

Role of a Pastor's Husband

A pastor's calling is a marvelous calling but at times, can be very challenging, lonely, exciting, frustrating, and yet very satisfying. Just as it is important for any man to have a help mate, it is doubly important for a female pastor to have that "*special someone*" to assist and fulfill God's calling for their "*special work*" or ministry.

Role of a pastor's husband is not really defined and there is no "cookie cutter" approach to follow. Can a husband's role be equally the same as it would for a pastor's wife? I think not. There are certain dynamics and differences when it comes to the roles of a female pastor and for her male spouse.

One husband commented that his concerns were about time and activities they will have together now. They were married before she became a pastor. "Will I ever see her again? I also wondered how the church would accept her. I had concerns about my place as a member. What would the church expect of me? Would I have to play the piano or sing?" There were also safety concerns because she would be out on visitation in the evenings.

Being the husband of a pastor does not mean there is a total role reversal. While some of the spousal duties may look similar, the role of a pastor's husband is essential to the success of the ministry and to their marriage.

A husband is to take care of the wife as the weaker vessel. This does not mean that he rules over her and tries to make the decisions for her in the church, not overtly protect her from harm. There are certain boundaries and guidelines that should be considered. Wisdom is far more important than brawn.

Listed below are guidelines and suggestions to be considered.

1. The Spouse (husband) must recognize his wife's ministry. He does not overshadow his wife in any way, allowing her to freely perform her duties as a pastor.
2. Husbands must accept the fact his wife that has the authority in the church and husbands have the authority in the home. (even though sometimes the female is authoritative and disciplinarian in the home)
3. The husband is to help his wife in the ministry because they are in this together. If both are not in the ministry together, this could negatively affect the church and role of a pastor.
4. It is typical that a woman needs love and acceptance and the male needs respect. Discovering ways to validate these will lead to a healthier ministry and home.

5. Husbands usually are employed in secular settings and may not be active in the daily operations of the ministry or church. A husband should not be considered as an unpaid part-time employee if he becomes more active in the daily operations of the church.
6. While the male spouse is the protector of his wife and home, he should be the ears and eyes for her as a wife/preacher/pastor.
7. Husbands must accept that there are times when he cannot come to his wife's side to rescue her. There may be times when his wife may get hurt and lied to by others. He must learn when and how to intervene. He cannot take over things. Avoidance and handling things through Godly wisdom can keep his wife from embarrassment.
8. Husbands should make suggestions when they are alone, not in front of their church membership or other church leaders. Neither is he to correct or reprimand his wife in front of the membership.
9. A husband should always encourage his wife through praise.
10. Husbands should also be careful how they conduct themselves or what they say at church due to others listening or watching. There is no need to be paranoid, but the position of the pastor and her family is a visible and honorable position.
11. Husband and wife should strategize and develop a plan for the husband to signal to his wife to alert her when things are not quite right.
12. Husbands should be friendly to everyone but also realize that not everyone is his friend.
13. The female pastor should also recognize the dynamics of both careers and not neglect family life.
14. The husband should help his wife to fulfill her potential. This may mean, "Letting go and letting God have His way." His place is to love his wife and support her in her calling. That will help him in the long run because she will become the person God wants her to be.

The role of a husband should be really to love and take care of his wife. There are many areas which a husband can aid and support her ministry through works in the church. He can be involved in Christian education, communication, audio/visual, music, greeter, men's department leader, fund raising chairman, community outreach leader, and so much more. He should allow God to use and place him in an area of helps.

While there are more pastor wives than husbands, this should not prevent them from working as a team. There are definite advantages to having a husband for a spouse. Listed below are a few of them:

1. A husband is not so emotionally tied to decision making. He can be a great sounding board for a wife to think through decisions without being led by feelings and thoughts.
2. Many husbands are in the secular world and have a better business mind to operate large projects and deal with people. She should use the talents, experience, and knowledge of her husband to help aid and assist her as a female pastor.
3. There are times when a female needs a male presence in areas of authority. A quiet presence can help put down or equal out the playing field when dealing with a male chauvinist. Thank goodness that this is very rare but there are times when a pastor knows there could be heated discussions that another male presence can help. (This should not

be abused. There are times when heated discussions may occur but should not be generated by gender)

4. Husbands are usually handymen and can help with small projects in the church. This should not be taken for granted as there is also a need for family time for helping to raise and discipline your children and to spend time away from the church for the health and benefit of the family.
5. One of the roles of a husband is to provide. Many ministries struggle with low incomes due to a pastor's wife not working on a secular job. Having two incomes greatly helps with the extra costs and time spent in the ministry.

Balance in any ministry is very importance as well as to validate each one's calling in life. Your role as a pastor's husband, is to love, protect, and provide for your wife. You are to aide and assist her with the raising of your children as in any home. But as a husband, you have a wonderful opportunity to provide helps and suggestions to make her ministry more fulfilling to everyone, including yourself.

As mentioned earlier, there are far more pastor's wives as husbands and this will cause some husbands to feel "left out" in denominational meetings or settings. Who does he hang around, other pastor's wives? Does he hang around other pastors? You should not hang around either.

With the growing numbers of female pastors, there are others with whom you can usually bond and with whom you share some of the same issues. They can be of great help and comfort when you may be trying to help your wife, but feel as if you are "handcuffed" in doing what you may be feeling.

As a general rule, I am finding that most pastors, whether male or female, are finding more comfort to just being with their spouses when mingling or being around other pastors in denominations settings. After all, you are a team, not of a secondary importance. The responsibilities and roles may be different, that is okay. Your primary role outside of the church building is the leader or co-leader with your family. Do not let the devil play mind games as to whom you are and where you fit. This is your family and your ministry. Be blessed, maintain balance, and seek to work as a team!