

# A Plea to Pray for Pastors

by Gardiner Spring

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of praying for pastors, highlighting the consequences of neglecting prayer and the benefits of a concert of prayer for ministers.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 102:17, Romans 15:30, 1 Corinthians 9:27, Ephesians 5:16, Colossians 4:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:25, 2 Thessalonians 3:1, Hebrews 13:18, James 5:16

**Topics:** "Pastoral Ministry", "Power Of Prayer"

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## Description

Gardiner Spring emphasizes the vital role of prayer in shaping and supporting ministers of the Gospel. He highlights the need for congregations to fervently pray for their ministers, as their prayers can empower and uplift them to effectively carry out their divine calling amidst the challenges and temptations they face. Spring underscores the importance of ministers being upheld by the prayers of their people, as neglecting this duty can lead to spiritual declension and ineffectiveness in ministry. He urges believers to engage in a concert of prayer for ministers, recognizing the significant impact of consistent intercession on the spiritual well-being and effectiveness of those who proclaim God's truth.

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## Transcript

Let the thought sink deep into the heart of every church, that their minister will be such a minister as their prayers make him.

If nothing short of Omnipotent grace can make a Christian, nothing less will make a faithful and successful minister of the Gospel!

If a people are looking for rich sermons from their minister, their prayers must supply him with the needed material. If they expect powerful and successful sermons, their prayers must make him a blessing to the souls of men!

Would they have him come to them with a pounding heart, a burning eye, and a glowing tongue, and with sermons bathed in tears and filled with prayer? If so, their prayers must urge him to pray, and their tears inspire his heart.

It is in their own closets that the people of God most effectively challenge their beloved ministers to take heed to the ministry they have received from the Lord Jesus.

For who and what are the ministers themselves? Frail men, fallible, sinning men, exposed to every snare, to temptation in every form. And, from the post they occupy, they are an easier target for the fiery darts of the foe. They are not trite victims the great Adversary is seeking, when he would wound and cripple Christ's ministers. One such victim is worth more to the kingdom of darkness than a number of common men. And for this very reason, their temptations are probably more subtle and severe than those encountered by ordinary Christians. If this subtle Deceiver fails to destroy them, he cunningly aims at neutralizing their influence by quenching the fervor of their piety, lulling them into negligence, and doing all in his power to render their work burdensome.

How perilous is the condition of that minister then, whose heart is not encouraged, whose hands are not strengthened, and who is not upheld by the prayers of his people!

Nothing gives a people so much interest in their minister, as to pray for him. They will love him more, respect him more, attend more cheerfully, and gain more profit from his ministry,

the more they commend him to God in their prayers. They feel a deeper interest in the work the more they pray for him. And their children feel a deeper interest both in him and in his preaching, when they regularly listen to supplications that affectionately commend him to the throne of heavenly grace. It is at a fearful expense that ministers are ever allowed to enter the pulpit without being preceded, accompanied, and followed by the earnest prayers of the churches. It is no marvel that the pulpit is so powerless, and ministers so often disheartened when there are so few to hold up their hands. The consequence of neglecting this duty is seen and felt in the spiritual declension of the churches, and it will be seen and felt in the everlasting perdition of men; while the consequence of regarding it would be the ingathering of multitudes into the kingdom of God, and new glories to the Lamb that was slain!

On his behalf therefore, and on the behalf of his beloved and respected brethren in the ministry, the writer would crave an interest in the prayers of all who love the Savior and the souls of men.

We are the dispensers of God's truth and at best fall far below our mighty theme. The duties of our calling often come upon us with many and conflicting demands. They sometimes put a demand upon all our thoughts, and at the very time when we have lost the power of thinking. And sometimes they call for all the intensity and strength of our affection, just at the time we are the least capable of expressing them. There is also associated with these demands that pressing distress, and decaying anxiety, which exhausts our vigor, cripples our courage, and drinks up our spirits. And then, in addition to all this, there are so many disappointments in our work, that we desperately need the prayers of God's faithful people!

Our spirit is sometimes stirred within us, and we go forth to our people flooded with the hope of rescuing them from everlasting burnings; and in some un-fortunate hour of self sufficiency, we vainly imagine the work and triumph are our own. We put on our armor, and enter the field with the determination to lay out all our strength, and with the confident assurance that we must complete our assigned task.

But what a lesson of self-abasement! We cannot convert a single soul. We press home the divine commands, and they trample upon His authority. We press home His threatenings, and they despise His justice. We speak tenderly of His promises, they heed not His faithfulness; of His beloved Son, and they tread Him under their feet; of His patience and longsuffering, but their impenitence and obstinacy are proof against them all. We reason and plead with them, until the obstacles to their conversion seem to us to rise higher by every effort we make to overcome them; until finally, we sink in dejection, and cry out, "What mighty power can break these granite-like hearts? What omnipotent grasp can rescue these perishing

men from everlasting burnings?" You blood-bought churches, your ministers need your prayers!

We have a concert of prayer for the heathen, another for Sunday schools, and yet another for the blessing of God upon the distribution of religious tracts. Why should we overlook the great means of God's own appointment for the salvation of men? May there not be something in the form of a concert of prayer for the ministers of the Gospel? If nothing better can be suggested, why may there not be a general understanding among Christian men and Christian families, to set apart the morning of every Lord's Day, for this great and special object? This was the practice in the family of my venerable father, and it has long been my own as well. And it is a most precious privilege.

Should God be pleased to give to the churches the spirit of prayer for their ministers, it would be with the purpose of answering it. "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer" (Psalm 102:17).

"It is no small thing," says a writer of our own city, "for any congregation to have daily cries for God's blessing ascending from a hundred firesides. What a spring of refreshment to a pastor!"

When the churches cease to pray for ministers, ministers will no longer be a blessing to the churches. Brethren, pray for us, that we may be kept from sin; that we may walk carefully, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time (Eph. 5:16); that our hearts may be more devoted to God, and our lives a more impressive example of the Gospel we preach; that we may be more completely furnished for our work and our conflicts, and put on the whole armor of God; that we may be more faithful and wise to win souls, and that we may discipline our body, and bring it into subjection, lest after having preached to others, we ourselves be cast away (I Cor. 9:27).

When we turn our thoughts toward barren ordinances and a fruitless ministry, our hearts sink within us, and we would gladly throw ourselves at the feet of the churches and implore a remembrance in their prayers.

If you ever enter into the "secret place" of the Most High, and get near the heart of Him whom your souls love, plead earnestly that His own power may attend the stated ministries of His Gospel. If you ever lie on Jesus' bosom, please remember us!

Press home your plea with tears, and tell Him that He has committed the treasure of the glorious Gospel to earthen vessels, in order that the excellency of the power may be all of God!

"Brethren, pray for us!" Amen!

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