

Toolkit of Resources for Churches



Bless your Pastor

Equipping Churches to
SHOW and **SHARE**
God's Love to Their Pastors





Join the movement to *show* and *share* God's love to pastors!

Bless Your Pastor is a national generosity campaign from the National Association of Evangelicals. It is an opportunity for church congregations to find creative ways to care for their shepherds.

Bless Your Pastor focuses on resourcing church leaders to disciple their people in generous living that leads to transformed hearts and generous spirits. The campaign will guide believers to relieve some of the financial and emotional pressures that pastors often feel as a result of their sacrificial service to their churches. Many churches may also decide to extend the campaign to church staff members in addition to their pastors.

The Bible instructs Christians and churches in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 to “Make sure that you *show* your deep appreciation for those who cherish you and diligently work as ministers among you.” And, Galatians 6:6 says, “The one who receives instruction in the Word should *share* all good things with their instructor.”

We hope these free resources will help your church *show* and *share* God's love for your pastor and church staff. See the following page about how easy it is to launch and spark excitement for the Bless Your Pastor campaign in your church.

TAKE NOTE...

The Bless Your Pastor campaign should be organized *by* lay leaders *for* the pastor (and church staff, if applicable). This is a behind-the-scenes effort between the lay leaders and the families in your congregation. While it is appropriate for the pastor to know about this effort, the promotion, distribution of materials, and the offering request should be handled by lay leaders and the admin/communications staff members. Materials can be sent out by mail and/or email to the families in the congregation, instead of being distributed during worship services. Do what works best for your church! Treat this effort as if you were planning a birthday party for someone special — they might know the event is happening, but they shouldn't be involved in planning the party, sending out the invitations, or requesting birthday gifts!

START HERE

5 Simple Steps to Bless Your Pastor



STEP 1: Share Bless Your Pastor with your church leadership team.

- Email the webpage, BlessYourPastor.org/leaders, to your church leaders so they can watch the welcome video and download the toolkit.

STEP 2: Discuss Bless Your Pastor as a leadership team.

Note: While it is appropriate for the pastor to know about this effort, they would not normally be involved in the planning process.

- Print out copies of this 5 Simple Steps sheet (BlessYourPastor.org/steps) and the list of 50 Creative Ways to Bless Your Pastor and Staff (BlessYourPastor.org/50ways) to inspire ideas and make plans for your church.
- Watch the Bless Your Pastor training video (Vimeo.com/NAEvangelicals/byp) together, or email the video to your leaders to watch before the meeting.
- Decide what weekend to publicly honor your pastor during your worship service. Many churches will pick a weekend in October as part of Pastor Appreciation Month. Other ideas include November in connection with Thanksgiving, December in connection with Christmas, or anytime that fits best in your church calendar.
- Decide if an Appreciation Offering will be received for the pastor and/or church staff.
- In addition to sharing the list of 50 Creative Ways to Bless Your Pastor with your church, brainstorm other ideas for how your church can Bless Your Pastor.
- Identify one or two individuals to coordinate this behind-the-scenes effort.

STEP 3: Spark excitement at your church.

- Connect with the admin/communications staff members to plan the best ways to share about the Bless Your Pastor effort and offering with your congregation.
- Review the materials in this toolkit and decide which ones will work well for your church (See Page 5).

STEP 4: Celebrate Bless Your Pastor Weekend.

- Decide how you will honor your pastor during the worship service.
- If your church collected an Appreciation Offering, present the gift to the pastor (and church staff members, if applicable) during the service. Visit BlessYourPastor.org/offeringtips for tips and BlessYourPastor.org/offeringsspreadsheet for a spreadsheet to prorate the offering if given to multiple people.

STEP 5: Report your Appreciation Offering.

- Go to BlessYourPastor.org/giftcard to report the Appreciation Offering amount your church received. The NAE team will then email your senior pastor a \$150 Amazon gift card to be an additional blessing to your pastor. (This will also help us measure the impact of Bless Your Pastor across America!)

TIMELINE

Timing to Implement Bless Your Pastor

This timeline of major milestones is a tool to help you and your church plan. Some churches may only need one month to plan the Bless Your Pastor campaign, while others will start working on it 3 months or more before the Bless Your Pastor weekend. Do what works best for your church!

BEFORE BLESS YOUR PASTOR WEEKEND

FIRST

- Meet as a leadership team and decide which weekend will work best to celebrate your pastor.
- Connect with the admin/communications staff members to make a plan to spark excitement for the Bless Your Pastor campaign and Appreciation Offering.

