wear! If you're giving food, make sure it's what you like and that it's not expired. You get the idea. Give of your time, money and energy. This shows love to the church and to your Pastor.

4- Speak well of your Pastor: There are those in churches who, when they don't like something that their Pastor says or does, will begin to gossip about it to others before leaving the church in a mess of division. Don't be like that! You will not always agree with your leadership but ask yourself the question: "Is my disagreement over something Biblical or merely a disagreement over the method that the Pastor has used?". If it's over a method or a style that's all the more reason to keep your mouth shut to others and go to the Pastor himself/herself. Don't be a Blabbing Bob or a Slandering Sally. Instead, if you disagree with the Pastor in an area that doesn't concern Biblical doctrine or practice, go to him or her privately and pray together and discuss the issue. If you hear others gossiping, show love to your leadership by openly rebuking such people and calling them out on their gossip. Then, point out all of the good things about your Pastor. Show love by protecting and building up your Pastor. Not by tearing him down or allowing others to do so. When a Pastor is attacked, his wife and children are also attacked. Be part of the solution; not the problem.

5- Ministry Support: People who attend church with a "me, myself and I" attitude come a dime a dozen; they do nothing for anyone yet expect everyone else to cater to their every need. They're consumers; they only attend church to see what "they" can get rather than what they can give! Don't be one of them. Rather, show tangible love to your Pastor by asking him what you can do in the church. What needs to be done? What ministries need help? Perhaps childcare or street ministry or music ministry are in need. Whatever the case, don't wait on the Pastor to ask... you go to him and ask what you can do in order to be a blessing to the church. So often, people want to be prophets and apostles but no one wants to scrub floors or clean the sanctuary. Grab a mop, bucket and start washing! No one will see you or give you applause, but cleaning the church shows you have more character than the wanna-be prophet or apostle who won't lift a finger when a call is put out to help someone move or to cleanup after a fellowship event. Be pro-active in the church by letting your Pastor know that you're available to do tangible things for the church.

This concludes my booklet and I pray that you'll take these 5 ways you can show love and put them into practice in whatever church you attend. Don't wait for others to do it; you be the one who takes the initiative. God will bless you for it and the Kingdom of God will grow because of it!