

## Pastors Overwhelmed

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I read recently that a young clergywoman in a Mainline denomination took her own life last week. I don't know her name or anything else about her, but this breaks my heart. A gifted child of God who was called to professional ministry considered death by suicide as an option and she took that option.

If you have a pastor or if you know a pastor, please offer that pastor a break. Share encouraging words. Contribute to a gift card to Door Dash or Air BNB. Write a quick note. Please.

Here's what pastors *do not* need right now:

- **Your complaints about online worship.** Maybe you hate it. Maybe you like it. But your pastor is trying to do their best. Help them. Give them the equipment or volunteer hours or funds they need to do this. Volunteer to preach or find a guest preacher to give them a Sunday off.
- **Your accusations that they aren't working very hard, especially if they are working from home.** Actually, work is different now for everybody and it's spilling into all hours of the day and night. Pastor Parents of young children are dealing with a lot right now – just like people in other occupations working from home.
- **Your political frustrations.** Yes, the world is divided and hot. Do not criticize your pastor for trying to serve God in the thick of Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter. Encourage your pastor to speak the Truth in love.
- **Your efforts to go rogue.** If your leaders have voted to hold off on in-person worship, don't organize a coup and gather at the sanctuary with cranky signage. Your leaders make decisions based on the law and the health of members and staff. Let them lead.
- **Your hand-wringing.** Yes we all worry about when we'll get back to some semblance of normality. Your pastor might be worried too. Don't pile on.
- **Your ghosting.** This is not the time to stop participating in worship gatherings or Bible studies. This is not the time to refrain from making financial contributions. While you disappear, your pastors are working harder than ever to lead the church. They can't disappear themselves.
- **Your negativity.** This is actually a great time to come together as the Church. The Church has so many new options for making a difference in your neighborhood, your town, your corner of the world. What new thing is God calling you to do and be?

What I'm not saying:

**I'm not saying we should be skipping happily through the day.** People are grieving everything from the loss of human life to the loss of human connection. We miss so many pre-pandemic things.

Your pastor feels this in a deeply spiritual way, as well as in an emotional, physical, and social way. Be a sibling in Christ. Recognize that these are not easy times for your spiritual leaders.

They deserve God's grace too.

If you are overwhelmed and need help, please contact your doctor or the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255](#)