

Pray for the Sexual Purity of Your Elders

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God requires that all those who serve in the ministry of preaching and shepherding must be blameless. The men who serve God in the church must have no hidden life of sexual sin. Men of God speaking for God must strive to live above-reproach lives and turn from and flee any and all sexual temptations. Many in the pew may not be aware of the many ways they can pray for the elders — by name — to be sexually pure for the glory of God, for the joy of their souls, and for the purity of the flock. [*Note: in this essay, I assume that pastors/elders are interchangeable and though a church may have one *primary teaching pastor*, there are others who serve as shepherds with him.]

Below, I will provide **7 ways that you can pray for the sexual purity of your elders.**

1. Pray for their Sexual Purity **IN THE HOME**

Your pastors need your prayer because they live in a home where the culture endeavors to infiltrate in countless ways. Pray for the home to be a dwelling of the righteous where God's blessing would fall lavishly. Pray for every member of the family to be sexually pure and for the pastor himself to be sexually pure with every member of the home, with every person who enters the home, and with all forms of media which enters through the doors. Pray for the home to be a safe haven, a glorious refuge, a pure protection, and a dwelling of God. Pray that Joshua's resolve would be your pastor's resolve: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

2. Pray for their Sexual Purity **IN THE MIND**

Every pastor knows what life is like to work in isolation. In fact, the man of God must be alone — with God. He must quiet his heart, his mind, his life, and isolate himself from other people so he can be alone with the Lord, in the careful study of God's Word, and in the careful scripting of his sermon manuscript. Yet isolation can also come with a tempest of temptation. Pray for your elders to be pure in their minds. Pray that they would never have wandering minds while looking out the windows in the office and seeing a cause for temptation. Pray that your elders would never live for, look for, and long for a certain woman in the church (or outside the church!) that would take over his heart and mind. Pray that the minds of your elders would so love Scripture that the endless delights of Christ and His gospel would ravish your leaders so thoroughly that they really would be blameless.

3. Pray for their Sexual Purity **ON THE COMPUTER**

Your pastors probably spend much time on their computers. To be sure, your teaching pastor does. He types out his sermons, he does word-searches on his computer programs, and may in fact use the internet and various news sources for illustrations. None of these are bad. But temptations can flood a man while he is alone, on his computer, in his office, while no one is there. Pray for your pastors (all of them) to be utterly and completely pure on their computers. Pray that they would never look at pornography. Pray that they would never be tempted to click on any icon that could lead to immorality. Pray and beg for God to protect your shepherds while they do the necessary work of sermon preparation on their computers. Pray that all email correspondence, all Facebook interactions and direct messages, Twitter feeds, and every look at

a picture on any social media site would be entirely God honoring as if Christ was sitting in the chair right next to your shepherd — because Christ is in fact there and sees it all.

4. Pray for their Sexual Purity IN THE COUNSELING SESSION

Every pastor must conscientiously guard from counseling alone with a woman. He must make certain that his wife or secretary understands that a lady is present and he should hand off a female counselee to another gifted woman who can carry on the counseling as quickly as possible. Nevertheless, even in initial counseling sessions (or even in counseling sessions with a few women or even with a married couple), the man must remain sexually pure. His thoughts, his demeanor, and his actions must always remain above reproach in every way. In times of pain and in broken marriages, it may be that some ladies may long for a man who will listen to them, give them biblical counsel, and pray with them. Pray that your elders would never fall prey to this sort of emotional affair but would remain utterly blameless in every respect.

5. Pray for their Sexual Purity IN THE OFFICE

Some pastors have their office in the church building along with secretaries, administrators and other staff. Being in the office nearly every day and interacting with someone of the opposite sex can lead to sinful emotional longings, unholy desires, and fanciful thoughts. If your pastor has an office in the building with a secretary, pray that he would be pure, above reproach and always respectful yet never flirtatious in the office. Pray that everything that occurs in the church offices would serve to heighten the glory of God, the gospel of Christ, and the Spirit of grace. Pray that every action performed, every word spoken, and every thought pondered would promote the magnificence of Christ and never one's selfish and lustful cravings.

