

**Read: Hebrews 13:7-8, 17-21**

## Respect and Pray for Our Spiritual Leaders

### **Hebrews 13:7, 17-18a**

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. Pray for us.

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Pastors, teachers, and church leaders are God's front-line defense of his Church on earth. They witness firsthand the devastating effects of Satan's bombardment of God's people. They hunker alongside you in the trenches of life. Their genuine desire is to keep watch over you for your spiritual safety. Someday, they will report to the Triune God for the groups of souls, large or small, entrusted to their care.

Because of the weight of their duties, your leaders need you. Here are two ways you can help:

1. *Remember your leaders.* Before we can remember, we need to know them by name. What's the name of your pastor(s)? Find out who your elders, church council, and other leaders are who serve your church. But don't just say their names. Remember to thank God for them. Send them encouragement in a text, e-mail, or card. Support them in their lives because they have the same joys and struggles as we do. Thank them!  
Acknowledge their time and the work that they do on behalf of all of us!
2. *Pray for [your leaders].* God isn't asking us to pray. He is telling us, "Pray!" We pray at dinner time. We pray at bedtime. We pray when we are afraid. We pray when we are joyful. Prayer is our conversation with our Father in heaven. We have the great opportunity to give him all of our troubles, share with him all of our joys, and thank him for every blessing in our lives. When was the last time you prayed for your leaders? Pray for their well-being. Pray that their faith might be strong. Pray that they might lead like Jesus who loved and gave himself for the church. Pray that we might support them and be a blessing in their lives of service. Pray with urgency. Our leaders face the devil daily. That brings urgency to us. We pray for our leaders that they might combat all of the devil's attacks.

Jesus fought with the holy weapon of love. He prayed, forgave, and loved us to death on the cross. He chose to obey his Father's will. Hold the line *alongside* your leaders! Use God's holy weapon of Christian love to achieve it: "Keep on loving each other as brothers" (Hebrews 13:1).

The battle is not against one another but against enemies that do not have flesh or blood. Following the lead of a godly leader reveals our faith in—and obedience to—God.

May God help us to remember and pray for our leaders so that their work is a blessing.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What two things does God want us to do for our leaders?
- Create a little prayer in your head for your pastor and say it out loud.

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Name as many leaders in your church as you can.
- Name one way you can support them in their work.

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Think of your pastors. Give a time they might need you to pray for them.
- Consider the different leaders that serve your church. Discuss at least two challenges they face while serving you.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Heavenly Father, you are a God of order. Thank you for setting up leaders so that we might have an orderly life to praise you! Grant us the peace that order brings to our lives. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 412:1-2 – Lord, Teach Us How to Pray Aright**

Lord, teach us how to pray aright,  
With rev'ence and with fear.  
Though dust and ashes in your sight,  
We may, we must draw near.

We suffer if we cease from prayer;  
Oh, grant us pow'r to pray.  
And when to meet you we prepare,  
Lord, meet us on the way.