



Bracken Association of Baptists

Partnering Together for the Kingdom

5015 Main Street
Mayslick, KY 41055

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FLEMINGSBURG, KY 41041

«NAME»

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606.763.6260 | brackenassoc@kybab.com | kybab.com

"For we are God's fellow workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9a NKJV).

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A Word from the DOM

The last couple of months have not been very eventful but they have been very productive. It has been a great time for myself to have one to one meetings with several pastors. Within the last month I have met with several pastors for lunch or coffee. I have greatly enjoyed getting to know our pastors better and trying to encourage them in some small way as they serve the Lord.

Pastors have one of the most challenging jobs in the world. They are given the responsibility to shepherd, feed, equip and lead the Lord's people to follow after Christ. That is a great responsibility and comes with a great amount of challenges especially for a man that himself is imperfect. Especially, with our church culture in America that sometimes is structured more as a business model rather than a biblical model. As pastors strive to lead the people of Christ to follow Christ many of our preferences, traditions, unfair criticisms and unrealistic expectations can hinder our pastors work and discourage our pastors. Churches tend to place too many responsibilities and expectations upon a pastor while at the same time suggesting that he only works on Sundays which is, absurd.

Not only are the expectations and work loads of pastors often unrealistic but the personal struggles of a pastor can be just as difficult. The standards most people have for a pastor are often very unrealistic as well. The pastor is and should be held to a higher standard due to his role in the church but he is still just a man in need of the grace of God. The reality is that your pastor will let you down in some way. He is not Jesus. Just as the people within the church struggle to put up with the old man to death so do pastors. Common struggles for pastors include depression, loneliness, marital issues, parenting, pride, anxiety, financial difficulty, and avoiding sexual

temptations. Pastors are not immune to temptation or sin. Pastors need our prayers, support and encouragement frequently because discouragement, loneliness, criticism and temptation probably come quite often.

In a book *Pastors At Greater Risk* H.B. London Jr. shares a few statistics concerning some of the challenges pastors face that we need to take note of:

- 90% of pastors work more than 46 hrs. a week.
- 80% believe pastoral ministry affects their family negatively.
- 75% report they've had a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry.
- 40% report a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month.
- 50% feel unable to meet the needs of the job.
- 90% feel inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands.
- The clergy has the 2nd highest divorce rate among all professions.
- 80% of pastors say they have insufficient time with spouse.
- 56% of pastors wives say they have no close friends.

These are some pretty alarming statistics and that is just scratching the surface of struggles that our pastors and their families face. I pray that as you read this it reminds us all of a couple things. First, pastors you are not alone in your struggles and know that your DOM is praying for you and is available to you as a friend. Secondly, church members pray for you pastors, befriend them, encourage them, remind them of the grace of God, appreciate them, share the work load they bear, and make sure their families are cared for and loved.

In Christ Alone,
Rev. Dewayne Slusher
Director of Missions

Prayer Concerns

-Churches without a pastor:

Calvary Baptist and Stonelick Baptist.

-Pastor Tony Bishop who is having severe back problems.

-Pastor Jonathan Groves and his family as they leave for India to adopt their daughter Haddasha.

*If you have a prayer request you would like to be added to this list please notify the association office by email at: brackenassoc@kybab.com

Monthly Church Prayer List

February:

First Baptist Church Carlisle

Central Baptist Church

Clearfield Baptist Church

March:

Crosspoint Baptist Church

Crossroads Baptist Church

Dover Baptist Church

April:

Ewing Baptist Church

Flemingsburg Baptist Church

Foxport Baptist Church

Around the Association

Tues. Feb. 10th 6:30pm Executive Board
at FBC Maysville

Tues. April 14th 6:30pm Spring Meeting
at Flemingsburg Baptist

Sat. April 11th Disaster Relief Training
at Lancaster Baptist Lancaster, KY

Tues. April 28th 7:00pm United Day of Prayer
Lewisburg Baptist Church

Birthdays & Anniversaries

February

11th Jean Simmons, Pastor's Wife, Plainview

28th Janet Bishop, Pastor's Wife, Augusta

March

6th Brad & Janet Caudill, Irvingsville

6th Harry & Opal Brooks, Mt Olivet

11th Christi Liess, Pastor's Wife, Maysville

29th Al Simmons, Pastor, Plainview

*If we have missed your birthday or anniversary
please let us know so we can update our records.