6. Pray for their Sexual Purity AT PASTORS' CONFERENCES

Your pastor and elders probably attend a conference (or more) throughout the year. These can greatly benefit your leaders and encourage them in their faith and rejuvenate them in the ministry. Yet being away from family, alone in a hotel room, with the TV, Cable, and internet can serve as a very strong temptation. Even being in a foreign city, going out to eat, observing the surrounding venues near the hotel can bring temptations that he might have never dreamed of. Believe it or not, pastors are not immune to temptations. Elders are not immune when it comes to sexual desires. Pray that even while being away from his home, his wife and children, that he would remain pure, fleeing any and all temptations, having no interaction with anyone of any sorts of the opposite sex, and that he would remain pure for the glory of Christ and for the purity of the gospel.

7. Pray for their Sexual Purity IN BEING FAITHFUL TO HIS WIFE

God commands husbands and wives to frequently engage in sexual intimacy. The only exception that the Word of God gives for a husband and a wife to abstain from sexual relations is for a brief season of prayer. But then they must come together again for enjoyment so that neither of them fall into sin by their temptations. Pray that your leaders would be faithful to their wives. Pray that they would love each other, delight in each other, and glorify Christ in their marriage in every respect. Pray that his wife would be his greatest delight and his greatest passion. Pray that your leaders would have eyes, hands, hearts, and minds *only* for their wives. Pray that Christ's faithfulness to His bride, the Church, would gloriously manifest itself in your elders' marriages.

Concluding Exhortation

The essay above provided some helpful principles as to how Christians can pray for their pastors and elders. Below, is a brief exhortation to pastors/elders to passionately pursue sexual purity for the glory of God. In other words, **elders how can you replace sinful temptations by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ?** Here are 6 practical thoughts.

1. READ the word.

Every pastor must read the Bible for his own soul before he reads the Bible to construct a sermon. Satisfying his own soul comes first before satisfying the souls of the entire flock. A man must guard *himself* and his doctrine. A man must watch out for *himself* and for all the flock. Reading the Bible frequently for soul-food keeps a man sensitive to God, sensitive to sin, and seeking more of Christ.

2. REPENT of sin.

A pastor should lead his flock and model for them in mortifying sin. He must root out all sin in his life. He must never allow any sin to take root and begin to dominate his life. He cannot walk (continue) in any known pattern of sin. The mark of a godly man is not sinlessness but the degree to which he hates his sin and the way in which he confesses and forsakes it. The man of God grows in his walk with Christ over time and yet sees more of his sin and utterly despises it.

3. REQUEST God's help.

Just as a small child would request help of his father to accomplish a task far too great for him to handle on his own, so the child of God must request God's help to flee immorality and all impurities. The man of God must flee sexual immorality and pursue godliness and purity. God always provides a way of escape in every temptation. So elders must pray and earnestly request the powerful help of God and the sufficient and powerful grace of Christ to resist temptations.

4. RELISH your wife.

One of the weapons that God gives to married men is to fight sin by enjoying his wife. Godly men must enjoy their wives. They must delight in their wives. Elders must cherish their wives more than the church. They must serve their wives more than they serve the church. If not, he has disqualified himself. So then, pastors should relish their wives as a way of fighting impurities.

5. REACH for accountability.

To isolate oneself is to have lost the battle. An isolated Christian is a defeated Christian. No one fights sin on his own. Just as a soldier who attempts to enter into the enemy's territory on his own would most surely and swiftly die, so a professing Christian cannot attempt to live the Christian life alone. Elders must seek accountability. Pastors must have other men speaking in to their lives. Godly men must ask their pastors about their sexual purity — specifically and lovingly. All pastors should welcome these specific questions so as to aid in holiness.

6. REMEMBER your soul.

Remember, those who live in sexual immorality will not inherit the kingdom of God. Those who engage in ongoing sexual sin and who refuse to repent of it will not inherit heaven. The pastor's soul is at stake. He must be pure for the sake of his own soul before he can ever endeavor to teach and preach from the pulpit. Pastor, guard your sexual purity as if your soul depended on it.