SECOND

- Send out the Bless Your Pastor email/letter, list of 50 Creative Ways and Appreciation Offering instructions.
- Consider using graphics and #BlessYourPastor sharing on social media. Collect social media input/photos/testimonies about how people are blessing pastor.*

THIRD

- Send out reminder email/letter as follow-up to first email.
- Continue sharing about Bless Your Pastor on social media.*
- Put an announcement in church weekend bulletin.*

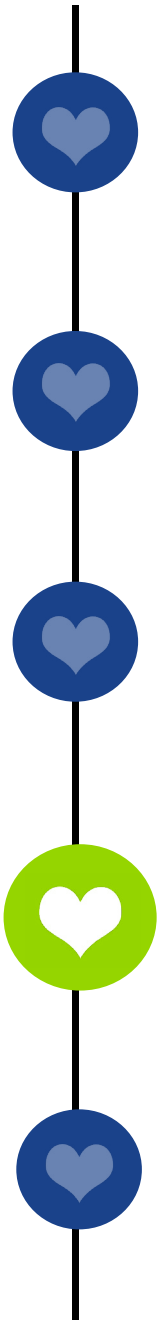
**Consider your pastor's preferences. Some may be sensitive to information about this effort being shared on social media or in announcements in your church bulletins or other communications.*

ON THE BLESS YOUR PASTOR WEEKEND

- Bring pastor (and church staff, if applicable) on to stage to give them the offering and pray for them.

AFTER THE BLESS YOUR PASTOR WEEKEND

- Continue to celebrate what God did in your church through an email to your church and/or sharing on social channels.
- Remind church members to consider the 50 Creative Ways to Bless Your Pastor (and Staff) and to continue showing and sharing God's love throughout the year.
- Report your Appreciation Offering at BlessYourPastor.org/giftcard.



This 50 Ways list is available in several formats, including versions to “Bless Your Pastor” and “Bless Your Pastor & Staff.” Formats include: a one sheet, half sheet and tri-fold brochure. Each format is available in black/white and in color.

FAITHFULLY PRAY

The best way to help your pastor and church staff is to pray for:

- Intimacy with God
- Marital love and unity
- Spiritual protection
- Divine guidance
- Emotional and physical well-being
- Parenting skills
- Genuine friendships
- Financial provisions
- Daily wisdom
- Personal encouragement
- Helpful mentors
- Effective ministry
- Time management
- Quality study and prayer times
- Helpful training and books
- Leadership skills

FONDNESS

- Let them know how God is specifically using them to bless, help and teach you to follow God.
- Remember their birthdays and anniversaries with a card, gift or social media post.
- Show appreciation for their strengths and give grace in their weaknesses.

FREEDOM

- Give their spouses the freedom to be themselves and to find their own niche at the church.
- Let their children “be kids,” care about them, and pray for them.

FOOD, FELLOWSHIP & FUN

- Prepare meals or baked goods for them (ask about favorite meals or certain foods to avoid).
- Give them gift cards for restaurants, fast food or coffee shops.

- Give them food from your garden, orchard, hunting or fishing trips.
- Invite them and their families to your home or a restaurant for a meal.
- Invite them and their families to go fishing, sailing, camping, hunting, to the gym, concerts, plays or sporting events. Offer to cover some or all of the costs.
- Offer your pastor and staff members sports, concert or event tickets.
- If you have a vacation home, timeshare, recreational vehicle or camping gear, offer to let them use it.
- Share frequent flyer miles that can be used for conferences, vacation, mission trips or holiday travel.
- Offer them the use of your dependable vehicle for a holiday family trip or vacation.

FREELY SHARE

Share your skills and time to help with any of the following items:

- Babysitting
- Auto maintenance and repair
- Home repairs, maintenance and projects
- Decorating, painting and wallpapering
- Haircuts and beauty treatments
- Medical, dental and chiropractic care
- Lawn and garden upkeep
- Legal, estate and financial services
- Tutoring or lessons for children

If needed, communicate in advance if there are any out-of-pocket costs the pastor or church staff members will need to cover (e.g., parts for a car repair or materials for home repair).

FINANCES

Faithfully give to your church, so your pastor and church staff can be properly compensated. Beyond the church salary, the Lord may prompt certain individuals to provide personal funding to help with any of the following items:

- Bless Your Pastor & Staff offering
- Marriage retreat costs
- Christian camp fees
- Back to school fees, clothing or supplies
- Children’s college tuition
- Mission trips
- Lessons or tutoring
- Family or couple’s vacation or getaway
- Pastor’s conference, seminar or training
- Seminary courses or sabbatical
- Student loan debt
- Retirement savings
- Medical expenses

PAY IT FORWARD

Most people have heard about “paying it forward.” Do you know you can also pay it forward by passing along possessions you no longer use or need? Possible items could include appliances, furniture, musical equipment, clothing, sports equipment or electronics. Ask if the items you may have available are actually needed and wanted by the pastor or church staff members. Also, be sure they are in good condition and will not need costly repairs.

