



# Crossroads District

Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church

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Okay....it's almost that time of year when we all scratch our heads thinking "what could I possibly give my pastor for Pastors' Appreciation Month?" While some gifts require the outlay of \$\$\$, the ones which would probably be appreciated the most cost nothing but love. Here are two examples:

- Write a simple and heartfelt letter of appreciation. Talk to their spouses - and children - to find out how much time they spend doing God's work and (once you get over the shock of how much time that is) include profound thanks for their service; or
- At least once a month during the next year, try to make some special observation about the pastor's sermon. It's easy to say "nice sermon, pastor." But even in my limited preaching experience, I really appreciate it when someone says "I really like that part of the sermon where you said....." Or you could ask to talk further about some part of the sermon over a cup of coffee.

When it comes to purchased gifts, it's probably best to resist those cross-and-flame gift items. Your pastor probably already has a ton of bookends, coffee mugs, etc. Ties – don't EVEN think about it! Try to think of something a little more personal. How about:

- A magazine subscription. Today there are magazines geared toward every interest you could image. It's pretty easy to find a topic your pastor would enjoy reading about.
- Bar-b-que accessories and maybe a grilling cookbook.
- Fishing lures for those who love to fish.
- A visit to a spa/massage.
- Homemade jam, pickles, barbeque sauce, pasta sauce, etc.
- If you make a "special recipe" you know your pastor likes, a "coupon" for that dish (letting your pastor decide when).
- Golf tees/balls, tennis balls, ping-pong balls, running, camping or hiking gear.
- Coffee basket.

Gift certificates for:

- Bookstores, online booksellers (don't assume your pastor only reads Christian literature. I have a clergy friend who loves Agatha Christy-type mysteries!)
- Dining, coffee shops
- Car repair, gas cards, oil changes
- Lawn care
- Grocery and clothing stores
- Movies, sporting events, plays, concerts

Consider pooling resources with your small group or others in your church to provide something more expensive but truly useful and wonderful, such as:

- 12 (or more) babysitting coupons for monthly date nights
- A romantic one-night get away, including hotel, dinner and childcare
- Attendance costs for pastor and spouse at an uplifting conference or concert
- Cash for something you know they need but can't afford (airfare to see an ailing parent, down payment for a car, much-needed home renovation project, braces for a child, etc.)

And there's no reason your gift can't be humorous! For instance, there's a wonderful T-shirt that defines a pastor as: "Pastor (noun): Hardcore devil-stomping ninja empowered by the Holy Spirit."

More than anything, pastors—and their spouses—are in need of affirmation and encouragement. Your handwritten letter of appreciation will do far more for their spirits than any token or obligatory gift offering, so consider including more than a "Happy Pastors' Appreciation Month" with your gift. As the saying goes, what comes from the heart touches the heart.

In His Service,

Dale and Fritz  
Crossroads District Co-Lay Leaders