

# Challenges and solutions to clergy members burnout



Statistics show that clergy members in the United States are suffering from an epidemic of burnout (Gonzales, 2018). Pastors are very susceptible to burnout (Gonzales, 2018). Reportedly, 54% of pastors still work over 55 hours a week, 57% cannot pay their bills, 54% are overworked, and 43% feel stressed all the time, 53% feel seminary had not adequately prepared them for the task, 35% battle depression, 26% are overly fatigued, 28% are spiritually undernourished, 9% are burnt-out, 23% are still distant to their families, and 18% work more than 70 hours a week and face unreasonable challenges (Statistics on Pastors: 2016 Update, 2016). Clergy frequently struggles with burnout symptoms and escape by feeding into negative feelings through addiction, such as food and sex (Adams, Hough, Proeschold-Bell, Yao & Kolkin, 2017).

The Southern Baptist Convention is the first largest Protestant Denomination in the United States and the second largest in Christianity next to the Catholic Church (Southern Baptist Convention -SBC Annuals, n. d.). The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is a community of over 47, 000 Baptist places of worship dispersed throughout the United States and its regions transversely which means that there are at least 47, 000 pastors and most likely even more across the USA (Southern Baptist Convention > Fast Facts About the SBC, n. d.). This pattern of pastor burnout is similar with the Assemblies of God denomination. About 65 % of Assembly of God clergy surveyed were either suffering from exhaustion or on the edge of fatigue (Visker, Rider, & Humphers-Ginther, 2017). Pastors display higher pressure and death rates in comparison to their nonclergy counterparts (Mavroudis, 2019). Ministers average more labor hours per week than other executives

and specialists, according to Jackson Carroll, instructor emeritus at Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina, and a long-term pastor-scholar. Most ministers will acknowledge when enquired about their private and professional lives, that serving Jesus in a church frequently creates lonesomeness, the absence of opportunities for continuing specialized and individual growth, and exterior and internal stress to oversee one's well-being in caring for others (Miller, 2016). The pressures of the profession will cause many to select (or be required) to step away or leave ministry all in all (Tanner, Zvonkovic, & Adams, 2012).

The direct goal of a theoretical prototype is to guide, practice, and evaluate a model's helpfulness in training. Even though a model could be hypothetically valuable in an explicit and well-defined situation, its ultimate practicality is dependent on whether pastors can adjust it to their circumstances (Wilson & Darling, 2017). Scholars have combined family stress theory and the classic ABC-X model of family stress, which have been utilized in past study to inspect the method of anxiety managing in pastor families (Wagnild, Rodriguez, & Pritchett, 1987)

These theories would help with understanding how well clergy can adjust to their environment and improve coping skills. Through more study, one can become more enlightened on how to assist pastors and churches in caring more effectively for its clergy (Randall, 2013). Burnout is considered to be a psychological condition of emotive fatigue, depersonalization, and reduced individual achievement that can occur amongst persons who labor with other persons in some dimensions (Adams et al., 2017). The significances of burnout are theoretically grave not only for clergy but then also for receivers <https://assignbuster.com/challenges-and-solutions-to-clergy-members-burnout/>

of the envisioned care. Consequences connected with professional burnout comprise lessened job displeasure, absence, diminished efficiency, reduced organizational commitment, decreased physical well-being, reduced quality of life satisfaction, loss of resolution, emotive difficulties, aloneness, lowered self-worth, marital struggles, and a considerable loss of intimacy and fulfillment in associations both personally and job wise (Adams et al., 2017). Learning how to assist these clergy members will help deter clergy burnout and thus help church members

A minister's principal role comprises individuals like lay leaders, church associates, the judicatory decision-making, judicatory staff, and community leaders as well as, insofar as the minister contemplates of his or her labor as a vocation, God, Jesus, and Spirit. Through socialization and other interpersonal developments, role prospects become a portion of a minister's identity (Cafferata, 2017). It is thus crucial for churches and clergy to define the pastor's role and expectations (Hang-yue, Foley, & Loi, 2005). Some churches have a more defined role that the pastor has, and it is well communicated to him how what is expected of him by the congregation. Many churches do not have clear expectations, and the pastor has to discern written or unwritten expected requirements for his position. The structural framework would help in better understanding that effects of those expectations. (Cafferata, 2017).

Randall presents in his research that approximately half (47 %) of clergy find themselves unsatisfied in their efforts to achieve responsibilities that are vital to them. More than two-fifths of the ministers feel exhausted by fulfilling their occupational duties (44 %). Over a third of the pastors described that <https://assignbuster.com/challenges-and-solutions-to-clergy-members-burnout/>

exhaustion and frustration are part of their everyday experience (38 %). Neither gender nor age interrelated meaningfully with the gage utilized (Randall, 2013). These roles are important because when a pastor is having job satisfaction and sensing purpose, he can excel at helping others more effectively. If a pastor is struggling with severe fatigue, he will not feel the need to care for his flock. He will not feel the need to study for messages nor will he feel the need to lead his congregation. It is crucial for churches to define and communicate expectations. Joynt (2017) designates six practitioner duties of a pastor, which are interactively focused on as overseer, planner, pastor, preacher, presbyter, and instructor. The job of an overseer is to provide. These have extended in scope and comprise present-day dissimilarities such as life coach. Expectations are wide-ranging and often unrealistic and often begs the question of whom chooses what pastors do?