Note: Please be prepared to graciously allow your pastor or church staff to decline anything that you offer. Also note that most items mentioned here are not normally tax-deductible to the giver, but are to be given out of gratefulness to God for what he has given to you.

RESOURCES

Everything You Need to Make Bless Your Pastor a Success

Click on the **bold blue text** to download any of these resources.

1) Training video

Training video for your church leadership team

2) Template letters/emails from your church leaders to your church

Bless Your Pastor letter template

Bless Your Pastor email template

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff letter template

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff email template

3) Appreciation Offering information

Offering envelope tips and tax information

Appreciation Offering chart spreadsheet

CHOOSE WHICH “50 WAYS” TO USE

4) 50 Creative Ways one sheet

Bless Your Pastor one sheet in b/w

Bless Your Pastor one sheet in color

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff one sheet in b/w

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff one sheet in color

5) 50 Creative Ways tri-fold brochure

Bless Your Pastor brochure in b/w

Bless Your Pastor brochure in color

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff brochure in b/w

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff brochure in color

6) 50 Creative Ways half sheet

Bless Your Pastor half sheet in b/w

Bless Your Pastor half sheet in color

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff half sheet in b/w

Bless Your Pastor and Church Staff half sheet in color

7) 50 Creative Ways article

MS Word article to post online

8) Social media toolkit

This **social media toolkit** includes an inspirational video, downloadable logos, social cards, sample posts, graphics and Scripture verses so that you can create excitement for the Bless Your Pastor initiative through social media.



BEST PRACTICES

How Churches Can Properly Care for Their Pastors & Staff

Most pastors have advanced degrees and work 50 to 60 hours each week caring for their congregations, but most Christians are not aware that their pastors and church staff members may not be paid well.

A pastor's week is filled with early morning meetings, office hours, visitations, counseling, sermon preparation and prayer, evening committee meetings and weekend worship services. Yet research shows many pastor families struggle due to low compensation and a lack of proper employee benefits. So, here is a list of seven things a church board and congregation can do to make sure their pastor and church staff are properly cared for, loved and blessed.

1 Compensate Your Pastor and Staff Using National Research

The best way for church boards or leadership teams to properly compensate church personnel is by using nationally recognized research, recommendations or regulations from their denominations or respected national research (ChurchSalary.com, CompStudy.Lifeway.com and MinistryPay.com). Using objective outside information will give church leaders guidance for what is appropriate and fair based on church size, location, denomination, church budget, experience and education.

2 Plan an Annual Bless Your Pastor Campaign & Offering

While many churches have limited budgets for pastor and staff compensation, most people in churches have been blessed by God with skills, abilities, interests and resources that they can use to bless their pastors and church staff members. Over the years, many churches in America have celebrated October as Pastor Appreciation Month. Through the Bless Your Pastor campaign and resources, we trust that many churches will plan an annual Bless Your Pastor (and staff, if applicable) campaign and offering. Every year, this will be a reminder to church families regarding how they can creatively show and share God's love to their pastors and staff members. And for the pastor and staff families, these intentional acts of kindness throughout

the year and through the annual offering will help them feel loved, valued and appreciated.

3 Provide Employee Benefits in Your Compensation Package

Most pastors do not receive the typical employment benefits that many working Americans receive. Church boards, finance teams or personnel committees should work with their denominations or other financial groups that serve pastors and churches to make sure their pastors and staff members receive retirement contributions, healthcare coverage, and life and disability insurance.

4 Properly Set Up a Plan to Reimburse for Ministry Expenses

Pastors regularly need to purchase books and software for sermon preparation, to attend conferences and events for connection and encouragement, to take people out for meals to discuss pastoral needs or church business, to drive to hospital and visitation meetings, to host ministry events at their homes and much more. Many pastors have to pay for these expenses from their already limited salaries. In the past, they could deduct these expenses for tax purposes, but the IRS no longer allows these tax deductions. So, it is important that churches make sure they properly set up ministry expense reimbursement plans to cover these ministry related costs.

BEST PRACTICES (cont.)

