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I recently had lunch with a group of FEBC pastors, and as we shared and prayed together, we discovered that most of the men in the room were dealing with some truly difficult situation. Some of these issues involved family members, some involved church and ministry issues, but regardless of the source of the difficulty, each of these men is dealing with a weighty issue that is not easily resolved. It was a blessing to seek God's face on behalf of one another.

But pastors do not get to deal with their own issues like most people do. Most of us have a job that is likely to stress us out, but when we clock out and go home, we can focus on the other aspects of life – family, finances, maintaining a home, and many other things, including managing whatever stressful situation is weighing us down.

While your pastor is "off work" and managing all those personal things, he is likely also heavily involved in multiple stressful situations in the lives of other people. Perhaps when he is just ready to sit down and process a problem with his wife, he receives a text asking him to mediate a dispute between church members. Or at a moment when much needed rest is finally available, he is called to rush to the hospital after a church member's accident. Shepherding a church is not just a job.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not suggesting that we all need to stop bothering the pastor. A healthy pastor is not bothered by tending to his flock. It is not just his duty, but his privilege and honor to be used as Jesus' under shepherd in these situations. Please reach out to your pastor or another church elder in your times of need!

But I am saying that pastors are human, and they need care too. As a Fellowship, we offer resources to bolster the health of your pastor. We offer retreats for our pastoral couples, along with Connect, as means to connect and to be refreshed. We offer advice to churches on proper pastoral care, along with advice to pastors on how to remain healthy in ministry. But perhaps most importantly, we offer prayer, encouragement, and a listening ear whenever your pastor is in need. Gary and I are privileged to serve our pastors in this way.

I encourage each one reading this letter to encourage your pastor, pray for him, and be patient when he is going through a difficult time. If you want more specific advice on how to support your pastor well, ask me for a copy of our resource: "**Caring for Pastors.**"

Thank you for supporting your pastor, and for supporting our Fellowship!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Stone", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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