Niebuhr, Williams, and Gustafson (Joynt, 2017) specify that the purpose of the preacher in the contemporary community is indefinite. According to Scripture the purpose of a pastor is to proclaim God's Word, protect the flock, counsel and encourage the people. These purposes are extremely difficult to carry out if the pastor is tired, is depressed, and is burnout. Approximately 70% of pastors' spend 10 to 18 hours on sermon research for one sermon (Daly, 2019). If a pastor preaches three sermons a week, he is spending 54 hours a week studying, which also means also he must still visit, handle emergencies, counsel members, attend committee meetings, and deal with various problems in the congregation. He also needs to spend time

with God his family. These are the precise reasons that burnout occurs so quickly for clergy.

### Environmental Factors That Cause Stress

High levels of interruption categorize boundary indistinctness: the work realm associated with designed ministry often infringes upon the family domain-producing boundary uncertainty (need citation). The boundaries of household and church frequently collide for the reason that the responsibilities of ordained minister do not follow within the traditional 9–5 work-hour calendar. Pastors are on call 24 h a day, seven days a week. (Wells, Probst, McKeown, Mitchem, & Whiejong, 2012). Exploration directed by Wells et al. (2012) tells that the dual landscape of relationships within the clergy occupation generates boundary uncertainty and attachment problems. Pastors, dissimilar from other caregiving specialists, do not follow to a typical code of ethics that delivers or sets guiding principles and guidelines for dual relationships. Dual dealings are occurrences wherein a serving professional and a consumer portion multiple roles. A pastor may perhaps concurrently serve as an individual therapist, a co-committee associate, and a friend to followers of the churchgoers. Such dual roles might trigger boundary and attachment matters. Also, pastors who described more trouble with boundary matters experienced higher anxiety (Wells, Probst, McKeown, Mitchem & Whiejong, 2012).

### Types of Mental Health Issues Clergy Face

It is not uncommon for professional clergy to struggle with health conditions (need citation). Part of the roles of pastors deals with death and dying. Thus <https://assignbuster.com/challenges-and-solutions-to-clergy-members-burnout/>

trauma is not at all a unique issue that pastors face often in ministry. Those who have chosen to become professional ministers have chosen a life that without being aware have embarked upon a dangerous expedition. Serving within the Christian pastorate has been recognized as a demanding progression. Experiential exploration shows that pastors across spiritual orientations and topographical settings report poor work-related mental health. Documentation of pastor exhaustion shows a progressively widespread problem (Visker, Rider, & Humphers-Ginther, 2017). The pressures from the duties of pastors often affect physical, mental and spiritual health. These duties lead to the pastor being 'on call' seven days a week, unrealistic expectations, loneliness, recurrent moving, learning new responsibilities and abilities, feelings of disappointment and dealing with the agony of the various individual from the church or community. Secondary trauma is a huge problem for the clergy (Visker, Rider, & Humphers-Ginther, 2017).

#### Environmental Dynamics and Other Factors that Trigger Mental Health Issues

Research shows that the familiar elements of pastors are unrealistic expectations for themselves which other scholars have signified that pastors' roles are continually related to stress and depression (Proeschold-Bell, Legrand, James, Wallace, Adams, & Toole, 201). Clergy members often have problems in setting boundaries. Pastors who tend not to acknowledge a role of stress for societal attractiveness reasons, and who have a strong servant temperament, putting the desires of others in advance of their own. A previous inquiry has also illustrated its adverse connection between pastors' well-being and matters of lack of confidentiality or invasiveness. A pastor's <https://assignbuster.com/challenges-and-solutions-to-clergy-members-burnout/>

health is affected by work difficulty and the variety of roles that clergy hold, with an emphasis on the high stresses of the ministry. Other research has noted the potential for communal remoteness and absence of close friendships amongst pastors. Scholars have also examined the aspect of congregational healthiness and disapproval or backing from the congregation, concerning pastoral health. The explanations contributors made about church healthiness confirm the anecdotal signals of ecclesiastical environment described the article (Hang-yue et al., 2005).

