### CLERGY APPRECIATION MONTH





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## THANK YOU!

We are thrilled that you have expressed an interest in the annual celebration of Clergy Appreciation Month in October. In our ministry to pastors and their families, we have found that most members of the clergy feel isolated, insecure and only rarely affirmed. This special event each year presents a great opportunity to say "thank you" to those servants of God who have made a difference in your life.

Focus on the Family is joining with several other pastoral care organizations, denominations, publishers, bookstores, radio stations and church groups to encourage people of faith around the world to say to those in ministry, "You are appreciated and loved!" If possible, we would encourage you to join us in designating your day of worship during the second weekend of October as Clergy Appreciation Day. If that day doesn't work for your congregation, please select another time or service to honor your entire pastoral staff and their families.

The following material is designed to help you with the promotion and implementation of your Clergy Appreciation Month observance. We urge you to begin your plans early since many steps typically require substantial amounts of time. We have even listed a number of suggestions to make your event festive and dynamic. With your imagination, the possibilities are endless!

Focus on the Family will be lending its support in the form of public service announcements airing on your local Christian radio stations and through general news releases to the printed media. Many of our own publications will also encourage your congregation's members to participate in your Clergy Appreciation Month observance.

Thank you for caring for your pastoral staff.

H.B. London Jr. Vice President

**Pastoral Ministries** 





## WHY HONOR PASTORS?



"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor,

especially those

whose work is preaching and teaching."

-1 Timothy 5:17, NIV

Why is it appropriate to set aside a special time each year to give recognition and affirmation to our clergy and their families? How are their needs and circumstances different from those of carpenters, grocers or dentists?

One distinction lies in the nature of the service these leaders provide. God has entrusted to them one of the most precious of assignments—the spiritual well-being of His flock. When a pastor becomes ineffective, the very souls of his or her parishioners are endangered. When eternity is in the balance, we should all be concerned.

Another problem lies in the expectations placed on pastors. Numerous surveys have found that a very high percentage of pastors feel pressure to be the ideal role model of a Christian family — which is impossible, of course. As a result, four out of five pastors feel their families are negatively impacted by unrealistic expectations — whether self-imposed or congregation-imposed — and that ministry is an outright hazard to the health of their families. Indeed, the "pedestal" is not all it's cracked up to be.

As pastors and their families try to please the God who called them to ministry while also trying to meet the expectations of their congregations, one result is dangerous stress. In fact, 75 percent of those surveyed reported experiencing a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry.

Then, of course, there is the "fishbowl" aspect of ministry, whereby the entire lives of pastoral families seem to be on public display. Every private family situation quickly seems to become a congregational or community issue. This anxiety can only be heightened when financial pressures also come to bear, which is common since pastors typically make substantially less each year than their own board members and deacons. Nearly 70 percent of pastoral spouses work outside the home, most often due to financial need.

No one would choose to live life under these conditions unless they felt obliged to a higher, divine directive. Unfortunately, all too often, these are exactly the conditions under which pastoral families serve.

The good news is that we can make a difference! Clergy Appreciation Month is an attempt to counter the negative erosion in the lives of our spiritual leaders with positive affirmation.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

#### Testimonies from past Clergy Appreciation Months:

"Clergy Appreciation Month has been a great encouragement. Our church does something special every Sunday in October. . . . This was our second CAM here at this church and last year was just as nice as this year. If anyone ever asks, 'Is it really that big of a deal?' let them know that it is! They may never know how much it means to their pastor — but trust me, it will mean a lot! What a blessing!"

— A pastor from Michigan

"Even we were surprised as a congregation to find that our church was giving our pastor his choice of a car for Clergy Appreciation Month! Last year, our pastor generously gave a large percentage of his own salary toward the funding of our new elementary school building. Blessings definitely come back when the Lord is involved!"

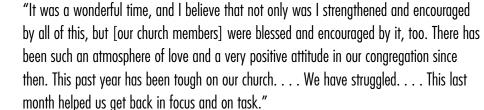
— A congregation from Tennessee

"The first Sunday, the elders presented my family with a surround-sound home theater. The second Sunday, following a discussion on our 'team' and working together, we were given coupons to restaurants — from McDonald's for our children to a nice restaurant for my wife and me. The third Sunday, the youth presented my wife with roses for her work as a youth leader. The fourth Sunday, they snuck our extended family into town, put them up at a hotel donated by the owner, and brought them into the worship service as a surprise. Family members gave speeches as well. A lunch was then delivered to our home to feed all the relatives after the worship service. That evening, a carry-in dinner was provided with members of the pulpit committee that had hired me, complete with presentations and a video of our lives. . . . What an incredible month for my family and for the church! Do we ever feel appreciated!"

