

Clergy Appreciation Month

October 2008

Again this year the Care of Church Professionals Committee suggests that Pastor Appreciation be a regular event on your church calendar. Clergy Appreciation is typically observed in the month of October or on the second Sunday in October, but please feel free to celebrate Pastor Appreciation at any time that works for your church. Encourage your congregation to think both as individuals and as a group.

Here are some suggestions for ways to affirm your pastor. These ideas may serve as a springboard for other ideas, especially if a group of creative people in your church get together to plan. If you have multiple ministers, don't leave anyone out! Appreciate your minister(s) every month!

- Encourage church members to write positive notes of thanks to the minister, and to his or her family members. You might make it a "card shower."
- Sponsor a recognition ceremony for the minister and for the family members who support the minister's ministry. It might be a surprise—or not.
- Have a covered-dish lunch or dinner in your minister's honor. Include favorite dishes.
- Create a "Memory Book" with letters and pictures of some of your happy times.
- Design a bulletin board about your minister's history with the church. Include photos.
- Have church flowers and/or decorations in your minister's honor.
- Offer gift certificates for special nights out. Offer to supply babysitting if needed.
- Make a gift basket. Think of an appropriate theme—travel, golf, gardening, music, etc.
- Encourage members to take a surprise meal to the minister's family.
- Provide tickets (maybe season tickets) to theater or special sporting events.
- Invite him/her to go fishing, golfing, or some other interest with you—with no agenda!
- Give a YMCA membership paid by the church and emphasize the importance of using it.
- Present a gift certificate to stores of special interest to the minister's family.
- Provide a 1,000-minute phone card for the minister to talk to special friends and family who live far away.
- Sponsor a surprise fall clean-up party at the minister's home: window washing, gutter cleaning, leaf raking, car washing, lawn care, etc.
- Insist that the minister have a day off. Announce this and reinforce it to the congregation.
- Provide a surprise weekend away with reservations and provide a substitute minister.
- Teach the congregation about the stresses and responsibilities of ministry.
- Encourage the congregation to continually lift up the minister in daily prayer.
- Ask if he/she has any prayer concerns, and pray for them. Care for your shepherd.
- Remember the minister's spouse and create space for her/his separate identity.
- Compliment your minister on his/her work.
- Publicize your appreciation—with a sign outside the church, with a newspaper article, etc.
- Give the minister the same respect you do other professionals.
- Say "Thank you" for the difference the minister has made in your life.

Inn the words of the apostle Paul, "honor those leaders who work so hard for you, who have been given the responsibility of urging and guiding you in your obedience. Overwhelm them with appreciation and love!" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, *The Message*).