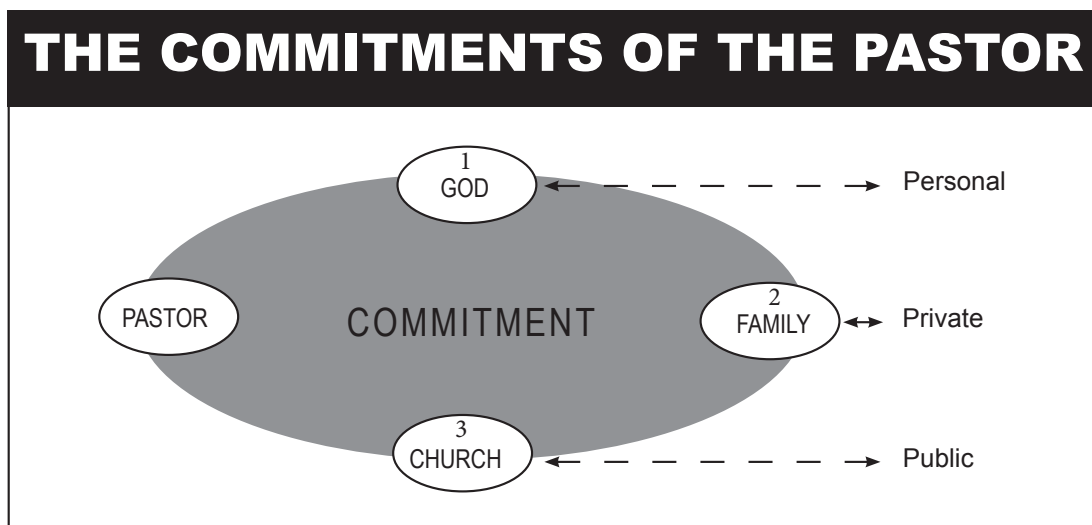


# PASTORS: THEIR PASSION AND PRIVACY

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## THE PASTOR UP CLOSE

The lives of pastors are composed of three major commitments. They are the hub—the center—of their call. Take a look at this diagram.



## 1 Commitment to God—PERSONAL

Before anything else, the pastor must have a personal walk and talk with God. It is a daily walk, like Enoch had, that draws them near to God. It is a daily talk, like Daniel had, that closes the mouth of the enemy and halts attacks on their lifestyle.

Personal holiness is developed through a personal, ongoing commitment to God (Thess. 2: 12). Integrity (Eph. 5:3-5), courage and faith for the fight, are all elements that spring from their passion for God.

## 2 Commitment to Family—PRIVATE

Pastors are the priest of their home like any other Christian parent. It is not their duty to train their family to be a model for other families of the church; rather, they are to guide their family in being shaped by Christian principles. This is the same duty as other parents.

This assignment carries with it all the normal responsibilities of a parent. It includes the magnificent as well as the mundane—the joy of children, the growth of a husband/wife relationship, the fun of family togetherness, helping with homework, managing the budget and house/garden care. Credibility is established through a passion for their family.

## 3 Commitment to the Church—PUBLIC

The church is not their first commitment; it is their third priority. This is the biblical order. The scope of this commitment, however, is a full-time effort. Pastors must preach the total truth of the Bible; they must equip for discipleship, stewardship, and leadership; and must teach, train, counsel, visit, encourage, plan, promote and shepherd.

Pastors are an example to the congregation, “in speech, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity” (I Tim. 4:12 NIV). And the greatest of these is their passion for the wholeness and happiness of the people.

### THE CONGREGATION UP CLOSE

Naturally, the faith-and-fruit flow of the people impact all three of the pastor’s commitments. As laity, your key mandate from the Word, however, is to undergird your pastor in his/her commitment to the church. I want to list three ways you can do this:

#### 1 Respect their Position

The pastor is called, appointed, and anointed by God. In John 1:6-8, three paramount principles are set forth about pastors:

1. Pastors are human, with human limitations. They are not perfect. They will make mistakes.
2. Pastors are sent from God. They have divine authorization, and divine credentials.
3. Pastors have a heavenly commission, to bear witness of Christ—to stand firmly for everything that Christ stood for.

Respect your pastor's position as being sent from God. The pastor is not competing with psychiatrists as counselors, physicians as healers, politicians as statesmen, or philosophers as speculators. They are humans sent from God to bear witness of the Light, Jesus Christ, and to equip you to bear witness of the Light.

## 2 Realize the Demands

There is no closure in the work of the pastor—the light is always on. It seems like Sunday is always tomorrow, two more sermons to prepare. There is always another phone call to answer, a funeral to conduct, a family in crisis to counsel, a church problem to solve, and a budget to balance. All of this tabulates into time.

I did a personal count of the hours most pastors total each week in ministry. The results are outlined in the following diagram.

WEEKLY PASTORAL SERVICE CHART	
Area of Ministry	Hours
Sermon Preparation	20
Inspirational Reading/Video	4
Preaching/Church	10
Telephone (10-20 calls, 5-10 minutes each)	2
Counseling	2
Administrative Work	8
Prayer/Devotions	6
Meetings/Visitation	3
Problem-Solving	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>

When the demands on the pastor are understood, the work of the church is viewed differently. Membership becomes partnership. Leadership becomes “followship.” Stewardship becomes ownership. We become a team, laboring together with God.

## 3 Restrict Intrusions

To be effective in the demands placed on them, pastors must do three things: (1) They must be *sensitive* to God; (2) They must have seasons of *solitude*; and (3) They must *screen* interruptions. All three are essential.

Pastors must be sensitive to the voice of God. They must receive a message from God each week for the people. This requires solitude, being alone with God. This also calls for screening. The process of screening means not responding to some things in order to

do the main thing—to spend time with God and His Word. This calls for using staff members, elders, and church members to do the work of ministry.

There are several ways you can help in restricting intrusions:

- Affirm the ministry of elders. They rest under the covering/anointing of the pastor. Call elders and let them anoint with oil, pray for the sick, listen to problems, and give spiritual counsel.
- Understand that less than ten percent of the people require ninety percent of the pastor's time. Help direct these individuals to other sources of encouragement. Don't let every contact with the pastor at church be a crisis, a counseling session, a confession, or a critical observation. Give your pastor free time to minister and speak to all of the people.
- Along with the church staff; become a minister. Let the pastor lead and equip and let all of us do the work of ministry. When this pattern was followed in Acts 6:1-7 KJV, "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied" God has called us all to do the work of ministry.

The heavy demands placed on pastors will strain and stretch them. That is why it is so important to pray for them. When Solomon built the temple, he needed three things—wisdom, wealth and workers. Pastors need these three things also. Pray that God will give your pastor wisdom and that he/she will use you to supply wealth and to be a worker.

When you respect the passion and privacy of the pastor:

1. You *walk* in step with him/her in fulfilling their call and the mission of the local church.
2. You *guard* their time so he/she can focus and be effective in the main objectives of the church.
3. You *serve* as a catalyst in bringing the church together to perform the work of ministry.
4. You *stimulate* respect for the pastor which in turn strengthens you, the pastor, and the congregation.
5. You *honor* God, and the church is able to operate at a maximum level of outreach and nurture.