— A pastoral family from Indiana

"I speak for thousands of pastors across our land. Thank you for encouraging the people of our churches to reflect positively on the ministry of the pastorate."

— A pastor from Maryland



— A pastor from Texas





"We feel so unworthy to receive such an outpouring of love and appreciation; but at the same time, it is incredibly satisfying. And so, we press on in Jesus' name!"



—A pastor from Indiana

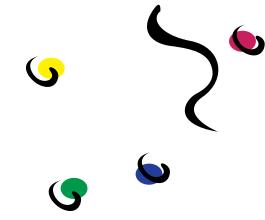
# PLANNING GUIDELINES

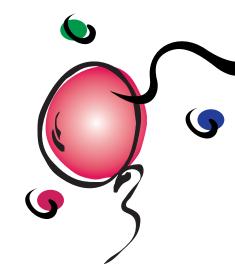


As your congregation prepares for Clergy Appreciation Month (CAM), the following guidelines will help you in planning a creative, memorable celebration.

- Select a CAM planning committee to oversee preparations for this event.
   Ideally, the committee should be representative of all members of the congregation
   (i.e., age, race, gender, church activity), but should remain small enough to be effective
   and efficient.
- 2. Plan the details. Your goal is to express appreciation to your entire pastoral staff and their families. List the specific activities you want to undertake to achieve this goal.
- 3. Delegate the responsibilities. Assign the responsibility for each activity on your list to one person. This person may need to enlist the assistance of others in the congregation, but making one person accountable will improve your results. Also, be sure to involve those under the direct ministry of staff pastors, such as calling on youth group members to help honor a youth pastor.
- 4. Communicate your plans to those in your congregation and community.

  Carefully determine the best means to promote your activities and encourage participation.
- 5. Monitor your progress. Be sure that each responsible person on your planning team reports his or her progress at regular intervals. Avoid a surprise resulting from a last-minute crisis.
- **6.** Thank the participants. Make sure that each person who helped plan, prepare, decorate, serve, lead, entertain, speak, clean up, etc., knows how significant his or her contribution was to the success of your celebration activities.







# CELEBRATION

## SUGGESTIONS

- In all of your activities, remember that Clergy Appreciation Month is not about glorifying a man or a woman. It is a biblically consistent opportunity to recognize and encourage those whom God has called to proclaim His message and lead His people (1 Thess. 5:12-13). It is a time when the entire congregation can become unified in celebration of what God is doing in its midst. Perhaps some of the following ideas may work for your congregation or may inspire you to create your own.
- Determine an appropriate level of involvement for your church.
   For example, a full-scale plan of recognition might include a banquet, a special ceremony during a worship service, special guests or speakers, a church family reunion of present and former members, gifts, plaques, flowers or an open letter of appreciation in the local newspaper. A more casual approach might simply involve a moment of recognition during a morning service.
- Team with your local Christian bookstore(s) or radio station(s) to recognize and honor your pastoral families through activities appropriate to your community.
- Host a card shower at which members and friends present either purchased or homemade greeting cards to each pastor's family. Or, distribute blank thank-you notes among the congregation to be used for expressing appreciation. Encourage those participating in these types of events to be as specific as possible in their praise, revisiting favorite sermons or moments when the pastor's ministry made a difference.
- Hold a people-pleasin' pizza party. Plan an informal time of sharing and caring around lots and lots of pizza and pop. If your pastoral families love pizza, give them certificates to a local pizza parlor to last throughout the year.

 Contact a local trophy company and order a small plaque for your pastor(s). A simple inscription might read:

In Deepest Appreciation of
[Pastor's Name] and [His or Her] Family
for Unselfish Commitment to the Body of Jesus Christ at
[Church Name]
Clergy Appreciation Month
October [Year]

- Plan a special appreciation service during your normal worship time(s) on the second weekend of the month. During this service, use a variety of means to honor your pastor(s). Work closely with your worship leader to make the celebration a very special one. Sing songs of commitment, read Scriptures of dedication and exhortation and include a time of tribute for your pastor(s) that includes representatives of your denomination, your community, your church leadership and others in the congregation. (See the sample order of worship that follows.) This would also be a wonderful opportunity to call those in attendance to a renewed commitment to the church mission and vision. Then ask the pastor(s) to share their dreams and vision for the future of the church, concluding with a laying-on-of-hands ceremony or other time of personal dedication.
- Plan an evening bonfire celebration with the theme of church unity. Share the
  joys and sorrows you have experienced together, especially identifying the role your
  pastor and his family have played. Make it a time of recommitment and bonding for
  your entire church family.



