

# live:kind

## *Kindness to pastors and church leaders*

Pastors and church leaders experience many stresses and challenges. Many of them are close to burnout or living lives with unhealthy levels of stress and fatigue. They are often giving out far more than they are receiving, and your kindness can go a long way towards helping them rebalance, giving them hope, and strengthening their heart for ministry.

1. Pray for your pastors and church leaders specifically as often as you can.
2. Write out a short prayer of blessing and encouragement for your pastor in a card, note, email or text message. It is good for them to have tangible evidence of a real prayer, rather than just a vague idea that you are praying for them.
3. Surprise your pastor's family with kindness. As a church family, donate food items, some basics and some treats, and load them into the boot of their car, or leave them on their doorstep.
4. Send thank you cards several times a year, thanking your pastor for specific things, such as a visiting your home, an inspiring thought in a sermon, or a kindness to your child. One pastor kept a collection of such cards to read whenever he needed hope and encouragement.
5. Make a collection to pay for the pastor's family to have a special day out together. Find out where they would like to go and give them gift vouchers or tickets.
6. Give your pastor a restaurant voucher to treat the family to a meal out.
7. Invite the pastor's family to a creative family worship in your home, and don't expect them to do anything except enjoy the fellowship.
8. Give a gift to your pastor's child. It can encourage their heart to know that they are special and cared for too.
9. Find out if the pastor's home has any maintenance work to be done, such as painting, or repairs, and organize a team to do the work. Or tidy up the garden. One church family discovered that the pastor's wife loved tulips. A gardener in the church secretly planted dozens of tulip bulbs to surprise her in the spring.

10. Give the church flowers to your pastor's family with a note of gratitude.
11. Wash the pastor's car.
12. Find out when it's your pastor's birthday, and organize a small, surprise party. All it takes is some cake, balloons, juice and happy friends!
13. Be on time for church meetings and events.
14. Don't wait for your pastor to come to you. Go to your pastor and ask, 'What can I do to help you this week, either in your home, or in the church?'
15. Ask yourself, 'How can I be a blessing to my pastor this week?' Pray for God to guide your ideas.
16. Tell your pastor how a sermon inspired you or helped your faith to mature in some way.
17. Cheerfully and willingly serve your church to the best of your ability.
18. Invite your pastor or pastor's family for a meal at your home. It can be surprising how rarely people invite them to a meal.
19. Give the pastor/pastor's family a 'pastoral visit'. Plan the visit to be a blessing that cheers and encourages them. Pray a short prayer of blessing on their ministry.
20. Speak well of your pastor to others.
21. After a challenging meeting, write a short note to your pastor appreciating what they handled well.
22. Give your pastor a gift card for a local café, so they can go for there for refreshment when they are tired and hungry or have a meeting there with someone.
23. Find out your pastor's hobbies and interests, and then give him a small gift to nurture their interest. Pastors need to be refreshed with time away from the stresses of ministry. If you don't have the money for a small gift, you could cut out interesting articles from magazines, or find a book in a second-hand shop.
24. Behave politely and respectfully in church meetings. Romans 12:9-18 is a healthy guide for church relationships.
25. When the pastor is away at pastors' meetings, or training events, take flowers, or do something special for the spouse or family left behind.
26. Don't expect your pastor's spouse to be like previous pastor's spouses. Each one is unique with different gifts and personalities. Don't expect them to do things to help in the church. It is fine if they want to, but there is a surprising amount of things that pastor's spouses do behind the scenes at home.
27. Expect pastor's children to be normal children who are still learning. Be graceful and generous when they behave in unexpected ways, and don't burden them or their family with unrealistic expectations, or unhelpful comments.
28. Respect the pastor's day off. Avoid calling them or emailing them on their day off. If there is an emergency, consider who else you could call first, like an elder, or wait until the next day.

29. Encourage your pastor to place a healthy and balanced priority on the needs of his/her marriage and family. When the pastor's family and marriage is strong and happy, the whole church is blessed. A pastor who is struggling with family issues is much less likely to be able to reach out and help other families.

30. If you need to disagree with your pastor, do so privately, respectfully and kindly, and be willing to listen to their perspective too. Blessed are the peacemakers.

31. Create a small prayer group, or find a prayer partner, and pray for your pastor and the pastor's family regularly. Let them know that you are praying for them and ask if they have any specific prayer requests.

32. Pastoral families have crises too, like bereavement, illness, family challenges and financial challenges. If you know that your pastor is going through a difficult time, offer extra support, understanding, grace, prayer and blessings.