

## BE THERE

In 1982, my wife and I came to Southern California to start our church. We knew no one and had never stepped foot in Riverside County before moving here. But we came to give our best, try to help people, and to honor God.

Before long, I traveled with some of our people to a nearby city to hear some preaching. It was a kind and blessed church (with faithful workers caring for the nursery, serving as ushers, singing in the choir, providing special music, and of course, everyone helping with the finances of this large ministry).

Within a short time, the pastor left. Another pastor came and these faithful members regrouped under a new leader, served in Sunday school, the Christian school, and many other ministries. Again the pastor left, and again the people rallied together under their new leader, and gave of their finances, time, and hearts. I preached there on several occasions, and the people were wonderful, faithful, and godly. Again, the pastor left. Repeat the story of these faithful members, and recently, a fourth pastor has left.

I have watched four pastors leave these good people. I was praying for their morning today. As it is Sunday, I know they have needs. There have been deaths, financial troubles, and marriage difficulties; and they have had no pastor. Teenagers have had three pastors they remember, all of whom have left. Who is preaching this morning that loves these young people? Who is grieving over the elderly who struggle to get their morning going and try to get to church? As I sent texts to several sick and elderly folks in our church this morning, no one did that in this church. As I spoke for a few minutes with one dear widow who is not well enough to get out to church, I thought of those widows in that church, and in my heart, I wondered why their pastor, one of them, did not care enough to stay and meet their needs.

Pastor, when you pray over taking a pulpit, please remember it is not a job, it is the lives of precious people who have need of a man of God -- not a perfect man, but a faithful man. When struggles come, which they do to all of us, remember who has been paying your check, feeding your children, and teaching the classes in Sunday school. Go in the will of God; stay in the will of God; serve faithfully in the will of God; and most of all, love in the will of God.

If you consider leaving that church, ask yourself who will love those people when you are gone and they are hurting. It is a sad situation indeed that I, as a pastor many miles away, am praying for people I have never pastored.

My heart breaks over the fact that I am concerned about their needs today, and that I fear for their youth and the choices they may be making. I, as a distant friend, am concerned about their senior citizens and who is caring for them, yet the men who were called their pastor have left again and again and again. Where is the love?

Why is it that I have received the calls from distraught deacons in other cities when their pastors left? Why am I fielding questions from staff members whose pastors have done wrong and left them without leadership? Why is it I am worried about the spiritual welfare of church members I know in other churches when their pastor has left, unconcerned about the needs of their own members? Why is it that I am flying to another city to preach and to meet with faithful members, and to guide them through the sorrows of losing a preacher to sin? Where is their pastor? Why is it I scramble to find money to care for Christmas gifts for the wife and children abandoned by their pastor dad? Where is he? This morning as I prayed, I thought of their needs, texted the needy wives, and assured them of the love my wife and I have for them. Where is the pastor and his love for his own?

We may not preach the best sermons; we may not be the best at organizing the ministry; we may not be the best soul winners -- but men, we can be THERE and we can CARE.

[www.thepreachersfriend.com](http://www.thepreachersfriend.com)