"The devil would like us to give up because he tries to convince us that what we're doing doesn't matter.

Yet, these times help us see that maybe we are making at least a little difference in people's lives."

—A pastor from Tennessee







- Provide a testimony time during a worship service for those involved in the church's various ministries to share the joy they experience in serving the church. Have them emphasize the satisfaction one receives in using God-given gifts for the benefit of the body. Subsequently, offer training courses on identifying and using spiritual gifts, then encourage members to sign up for the various ministries and service needs that currently exist and that match their gifts, abilities and interests.
- Submit an open letter to your local newspaper to announce to the community your genuine appreciation for your pastoral staff and their families.
- Plan a special banquet in honor of your pastor(s). Have guest speakers and an entertaining program that highlight the accomplishments of the church under the pastor(s)' leadership. Prepare a "This Is Your Life" show or celebrity roast. If such an event is not possible, arrange for several members of the congregation to take the pastoral staff and their families to lunch or dinner.
- Invite local dignitaries to participate in the various appreciation events. Ask them to say a word of gratitude for your pastor and the influence of your church in the community. Invite denominational leaders who oversee your area or district to attend and participate. (You may impress them with the high regard in which you hold your pastor(s).)
- Present your pastoral family with a significant gift, including a card signed
  by as many people as possible. The cost of such a gift may be covered through your
  church budget or by asking for special donations. Consider simple gifts (a gift certificate
  to a local bookstore, restaurant or car wash; a magazine subscription), personal gifts
  (a new pair of shoes, a new suit or dress, a new set of tires), generous gifts (an
  all-expense-paid trip to a resort, bed and breakfast or overnight railway trip) or even
  practical gifts (a personal digital assistant (PDA), a conference or seminar for pastors).

- Make banners of appreciation and display them throughout the church property. Distribute appreciation ribbons, buttons, stickers or T-shirts to every member of the congregation and wear them proudly throughout the month.
- Urge the Sunday school and other children's groups to make creative
  appreciation messages for the staff using construction paper and bright colors. Have
  the pastor(s) visit them for their own ceremonies of gratitude. Then decorate staff offices
  with the children's artwork.
- Plant a tree or some shrubs in honor of your pastoral staff. These can
  make long-lasting tributes to your clergy, past and present, and can form the basis for
  future conversations as you talk to your children and grandchildren about the value of
  their spiritual leaders.
- **Send a letter to members of the congregation** explaining Clergy Appreciation Month and include offering envelopes for a special love offering.

• Set up a "leafless" tree that can be decorated with a variety of small gifts for your pastor(s), such as a favorite treat (chocolate chip cookies, candy), hobby items (fishing flies), small envelopes with gift certificates (clothing stores, restaurants, bookstores, haircuts, dry cleaning, etc.) or money.





#### **Celebration Suggestions (continued)**

- 6
- Plan a church picnic, circus or other festive event to celebrate the day.
- **Invite the extended family of your pastor to visit** and assist them by underwriting the cost. Schedule a family portrait sitting or other similar activities.
- Play taped audio or video greetings from special friends, children, fellow ministers and district officials of your pastoral staff at a special service.
- Invite a guest speaker to conduct worship and give your pastor(s) an extra
  paid day off.
- Schedule special prayer sessions to pray specifically for your pastors and their families. Make this a yearlong commitment, and assign special categories to each month, such as good health for the pastor's family, financial stability, courage and freedom to dream, and the pastor's marriage.

Have

 Have various congregation members sign up for each day of the month on which

they would assume
responsibility for providing
some tangible expression
of appreciation (meals,
handcrafts, small gifts,
bouquets of flowers or
balloons, personal
poetry). This will assure
that your pastoral family
feels affirmed throughout
the entire month.