How Churches Can Properly Care for Their Pastors & Staff

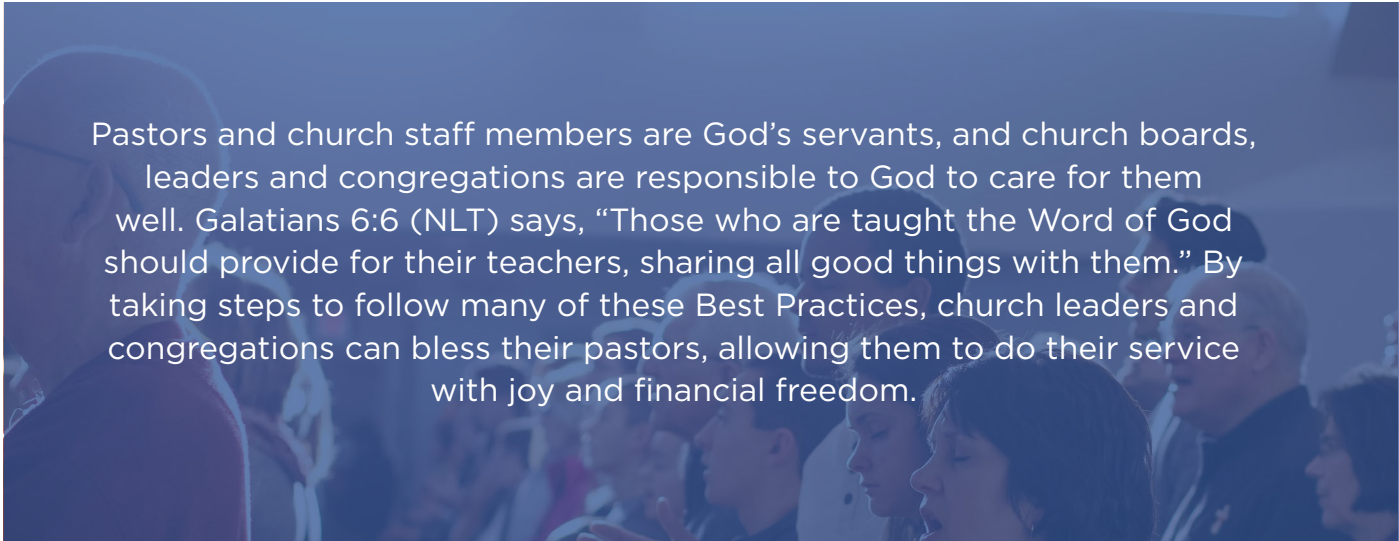
5 Offer Time Off and Time Away
Pastors work long hours every week. The demands of leading the church, preparing for worship services, and caring for the flock can be non-stop. Church leaders and congregations need to honor their pastors' weekly time off and vacation time. Some pastors say they can't afford to take time off with their families. Church members who have access to vacation properties, timeshares, RV equipment, unused frequent flyer points, etc., can offer these to their pastors or church staff members who need time away but can't afford it. Also, after pastors have served for six years, consider providing them with some God-honoring sabbatical time to help them rest, restore and refocus their lives and ministry.

6 Legally Approve Housing Allowances for Pastoral Staff
In America, current laws allow pastors to receive parsonage or housing allowances free of federal income taxes. This is a major financial benefit for pastors that can be easily implemented by churches. But it is important for churches to properly follow IRS guidelines to make

this legal for their pastoral staff members. If housing allowances are not properly approved, pastors and churches can face back taxes, fines and penalties. Visit NAEfinancialhealth.org for Pastor Compensation resources and IRS guidelines for legally approving housing allowances.

7 Conduct Annual Reviews and Planning Sessions
Being a pastor can sometimes be a lonely and difficult job. Oftentimes pastors hear negative comments about all sorts of topics — the sanctuary is too cold or warm, the music is too loud, the sermon is too long and on and on. A good practice for a pastor is for a small group of two or three lay leaders to conduct an annual review with the pastor and review together the good things that have happened, possible areas of improvement, a compensation discussion and review, and positive plans for the coming year.

Brian Kluth is national director of NAE Financial Health and spokesperson for the Bless Your Pastor movement.



Pastors and church staff members are God's servants, and church boards, leaders and congregations are responsible to God to care for them well. Galatians 6:6 (NLT) says, "Those who are taught the Word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them." By taking steps to follow many of these Best Practices, church leaders and congregations can bless their pastors, allowing them to do their service with joy and financial freedom.

BEYOND BLESS YOUR PASTOR

Additional Resources to Continue Blessing Your Pastor and Church Throughout the Year

Click on the **bold blue text** to download any of these resources.

Church Compensation Research and Resources

- Many denominations have research and resources on compensation. Be sure to contact your denomination to see what is available.
- **Christianity Today's ChurchSalary.com**
- **LifeWay Research Compensation Study**
- **The Church Network's Annual Salary Research**
- **NAE Financial Health** (Pastor Compensation Resources)

NAE Financial Health Free Online Training

- **Bless Your Church** | A 13-minute video training session to equip, empower and encourage your church to receive generous gifts of assets and estate bequests
- **Generous Life Devotional** | A 10-minute video training session to inspire generosity through the use of a 40-day church-wide devotional
- **God Is Your Provider Personal Finances** | A six-session at-home interactive training for couples and individuals to improve their financial health regardless of their age or income
- **Church Generosity** | A six-session interactive training for church leadership teams to grow givers and giving in their churches

