



**Special Edition: Pastor Appreciation Month
October 2005**

Practical Ways to Love Your Minister

Each October is Pastor Appreciation month. For people of faith, ministers are some of the most influential and important of individuals. They are intimately involved in all the major events of our lives: baby dedications, baptisms, marriages, funerals. From cradle to grave, ministers are there for us, pouring themselves out as an offering before the LORD. For many, ministry can be a thankless job. The burnout rate among ministers is alarmingly high – too high.

This month, *you* can make a small investment that can make a big difference. It takes so little to share your appreciation to the men and women who have given to you so much. In *The Five Love Languages*, Dr. Gary Chapman shares the five primary ways most humans enjoy receiving love (by the way, you do know ministers are human, too... right?). Using his model, here are some very practical suggestions for showing love to your minister this October:

- ✓ **Words of Encouragement:** “The right word at the right time is like a custom-made piece of jewelry.” (Proverbs 25:11, *The Message*) Words have power to bless when spoken from a grateful heart. Offer such encouragement by email, telephone, voicemail, greeting card, hand-written note or in person. Share anything that places your minister in a positive light: brag about character qualities you appreciate, say “thanks” for something he or she did to minister to your family, tell how a sermon or counseling session made a difference in your Christian walk. Such words of encouragement really can make a difference.
- ✓ **Time:** Love is often best spelled “T-I-M-E.” Take your minister to lunch and simply enjoy the friendship. Take them with you for racquetball or a round of golf together. Invite your minister and his or her spouse to dinner with your family. Whatever activity you choose, purpose to talk about anything *other than* his or her ministry (remember, the ministry is the minister’s job – ministers rarely have anyone who is willing to relate with them without talking “shop”).
- ✓ **Gifts:** This doesn’t have to cost a fortune. Small, sentimental gestures can make a big impact: a Christian book you found meaningful, a bookstore gift certificate, your treat to lunch or to an activity, a pound of his or her favorite coffee or a gift certificate for a professional massage. You may even have access to “gifts” others would find costly: donation of airline miles or use of your beach condo for a weekend getaway or perhaps free or deeply discounted services from your company.
- ✓ **Service:** Don’t underestimate the value of your own time when it’s invested in the life of your minister and his or her family. Offer to baby sit their children for an evening to allow your minister and his or her spouse a date night. Offer to clean their home, change their car’s oil, cut their grass or help them with a home renovation project.
- ✓ **Touch:** Many Americans are touch-deprived. Pastors may further suffer due to the distance the average person keeps from clergy. When ministering in times of crisis, ministers give touches and hugs. Yet *receiving* may happen only infrequently. A firm handshake, gentle touch on the arm or big hug can be very affirming to your minister.

If you happen to know your minister’s preferred love language, you can tailor your appreciation accordingly. If you don’t, ask your minister if he or she knows their love language. But bottom line is this: most people appreciate receiving love in all five love languages. *Showing your love and appreciation – in any language – will always be worth your investment.**

Thoughts to Ponder:

- Who are the ministers in your life who deserve a little bit of love and appreciation?
- What gestures will *you* choose to give to your minister this October – and any other time it’s appropriate?

“Michael Todd” Wilson, MS, LPC
Director of ShepherdCare

*For more pastor appreciation ideas, go to www.clergyappreciation.org

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ShepherdCare • 2250 Satellite Boulevard, #230 • Duluth, Georgia 30097
(770) 623-3331 • www.PracticingShepherdCare.org