**A How-To for Connecting with Your Pastor**

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Today, pastors are more accessible to their parishioners than pastors at any other time in history. Before a pastor’s feet have even hit the floor in the morning, they have emails, texts, and voicemails waiting for them.

In a typical month, a pastor will prepare talks and speak up to a dozen times. They will marry someone and bury someone. They will counsel people in their office and visit them in the hospital. They’ll dedicate babies and baptize new believers. Pastors preside over the whole cycle of birth, life, and death—sometimes in a single day. And they do it under a microscope!

Yet, we still hear phrases like, “Pastors only work one day a week.” Or “Pastors don’t know what it’s like in the *real* world.”

The truth is, nobody calls their pastor when they get a promotion. They call when they lose their job.

Nobody messages their pastor to let them know their kid made the honor roll. They reach out when they find condoms in their daughter’s backpack or drugs in their son’s nightstand.

Nobody calls to say, “Hey pastor, we celebrated our 25th anniversary this weekend!” They call to say, “I found texts from another woman on my husband’s phone and I don’t know what to do.”

**So no, pastors don’t know what it’s like in the real world; they know what it’s like in the *worst* 10% of it.** And still, they show up—and they *keep* showing up, because they are called.

At Man in the Mirror, we’ve never encountered a pastor who doesn’t want their men to be discipled. It’s why they became a minister in the first place! But it’s also true that pastors are pulled in many directions every day. So as a ministry, we want to help pastors accomplish this core desire for which they have a great abundance of *passion* but a critical shortage of *time*.

But we also want to equip and encourage you to help your pastor, too. So how can you support and connect with your pastor?

If you’re a men’s leader at your church, here are some practical ways (adapted from the book [No Man Left Behind](https://www.amazon.com/No-Man-Left-Behind-Disciple-Making/dp/0802475493/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=no+man+left+behind&qid=1570742204&sr=8-2)) to connect with your pastor when it comes to men’s discipleship:

* **Pray for and with your pastor.** Here’s one idea: gather your men on Sunday mornings before services start and have a time of prayer for your pastor. Ask for specific requests.
* **Support your pastor.** The men’s leadership team needs to have a reputation of enthusiastic support for your pastor. For example, discover the pastor’s area of passion in ministry and rally around it to make it even more effective.
* **Inform your pastor.** Never let your pastor be surprised by what’s going in in your ministry to men. Copy the pastor on an email summary of a meeting and forward stories of changed lives.
* **Include your pastor.** If your pastor is male, personally invite your pastor to the men’s events, but include him in the way he wants to be included. If he doesn’t want to say the blessing or close in prayer or give a message, just let him be one of the guys! If he does want to do one of those things, carve out space for that as a way to honor him.
* **Love your pastor.** Find tangible ways for the men’s leaders to show your pastor their appreciation. For example, set up a co-op to take care of his lawn for six weeks during the summer to free him up for vacation and refreshment.

A pastor who is prayed for, supported, informed, included, and loved tangibly by the men of the church is much more likely to be supportive of those ministry efforts and to feel connected to the men.

Here are some other ideas for connecting with your pastor on an individual basis!

* Write your pastor a sincere note affirming a job well done and be specific! (But don’t ask them to lunch to share your appreciation; respect the fact that time is their most limited resource.)
* Always defend and speak well of your pastor. If you see something worthy of praise, tell your friends in the church. On the other hand, if you see something you *don’t* like, tell your pastor. But don’t offer constructive criticism until you’ve earned the right through relationship.
* Invite your neighbors to church and introduce them to your pastor after the service.
* Offer to babysit so your pastor and spouse can go out on a date.
* Pick their favorite restaurant and present a gift card to them.
* Volunteer to start a small group to disciple others in the church.
* Tithe and support the work of the church.
* Share stories of encouragement and transformation with your pastor, whether it’s from your small group, Bible study, or a first-time visitor.
* Be engaged in prayer, reading the Word, and in the life of the church, growing as a man, husband, and father yourself!

**Pastors are under tremendous pressure spiritually, professionally, relationally, and physically. If you want to connect with yours, the overarching idea is don’t put more demands on them. Instead, help them accomplish their mission and fulfill their calling.**

In this way, we truly show them we appreciate them—not just this month for Pastor’s Appreciation, but every month.

*Serving Pastors, Raising Up Leaders, Transforming Men*

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