



OCTOBER—2003 PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

Pastors need a lot of support from their community. The eight ways listed below will be a positive way to show your pastor you care:

1. **PRAY.** Prayer is the most powerful weapon you can use to help your pastor. They have daily struggles as much as, or more than, we do. Take time to ask the Lord to bless them in their very important ministry.
2. **MAKE AN EFFORT TO LEARN FROM YOUR PASTOR'S MESSAGE.** Try each day to work on your relationship with God, and you'll honor your pastor and the lessons that they teach.
3. **SHOW YOUR PASTOR PERSONAL SIGNS OF APPRECIATION.** A thank you card or an offer to assist them at church functions may not seem like much, but it's a great way to show your pastor that you appreciate them.
4. **GET TO KNOW THEM BETTER.** Take your pastor out to lunch or dinner. Invite them over to your house for a family get-together. Taking the time to get to know your pastor will make it much easier for them in the long run.
5. **GET INVOLVED.** Your pastor works hard to turn your congregation into a true community. Reward him by taking an active part in church programs and activities.
6. **HAVE A CELEBRATION.** Pull your congregation together for a special service of appreciation.
7. **SHOW UNDERSTANDING.** Pastors are just as human as the rest of us and they are just as troubled by pressures of life. Show as much compassion for them and their problems as they would show for yours.
8. **SPONSOR A VACATION PACKAGE.** Some pastors just don't have the time, or finances, to plan a real vacation. Work with your church secretary and surprise your pastor with a trip of a lifetime.

To find out more about Hawaii Family Forum, visit our website at:
<http://www.hawaiifamilyforum.org>



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HAWAII FAMILY FORUM

September, 2003

LOVING ALL OUR NEIGHBORS

In a nutshell, Hawaii Family Forum strives to help each of us love our neighbors. It is an important command with a broad scope. Reading it, saying it, believing it is one thing. Doing it is quiet another. Why? There are several reasons.

One is how we define neighbor. Who is our neighbor? In answer to this specific question, Jesus told the story of the Samaritan who helped the overlooked Jewish traveler on the side of the road when two others had passed him by. The Samaritan helped the traveler up, cleaned his wounds, led him to safety and paid the tab for his care. (*Luke 10:27-37*) This Biblical perspective is clear— EVERYONE IS OUR NEIGHBOR, regardless of culture, race, creed, gender or economic status. Hopefully we treat our physical neighbors, our friends, our classmates, and our co-workers in a neighborly way. But "neighbor" goes far beyond these; it extends to the street person at River of Life, the ice addict and her children, the inmate at Halawa, the guy who gets on our last nerve at work, the driver who keeps cutting everyone off in traffic, the gay couple at the grocery store, the persons, close at hand or in the distance, that are struggling financially, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

A second reason we fail to live out this commandment is how we define love. The kind of love commanded in the scriptures is more than neighborliness. It is about compassion and commitment to the worth of all people, enough to work for aid and justice on their behalf. Love is the essence of who we are and why we are here. Again hearing, saying, thinking it is one thing. The Message describes this command as "loving others as well as you love yourself." That's a tall order.

Can you imagine the radical change we would see in our communities if we succeeded at this one simple command? Can you imagine how many people would be rushing to get into the church doors each weekend? Can you imagine how many homes and lives and communities would be changed by fulfilling what Christ described as one of the two greatest commandments? (*Mark 12:31*) I can only imagine.

This neighbor love extends also to our pastors and priests. October is Clergy Appreciation month—not that you should wait for this time of year to tell your pastor how much you appreciate him, you can do that anytime! But do apply the love-your-neighbor principle to your church leaders, especially in October. Cook dinner for them, send them a card or a gift certificate, give them a hug, and tell them that you appreciate all they do for God and for you. (*1 Thessalonians 5:12-13a*)

Another way we can each love our neighbors is by participating in our community. By being aware and involved we can help scores of our neighbors. Proverbs 31:8-9 commands us to "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those who are perishing. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless and see that they get justice." But speak in love. When we take a stand and work against things that are bad for our society, we are loving all our neighbors. When we applaud and patronize things that are good for our neighborhoods and nation, we love our neighbors. And when we love our neighbors, we glorify God.

One more thing, my friends, this "loving our neighbors" thing will require us to turn off our computers and our televisions and spend time with our families giving, helping and serving our neighbors!

God's blessings as you love ALL your neighbors with the love of Jesus Christ.

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