

# Support Your Pastor

Andrew Fuller (1754-1815)

**G**ive me your attention while I mention a few different ways in which it is your duty, interest, and honor to support your pastor:

1. **By a diligent and constant attendance on his ministry.** If possible, at all the services of the Sabbath and in the week. And those who live in neighboring places may support the cause essentially by receiving their minister at their houses, for the purpose of village preaching.<sup>1</sup>
2. **By a free and affectionate behavior towards him.** Treat him as a friend and a brother. If in his preaching he should occasionally make a mistake, do not magnify it. Do not make him an offender for a word. You are as likely to make a mistake in judging as he is in stating an idea. If you perceive faults in his behavior, do not whisper about them [to others], but kindly mention them to him. Do not give ear to every report concerning him. He has a right to expect this as a brother, but especially as an elder. “Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father” (1Ti 5:1)—that is an elder in office. And, though your pastor may be your junior in years, he is your elder in office. As your elder he has a special claim on your patience and protection. Ministers are the objects of envy, and, if every report against them were encouraged, they would be unable to stand their ground. Under trials and afflictions, especially, you should manifest great tenderness towards them. God often afflicts ministers for the good of the people—that they may be able to comfort those who are afflicted. Surely then the people should be very affectionate toward them under their trials. You that are officers in the church should especially be concerned to bear up his hands, as Aaron and Hur stayed the hands of Moses (Exo 17:12).
3. **By treating him with appropriate respect** and teaching your children and servants to do the same. This will be to your own advantage. So long as he deserves your respect, you ought to show it, and no longer [than he deserves respect] ought he continue to be your pastor.
4. **By acknowledging his instrumentality in your edification.** There is great danger of extremes here. Some are always feeding a minister’s vanity by telling him how well he preached at this time and that. [Ultimately,] at the same time they display their own vanity by wishing him to consider what good judges they are of an ingenious discourse! Others, to avoid this extreme, will never speak to him in the language of encouragement. Surely there is some way we can acknowledge [to him] that we have been edified and profited without feeding his vanity but encouraging him in his work.
5. **By giving him a place in your prayers.** Think much on the greatness of his work:  
His work is to bring light to a dark world. Pray that he himself may be enlightened.  
His work is to “feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jer 3:15). Pray that he himself may be fed.

---

<sup>1</sup> **village preaching** – In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this could take the form of neighborhood or community preaching or teaching.

His work is to stand between God and men. Pray that he may be kept humble.  
His work is to disturb the carnal security of men. Pray that he himself may be kept awake.  
His work is to break the hard heart. Pray that he may be tender-hearted.  
His work is to rouse the listless soul to action. Pray that he may be alive to himself.  
His work is to trace the windings of the human heart, and to describe the genuine operations of grace in the true believer. Pray that he himself may increase in Christian experience.

From what your pastor has this day heard, I think I hear him sigh and say to himself, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2Co 2:16). Think of this, my brethren, and you will not forget him in your [earnest prayers] to God.

**6. By not hindering, but helping him, in the exercises of his pastoral office.** Avoid being overly sensitive, which would prevent him from freely giving you advice and caution, and even reproof. It would be to his dishonor to offer personal reflections<sup>2</sup> from the pulpit. But, out of the pulpit, it would be to your dishonor to be offended with plain and close dealing. If you have such an attitude that you cannot bear to be told your faults, you will hinder him in fulfilling his office. At the same time, be willing to take your share in the exercise of discipline [of others]. In cases of personal offence, it might be best for your pastor in some instances to be excused. This way the people involved will be less likely to take offense at him, which would prevent the success of his ministry. But, where he cannot be excused, be always ready to join him, to stand by him, to approve and encourage him in the execution of the laws of Christ—even if the offenders are your relatives or friends. Let the deacons in particular stand by him; and never let a church censure<sup>3</sup> have so much as the appearance of being passed by the influence of the minister. The address of the elders of Israel to Ezra, in a most painful case of discipline, will furnish you with a good example: “Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it” (Ezr 10:4).

**7. By liberally contributing to the support of his family.** It is the honor of protestant dissenters<sup>4</sup> that what they contribute to their ministers they contribute freely, without constraint. But it is greater honor still if they contribute liberally. Consider your minister’s salary not as a gift, but as a debt—and not as done to him, but to Christ. Give liberally, or you will lose the liberal reward. Give it as due to the cause of Christ, or Christ will take no favorable notice of it. A generous and careful regard to God’s servants was a feature of the great reformation in the days of Nehemiah (12:43-47).



This tract was adapted and modernized from an article entitled “Churches Should Exhibit the Light of the Gospel” in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, Vol. 2 (Boston: Lincoln, Edmands & Co., 1833), 430-431.

This adaptation copyright © 2024 Chapel Library. Copies can be made without restriction for non-commercial purposes. Please include this copyright notice. Chapel Library does not necessarily agree with all the doctrinal views of its authors.

**Andrew Fuller** (1754-1815) was a Particular Baptist pastor and author in England, influential in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society, and a friend of missionary William Carey.

---

<sup>2</sup> **personal reflections** – comments or admonitions addressing individuals in their private concerns.

<sup>3</sup> **censure** – decision to take disciplinary action against a person.

<sup>4</sup> **dissenters** – churches who separated from the Church of England, such as Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists.