

Possible Suggestions for Local Churches

A. Four ways to bless your pastor immediately.

- 1. Use helpful resources.** For ideas on how to bless your pastor, visit www.blessyourpastor.org. The site offers the opportunity to sign up to receive more resources and tools to help launch an appreciation campaign at your church, including the NAE article entitled, "Over 50 Creative Ways to Bless your Pastor and Staff," a short training video for church boards and leadership teams, template letters and emails, and social media graphics.
- 2. Honor your pastor and spouse publicly before the church.** This can be done in less than five minutes by calling them up in front of the church to officially thank them for their service, present them with a gift and lead the church in praying over them as leaders. Honoring them in proportion to their years of service is wise.
- 3. Present them with a financial gift.** This can be achieved in any of the following ways.
 - The board can authorize a church check to be written for a determined amount.
 - The board can take a love offering from the church that is announced each of the three weeks beforehand and publicly present your pastor/s with the check.
 - The board can do a combination of the above by determining a set amount to be given from the church budget and then adding to it any additional funds that come in through a pre-announced love offering.
- 4. Establish annual procedures.** Diffusion of responsibility is a term that describes the reason for group neglect. It basically means that sometimes important things do not get done because everyone thinks someone else is doing it. Some ways to protect your church from this unfortunate reality is to
 - Place Pastor Appreciation on your monthly board agenda as a reminder.
 - Appoint one board member or faithful leader to head up this annual initiative.
 - Budget for this initiative each year.

B. Four ways to bless your pastor in the long term.

- 1. Investing in your pastor's peace of mind.** Author William Vanderbloemen claims one of the biggest obstacles to retirement that pastors face is a lack of planning and professional consultation. One way your board can bless your lead pastor is to establish a small savings account in the church's name where the church deposits \$500 a year. This would then allow your lead pastor to access the balance every five years to

evaluate their retirement plan with a professional. The account should be set up as a reimbursable expense requiring receipts from a certified financial planner of the pastor's own choice. Vanderbloemen warns boards not to assign a consultant or use one from within the church. Give your pastor a peace of mind to know they are planning well for retirement.

2. Invest in your pastor's peer relationships. Statistics show that strong peer relationships are one of the most productive ways to strengthen resiliency in ministry. One way to do that is to make sure that your church budgets funds each year for your pastor to attend Network events that minister to them and strengthen peer relationships. You can bless your pastor by making sure the following Network events are in your budget each and every year.

- Network Council held every year in April in Colorado or Utah.
- Sectional Tour held every year in February at a location in your region.
- Sectional meetings (informal gatherings for fellowship and lunch) are held locally between 1-10 times a year.
- General Council- once every 2 years held in one of America's premier conference cities.

3. Invest in your pastor's education. Set aside funds that allow your pastor to pursue formal education opportunities.

- Send your pastor to conferences designed for pastors and church leaders.
- If your pastor's current credential is either certified or licensed, provide a scholarship for them to advance to the next level through one of the Network's educational partners. More information can be obtained at www.agspe.org/Preparation.pdf
- The Network offers the "Trinity Ordination Scholarship to all of our ordained ministers. This scholarship covers 50% of tuition for all graduate programs (MA & Ph.D) at Trinity Bible College and Graduate School. If your pastor is ordained, your church can partner with the Network by covering the other half of tuition and offer your pastor a full scholarship for a graduate degree. More information on this benefit for ordained ministers can be found at www.agspe.org/trinityscholarship.pdf.

4. Optimize your pastor's financial package. Pastors are entitled to unique opportunities to maximize the value of the salary and benefits package provided by the church. Skilled financial planners may be able to help the church structure the compensation package that increases the value of the compensation to your pastor without increasing the cost to the church. Learn more by listening to this podcast with minister's tax specialist Richard Varnell at <https://soundcloud.com/rmdstudios/c73>