- Use the downloads included at the end of this document to design special bulletin inserts, posters, invitation letters and other promotional material customized for your church and its pastoral staff.
- Design a memorial scrapbook. Insert photos and other souvenirs of the
  previous 12 months of your pastoral staff's ministry. Be sure to include lots of pictures
  of congregation members. You might hire a photographer to capture your Clergy
  Appreciation Month activities as the fitting conclusion of your scrapbook.
- Participate in renovating part of the pastor's home. There are almost always home improvements that pastors need, but cannot afford or do not have the skill or time to accomplish.
- Present each of your pastors with a packet of personal service
  coupons. Have members of the congregation pledge to provide services for your
  pastoral families, such as lawn service, child care, car repairs or catered dinners. You
  might even pledge to assist with projects around the church campus, such as fixing a
  sign, repainting the parking lot stripes or teaching the pastor's class one Sunday. And
  don't forget spiritual tasks, such as a commitment to pray each day for every member
  of your pastoral families.
- Ask business members throughout your community to use a portion
  of their advertising marquees to extend your congregation's message
  of appreciation. A discount for your pastor's family might also be offered by that
  business during the month of October.
- Distribute individual quilt squares to congregation members and encourage each contributing family to personalize its square. The finished quilt would become a long-lasting reminder of appreciation.
- **Print bumper stickers** with the message, "We love our pastor(s)! from the congregation of [Your Church]."



#### **Celebration Suggestions (continued)**





- Provide paid time off and travel funds for your pastoral families to visit their relatives. Getting away for special holidays or family events can be a memorable time of respite and relaxation.
- Give your pastor(s) a cell phone (for personal use only) and pay for the
  first year of charges. Or give your pastor a phone card for prepaid long-distance calling.
- Provide your pastor's family with upgraded hardware equipment or a software package for their home computer.
- Name something after your pastor(s), such as a room or banquet hall in the church, a scholarship fund or an annual church picnic.
- Improve your pastor's working environment by upgrading or expanding
  his office or study, adding bookcases and file cabinets, or replacing out-of-date office
  equipment and furniture.
- Create a pastors' hall of fame in your church with photos and memorabilia of your present and past ministers.
- Film a video scrapbook and tribute that highlights your pastor's ministry, co-workers and congregation members.
- Build a praise puzzle. Buy a large picture puzzle, assemble it, then have the congregation write personal notes of appreciation on the back in various colors and handwriting. When the messages are complete, disassemble the puzzle and give each family in the congregation a few random pieces with a date when they are to send their pieces to the pastor(s). As the puzzle is gradually assembled, it will surely be a blessing. (This works especially well in a small congregation.)

- Plan theme dinners throughout the month at individual homes,
   assigning all participating non-host adult members of the congregation to the host
   homes (along with pastoral staff and their spouses). Each adult couple/individual
   should bring part of the meal. Plan an intimate time of sharing with the pastoral staff
   couple, including how each member has been blessed by their ministries.
- Give tickets to activities especially enjoyed by your pastoral staff, such as sporting events, the symphony, a play or dinner theater, a rodeo, a home show or gardening show, an antique auction or antique car show, etc.
- Plaster signs on your church vans/buses that proclaim the message to your community of how much you love your pastoral staff.
- Make a paper prayer chain. On separate strips of colored construction paper, have each family (children included) write down the specific prayer topics concerning their pastor(s) for which they will regularly remember to pray.
- Prepare a "Sunshine Jar" for each pastoral family. Fill a large decorative jar with notes containing favorite Scripture verses and/or encouragement to be read anytime a boost is needed.

Always be looking for new ways to honor and recognize your full pastoral staff and their families throughout the entire year. And don't forget to continually support them through your prayers.











### LONG-TERM CARE OF YOUR PASTOR

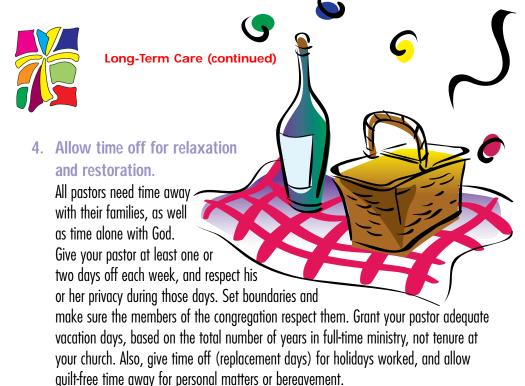
It is virtuous, invigorating and biblical to set aside time each year to honor your pastoral staff and their families. It can be one of the most enjoyable and unifying times your congregation will experience. But it is also imperative that your appreciation of your pastor(s) not be confined to just one weekend or one month. It needs to occur throughout the entire year. In fact, it needs to be present throughout their entire ministry with your church.

