

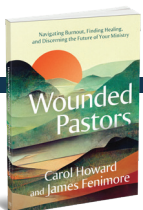
# SEVEN WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR PASTOR

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Ministry is a stressful vocation, with unspoken expectations, projected anxieties, and conflicting demands. After the pandemic caused a sudden shift to the way we worship and aggravated political differences, pastors have been leaving congregational ministry at even higher rates than usual. The emotional fallout of burnout and church conflict can stay with pastors for years.

## CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WAYS TO SHOW YOUR PASTOR YOU CARE

- 1 Honor their boundaries.** Understand why they can't tell you everything and might decline social invitations. Respect their days off and vacation time.
- 2 Respect their family.** Your pastor's spouse and kids are not obligated to fill certain roles in the church, or participate at all. Don't pressure your pastor to choose between their family and the congregation.
- 3 Convey concerns responsibly.** Don't pass along anonymous feedback. Telling your pastor "some people are saying . . ." isn't helpful and only stirs up drama.
- 4 Stick up for them.** When toxic individuals try to force their way, attacking the pastor or going behind the pastor's back, tell those people kindly but firmly that such behavior isn't appropriate. Don't leave your pastor standing alone.
- 5 Compensate them fairly.** Pastors may serve God (shouldn't we all?) but they work for the congregation. Make sure their salary and benefits reflect their qualifications and don't become a source of stress or resentment.
- 6 Check your expectations.** Do you think pastors should be available 24/7? Do you assume that a thirty-something pastor will automatically attract young families to the church? Remember that your pastor is called to lead but is not responsible for saving the church.
- 7 Express appreciation.** A note of encouragement or "thanks for all you do!" can be just the boost your pastor needs on a challenging day.



Inspired by *Wounded Pastors: Navigating Burnout, Finding Healing, and Discerning the Future of Your Ministry*, by Carol Howard and James Fenimore

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