

**SERIES: "I Am a Church Member"**  
*"I Will Pray for My Church Leaders" – 1 Timothy 3:1-7*

Last we talked about how we as church members can seek to be a source of unity in our church family. (Slide – how did you do with "Thinking" before you speak this week?)

**Slide** – I want to share some of the many responses that came in last week...

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Dr. Wilbur Chapman often told of his experience when, as a young man, he went to become pastor of a church in Philadelphia. After his first sermon, an old gentleman said to him, "You're pretty young to be pastor of this church. But you preach the Gospel, and I'm going to help you all I can." Dr. Chapman thought, "Here's an old crank." But the man continued: "I'm going to pray for you that you may have the Holy Spirit's power upon you. Two others have covenanted to join with me in prayer for you."

Dr. Chapman said, "I didn't feel so bad when I learned he was going to pray for me. The 3 became 10, the 10 became 20, and 20 became 50, the 50 became 200 who met before every service to pray that the Holy Spirit might come upon me. I always went into my pulpit feeling that I would have the anointing in answer to the prayers of those who had faithfully prayed for me. It was a joy to preach! The result was that we received 1,100 into our church by conversion in three years, 600 of whom were men. It was the fruit of the Holy spirit in answer to prayer!"

As we continue our series on I Am A Church Member, I want to encourage you today to make one of the most important commitments that you will ever make as a church member. I want you, from this day forward, to commit to praying for your church leadership team - myself included. I hope I don't come across as selfish when I ask you to make this commitment. I want you to understand that I ask for this commitment not out of selfishness, but out of need. I confess to you today that there are many times when I feel so inadequate for this position that God has called me to fulfill as your pastor. That is why praying for me and the rest of the leadership team here at MOLC is so important. We need your prayers.

#### I. A POSITION OF GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY

As I was working on this sermon this week, while not one of our readings I was reminded of the story Moses and Joshua in Exodus 17. **I invite you to look up Ex. 17:9-13**... Moses sent Joshua and his men into battle with Amalek and the Amalekites. Moses went to the top of hill to lift his hands and God's staff in prayer. When he was lifting his hands Israel prevailed. When his hands grew weary and he lowered them, Amalek prevailed. His helpers then literally supported him in prayer as they kept his arms raised. Israel prevailed.

- i. His position was one of intercession - scholars agree - Moses was praying
- ii. His position was inspirational (on the hill for all to see)
- iii. His position was instrumental to their success

The primary roles of church leaders goes beyond the obvious

- i. Intercession is the work of the ministry
  - ii. Church leaders must inspire with their example as well as their words
- Illus. As our pastor's sermon stretched on, my daughter grew impatient and started to talk. "Shhh," I whispered. "I want to hear the sermon." Later that week, we saw our pastor while shopping. We exchanged greetings, and as we walked away, I asked my daughter, "Do you know who that was?" "Sure," she replied. "That was the Sermon." Pastors and ministry leaders ought to all be recognized as walking sermons - not only preaching their messages but also practicing their messages. Helen Siml, Wheaton, IL. "Heart to Heart," Today's Christian Woman.

- iii. Good leadership is instrumental in the success of the gospel
  1. Good leaders know how to delegate and recruit other leaders
  2. Good leaders know how to work within their boundaries
  3. Good leaders see the bigger picture
  4. Good leaders are supported mightily in prayer

As your pastor, I just want to take a moment and thank each and every one of you who have taken a leadership role at this church. You bear great responsibility to God and to your fellow church members and you have my prayers and gratitude!

## II. A PRAYER THAT BROUGHT GOD-SIZED RESULTS (vv. 10-11)

- a. There is a very simple, yet profound, lesson to be learned here in Ex. 17 - Prayer is crucial to victory. When Moses lifted his hands in intercession, the Israelites prevailed but when he grew weary and dropped his hands in prayer, they began to lose.
- b. Christian Evangelist Leonard Ravenhill - "If weak in prayer, we are weak everywhere."
- c. We must understand how crucial the ministry of prayer is to the work of the church. When we lift our hands up we will see victory and when we let them drop, we will face the agony of defeat.
- d. We often convince ourselves that we only need to spend just a few minutes in prayer because we have hours of work to do but we have it all backwards. We ought to spend hours in prayer and minutes in the work.

## III. A PEOPLE WHO FULFILLED A GREATER ROLE (v. 12)

- a. As the battle raged on, Moses grew tired and his hands began to drop and his prayers began to falter. That is when Aaron and Hur came along side Moses to help.
- b. This is a powerful picture of what it is like for believers to come along side of their leaders and bolster their prayer efforts with their own prayers. I would dare say that one of the greatest needs in church today is for people to pray for their church leadership.

- i. If I had to ask what you thought was the most important role in our church, what would you say? I would say that those serve as prayer warriors and fulfilling the most important role.
- ii. I am so very grateful for those of you that pray for me - for those that I know about and those that I do not know about. I need your prayers daily.
- iii. I want to encourage you though - every church leader needs prayer, not just me.

c. Other pastors and church leaders need your prayers too. Listen to the startling statistics by the Schaeffer Institute:

### **Slide:**

- i. 50% of the ministers starting out in ministry will not last 5 years.
- ii. 4,000 new churches begin each year, and yet 7,000 churches close.
- iii. Over 20,400 pastors left the ministry last year.
- iv. Over 15,600 pastors were terminated by their church last year, many without cause.
- v. Pastors, along with doctors and police rate among highest professions for suicide, addiction and depression.

d. SO, we truly need your prayer. So, how can you better pray for me and other church leaders here at Mount Olive?

I want to give you the opportunity now to add to our new member covenant by filling out the card you received: **Slide:** "Since our pastors, staff, and leaders cannot do everything, I will pray for... I Timothy 2:8 - "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling..."