There are a number of long-term ways your congregation can show its love and appreciation for your pastor(s) and demonstrate its respect for their divine calling among you. Here are a few very important things your church can do to provide the ongoing care God expects from you:

- 1. Establish a pastoral care team. Select a handful of people from your congregation who will be charged with overseeing the welfare of your pastor and family. They will be their advocates. As such, they will regularly monitor their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being; offer suggestions to congregational leaders that would improve their living conditions; represent the pastor's interests in any discussions on such matters; and ensure that the following entitlements are properly available.
- 2. Provide fair and adequate salary, compensation and retirement benefits. The Bible says, "The worker deserves his wages" (Luke 10:7, NIV). A pastor should be compensated on a par with the people being served and other ministers in the same community. Leadership in every church should be more concerned about the physical and fiscal well-being of the pastor than nearly any other area. The quality of such care is a reflection upon you as a congregation and a witness to your community of Christ's love in action. Recognize your pastor as a uniquely trained professional with related education loans to repay, family-raising needs and expenses similar to your own, and a right to a comfortable retirement. Make this support a priority. Review it and adjust it regularly. Give your pastor the freedom to minister instead of worry.
- 3. Allow time off for professional development. Encourage your pastor to continually challenge and improve himself/herself by underwriting his/her participation in spiritual retreats, conferences, denominational functions and continuing education each year. Every church will be better served if its leader is filled with new insights and motivation.







- 5. Give freedom to dream and permission to lead. Be open to new ideas. Your pastor has access to resources and new concepts from the world's greatest religious leaders. That means he/she will probably come to you with ideas and dreams for your congregation that may at first seem a bit grandiose or unrealistic. But stay open. Dreams are fragile. Work to keep your pastor dreaming and alive. Don't be afraid to let him/her fail occasionally. Follow his/her leadership rather than presenting constant opposition. Allow and expect him/her to speak out honestly against sin and injustice. Let the Holy Spirit work.
- 6. Be willing to participate enthusiastically in shared ministry. The most exhilarating moment a pastor can experience is to have a layperson say, "Pastor, I really want to make a difference in my world for Christ. I want to put on the whole armor of God and enter the fray. Will you help me? Will you train me? Will you pray for me?" Join your pastor in God's ministry.

- 7. Support your pastor with regular prayer, love and encouragement.

  These are the most important things a church member can provide for a pastor. Prayer empowers pastors to be the people God called them to be. It is difficult to pray for someone and be critical at the same time. Love your pastor(s) as Jesus loves them, and show it through regular, tangible acts of encouragement (such as simple cards or notes) all year long.
- 8. Create an atmosphere that minimizes ministry stress and unrealistic expectations. Cherish your minister's Christlike character as a priceless asset for your church. Avoid grumbling, poisonous humor or a negative spirit. Be loyal. Come alongside him or her to facilitate personal renewal and restoration. Keep him/her accountable in avoiding an excessive schedule and maintaining healthy priorities.
- 9. Care for your pastor's family.

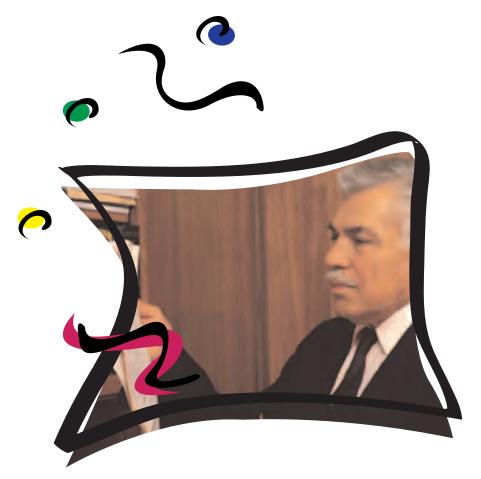
Don't expect pastoral families to be any more perfect than your own. Recognize that every family is unique and eliminate unrealistic expectations. Encourage your pastor to make family a priority (even above ministry to you) and to give it the time, energy and effort required to keep it healthy. Recognize the tremendous sacrifices he/she makes on your behalf and offer massive affection and affirmation. Provide for their comfort, needs and preferences. Don't cut corners.



10. Support pastoral caregiving ministries. Pastors do burn out. Even though you do everything within your power to care for them, statistics show that your pastor or his/her family may some day need unique caregiving assistance.

There is no shame in it, neither for you nor them. Facilitate such care by financially supporting one of the special ministries or denominational programs that offer assistance to pastors and their families. If and when it becomes necessary, cover any costs associated with renewing your pastor to full strength and restoring his/her ministry.

## SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE



Use the following format to create a news release for publication in your local newspaper to let your community know how much you appreciate your pastoral staff and their families.

### **NEWS RELEASE**

[Contact person's name and phone number]

[Church Name] Pays Tribute to Pastor(s)!



[Your city, your state] — October is Clergy Appreciation Month, and on [celebration date], [church name] will honor [pastor(s) name(s)] for [his, her or their] tireless commitment to [his, her or their] congregation and community.

[Provide paragraph(s) detailing years of service, outstanding accomplishments and family members for each pastor.]

We invite you to attend this special Clergy Appreciation Month celebration on <code>[date]</code> at <code>[time(s)]</code> and join us in thanking <code>[pastor(s) name(s)]</code> for <code>[his, her or their]</code> sacrificial dedication, spiritual teaching and wise counsel.

Clergy Appreciation Month is an annual effort that seeks to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of — and pressures facing — religious leaders around the world.

"Thank you for promoting Clergy Appreciation Month, for explaining its necessity and for providing ideas on how to pull it off. All I had to do was manipulate the ideas from your planning guide into a form that would suit us."

—A church member in New Jersey

## SAMPLE ORDER OF WORSHIP

- Call to Worship
- Greetings and Welcome to Clergy Appreciation Month Service
- Congregational Hymn or Worship Chorus
- Responsive Reading
- Inspirational Singing and Praise
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer for Unity of the Church
- Introduction of Pastors and Their Families
- Tribute #1 (from a young person)
- Tribute #2 (from a single adult)
- Special Song or Choir Selection

- Tribute #3 (from a married couple with a family)
- Tribute #4 (from a senior citizen)
- Special Music
- Sermon (a 10-minute challenge from a layman to the congregation)
- Pastoral Responses
- Prayer for Pastors and Their Families
- Presentations to Pastors
- Benediction
- Closing Hymn

(This suggested order of worship can be altered to fit your congregation's worship style and format.)









"My heart was overwhelmed with the tenderness shown."

— A minister of music





"We've been spurred on to love and good deeds."

—A pastor in Kansas



## SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE



We want to hear about your Clergy Appreciation Month activities and celebrations, and especially how they impacted your pastor(s), their families and your congregation.

Write us at: Pastoral Ministries

Focus on the Family

Colorado Springs, CO 80995-7001

or online at: www.parsonage.org/forms/testimony.cfm

or fax us at: (719) 531-3347

or e-mail us at: pastors@family.org

If you are willing to allow Focus on the Family to use your testimony in future promotions of Clergy Appreciation Month, please specifically grant that permission in your message.

"You soon discovered ways in which you touched lives that you had no idea about. Just realizing that you have made a difference in someone's life is appreciation enough by itself."

—A pastor from Wisconsin

## GIFTS AND RESOURCES

The following gifts and resources are available from Focus on the Family by writing to Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO 80995 or by calling (800) A-FAMILY (232-6459).

Please mention source code PIZZXGDE with your request.







### Inspire Pastors Throughout the Year

Request a *Pastor to Pastor Alert* subscription for your pastor. Every other month, he'll receive an e-mail alert that a new edition of *Pastor to Pastor* is available online consisting of compelling interviews with Christian leaders on a variety of topics — all designed to uplift and strengthen those in ministry.

Pastor to Pastor Alert (complimentary subscription) Visit www.parsonage.org and click on the *Pastor to Pastor* link.

Then follow the instructions to sign up for the *Alert*.

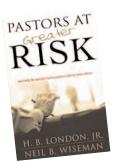




### Give the Latest in Current Events!

Provide your pastoral staff with a *Pastor's Weekly Briefing* complimentary e-mail subscription. It's an essential weekly report with up-to-the-minute news bulletins showing how the family and the church are being affected — and how your congregation can make a difference!

**Pastor's Weekly Briefing** (complimentary e-mail subscription) Visit **www.parsonage.org**, click on the *Pastor's Weekly Briefing* link and provide the requested information.



### **Help for Pastors From Pastors**

Everyone needs someone to confide in — even pastors. Here's real pastor-to-pastor help on today's hot-button issues. Completely rewritten, it includes updated statistics and interviews with contemporary pastoral leaders. Give your pastor some much-needed support through this great book!

Pastors at Greater Risk (hardcover & paperback)





Celebrate

### **ARTWORK**

The following Clergy Appreciation Month artwork may be used for promotions as you see fit. For instructions on downloading artwork to your computer, click on any image below.





CLERGY **APPRECIATION** MONTH









Colorado Springs, CO 80995