

## Pastors Aren't Perfect

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Once I invited a minister from another church to give the devotions at a men's breakfast. We started eating promptly at 8:00 a.m. even though the speaker had not yet arrived. I thought he was just running late and would be there by 8:30. However, 8:30 came and went, and still no speaker.

In fact, he never did arrive. Later he called to apologize and to confess that he had simply forgotten to come. "At least," he said, "it's not as bad as some things I have forgotten. One time I even forgot to go to a funeral I was scheduled to conduct."

Although it may sometimes be hard for churchgoers to understand, ministers are human. We ministers forget things, make mistakes, and sometimes do foolish things.

The only hope for church members looking for a perfect pastor is to die and go on to heaven. Jesus is the Perfect Pastor. The rest of us are foggy images of him.

One reason for pastoral burnout is unrealistic expectations by the congregation. A pastor once wrote a list of pastoral duties. Then he asked each of his board members to note the amount of time per week he thought was appropriate for that task. When the pastor added it all up he discovered that he would have to work over 120 hours a week to meet their expectations.

Here are three practical things you can do to help your pastor.

First, if you are ill or in the hospital and need pastoral care, call your church and let someone know. Contrary to what some people believe, pastors cannot read your thoughts. The Bible says, *"Is any one of you sick? He should call for the elders of the church to pray over him..."* (James 5:14)

Secondly, don't try to tell you pastor something really important on Sunday morning just before or after the worship service. On Sunday morning your pastor is focused on his most important task – to deliver God's Word. He is likely greeting many people while at the same time trying to see that things run smoothly. It just isn't a good time to tell him that someone needs to trim the bushes in front of the church.

And finally, remember that only God is perfect. Just as there are no perfect churches, there are no perfect pastors. All pastors make mistakes, forget things, run out of time, and say things they wish they could take back.

For the sake of your pastor's mental and physical health, as well as for the good of your own spiritual growth, realize your pastor is human and learn to ease off a little.

Remember that your goal is to be like Christ, not like your pastor. You and your pastor are both on the same spiritual journey. Instead of judging him for not yet achieving Christ-like perfection, pray for him as a fellow pilgrim walking on the heavenward road.