The three instances of problematic church dynamics that fit into the “toxic congregation” group in which congregants utilize a significant volume of control in passing a schema that is contentious or precarious to the church (Hang-yue et al., 2005). Pastoral contributors also described that their congregations have a shallow understanding of clergy’s duties occasionally distinguishing that clergy “only preach” and visit with ill followers. Laity expectations of the clergy are most likely to be idealistically high and broad; they see clergy as having considerable free time. At the same time, participants in the study specified that they have less unpaid helpers accessible to them than in the past, and additionally, that church members look to them as salaried experts to take on any uncompleted responsibilities. Amongst the 42 mediators of health that the model classifies, contributors supposed that the ones most impacting the pastor’s health are lack of boundary-setting; ecclesiastical followers insight that the clergy is continuously accessible; financial strain; ministerial health; and itinerancy(Hang-yue et al., 2005).



Frequently clergy members believe they are a hero of types, overlooking their physical well-being, and trusting they are unsusceptible to disease. While medicinal research in numerous denominations specify that pastoral associates live extended lives in comparison to civilians, a new body of indications over the last several decades has revealed that preachers are more susceptible to diabetes, hopelessness, hypertension, digestive distress and cardiac problems (Emmons, 2016).

As a means of escape, many clergy members have become caught up in pornography and sex addiction. Studies have shown that 15% of clergy met criteria for cybersex dependence (Ahmad, Thoburn, Perry, McBrearty, Olson, & Gunn, 2015). Clergy members appear to be at increased danger for emerging an online sexual dependence given the quantity of time consumed in isolation. Many clergy members sacrifice individual associations for the sake of their vocation (Manister & Gigliotti, 2016). Likewise, ministers are anticipated to be independent and able to attend for themselves without supervision. This remoteness shared with unstructured work periods can lead to permit time to surf the internet. (Ahmad, et al., 2015). The penalties that transpire with highly public figures, such as ministers, who confess their sexual dependences are often dissimilar from the overall populace who may approve similar deeds.

Consequently, a minister may fear to speak to someone about this kind of problem; he or she may not know who can be reliable with privacy. If their sexual addictions were to become common knowledge, and given the legal matters confronted by the church currently, a minister would likely face firing from the ecclesiastical body with the incapability to ever return to that

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same church (Laaser & Gregoire, 2003). In this sense, there appears to be more of an advantage in keeping struggles concealed than endeavoring to seek treatment (Ahmad et al., 2015).

Because clergy often work many hours and their vocation requires a lot of social demands, pastors frequently turn to food for comfort (Ferguson, Andercheck, Tom, Martinez & Stroope, 2015). Also, in regards to bi-vocational pastors, because they either have another job or another congregation they frequently deal with stress via food. Additionally, self-blame, guilt, and lower self-image become risk issue for weight problems which can be a consequence following such role conflict for the reason that a pastor falls short of the potentials of church members related with his roles (Ferguson et al., 2015). Moreover, because clergy members frequently do not have the time and money to invest in healthy eating habits and exercise, thus increasing the likelihood of negative consequences of poor eating habits.

### Future Research

Clergy tension is an increasing phenomenon in the U. S. A. and other Western nations, distressing not only the pastor but the whole family as well (Guzman & Teh, 2016). A survey of 1, 050 of American ministers showed by the Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development included that 90 % of the participants stated that they experiencing exhaustion and being extremely tired, 71 % acknowledged unhappiness on a day-to-day basis, and 81 % felt there were no support for them (Guzman & Teh, 2016). Thus pastors and family frequently have problems with

communication, and it is not uncommon for pastors to use their spouse or children as a scapegoat for stress from work (Lharris, 2010). Research shows that pastors frequently use psychotropic medications to manage signs of psychological disorders and emotional suffering.

Additionally, more than one in five pastors had a claim for psychotropic drugs, and amongst clergy who experience chronic work-related distress, more than 25 % needed a claim. This percentage is higher than the rate of adults in the United States populaces with requests for psychotropic medications. Elderly pastors, female ministers, and those undergoing everyday work-related anguish are more probable to have a claim (Emmons, 2016). Current demographic variations in the pastor populace (i. e., growing average age of pastors and the augmenting amount of female clergy) propose that the use of psychotropic medicine amongst pastors will upsurge in the pending years (Frenk, Mustillo, Foy, Arroyave, Hooten, Lauderback, & Meador, 2013)

A weekly Sabbath is a way pastors can prevent burnout and give them some self-care. Sabbath exercise would be the deliberate actions of pastors to disengage from vocational responsibilities at minimum once a week for a time of at least four to six hours for the resolution of reflection, prayer, relaxation, training, or contemplation via a variety of arrangements. It is purposefully engaging in self-care exercises and in so doing, linking with God in sustaining equilibrium of fitness, faith, perception, and self-differentiation (Kanipe, 2017). Positive self-talk training is another boon in helping pastors build self-confidence and helping them succeed with their roles. Scriptural memorization in empowering them to draw on the power of their faith in the <https://assignbuster.com/challenges-and-solutions-to-clergy-members-burnout/>

person of Christ. A Christian therapist who is perhaps specialized with pastors and could guarantee that confidentiality would be a tremendous asset to helping clergy to survive and learn through their struggle.

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