

# *The Role of the Pastor's Wife*

For the most part, the pastor serves as the spiritual leader, the overseer of the church, teaching, preaching, and counseling others. He may challenge or encourage his flock to draw closer and dedicate one's life to the Lord. In doing so, a pastor is forever trying to lead others down a path of righteousness, which means a change for many of our members. Some are willing and some are not so willing.

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 pastor to have that "*special someone*" to assist and fulfill God's calling for their "*special work*" or ministry.

The Bible does not address the involvement of the pastor's wife in any ministry. In other words, the pastor and his wife determine how active the pastor's wife should be. The main area of responsibility for any wife is to support and be submissive to her husband ([Ephesians 5:22-24](#)). However, if the Lord calls a man into the ministry, He calls the whole man, and that includes the man's wife and his family.

In reality, there is no cookie cutter approach on the actual role of a pastor's wife. The wife does not do the work of the pastor, but the pastor and his wife are a team who are yoked together to do God's work. Few recognize the reality of this and want to put the pastor's wife in a box and delegate to her to do some type of traditional church work, submitting, keeping the home fires burning, and of course, being a prayer supporter for her husband. That certainly is a responsibility, but quite often the pastor's wife has gifts that can and should be used in the ministry. Her role does not necessarily include playing the piano or organ, being an extra worker in the church, or even the women's ministry leader.

I have heard a pastor's wife state that her role is basically the same as any other wife in the church -- to honor and support her husband. As a pastor's wife, she would not be necessarily employed by the church, but would utilize her God-given gifts to volunteer in different areas of ministry. She then went on to say that her priorities are to God first, then to her husband and children, and then to the members of the church.

A pastor's wife has a very special role in the church and in the life of the pastor. She will often keep her husband's long hours, shoulder his pressures, feel his disappointments, and suffer his defeats—often as profoundly and as deeply as he does. She will often analyze sermons, catching grammatical errors, smile in the face of criticism and negative comments about her husband and children.

There is no other occupation — besides, perhaps, being the actual First Lady — in which a spouse is so defined by what her husband does. I cannot think of a single instance in which a

woman was expected to give up her gifts and calling in service of her husband, the dentist...Or lawyer...Or plumber. But a woman who is married to a pastor will inevitably face expectations about her role in the congregation that have nothing to do with how she is gifted by God.

A pastor's wife provides a sounding board for her husband to vent, brainstorm, and question his progress or goals, yet encouraging and steadfast to support the vision that God has given to them. She is often a nurse, healing emotional wounds that seem to cause many pastors to give up. She is a counselor that helps her husband to work out difficulties that are too close for him to see. She is a lover and protector to shield him from harm and to provide the loving care that is so vitally needed, especially when one feels they are in a lonely profession. Many pastors do not have close friends with whom they can vent or share their problems. A pastor's wife provides that companionship that encourages him to continue even when he feels like giving up.

One of the truly remarkable qualities of a pastor's wife is when they are able to show a faithful love for the members they serve. I believe there is a special anointing upon the pastor's wife to go beyond the normal call of duty. It is a patient love, almost as if the person they are helping is a small child. A pastor's wife often understands that baby Christians, no matter how old, can be acting out because they are hurting.

A pastor's wife may face other difficulties, such as people in the church expecting her to know EVERYTHING about what is going on in the church, such as the events, planning, or what a church member may be going through as if she is the pastor. Some pastor's wives have jokingly remarked, "I am not the pastor, I am only his wife!"

Other difficulties may include career pursuits outside of the church. It is wise to address this issue before accepting the church. It is also wise to remain a part of your husband's ministry, attending and supporting as many functions or activities as possible, but without damaging your career or ignoring the needs of the flock. Balance in the ministry is very important, as well as, setting priorities with yourself, your husband, family, and church.

Many of our pastors and spouses have chosen to be co-pastors in the church. The husband is actually the lead pastor but giving a place of respect for his spouse, as they are one. Co-pastors often share in the goals and vision of the church, sometimes filling the pulpit or sharing a word of encouragement to the body. Most co-pastors allow the lead pastor, which is usually the husband, to assume the business responsibilities, counseling, and be more visible in the regular duties of a pastor.

Whether you designate for both of you being co-pastors, there is definitely strength in numbers. I mentioned earlier about God calling the whole man, both husband and wife, becoming one flesh. It is very powerful in the spiritual realm. **"And a threefold cord is not quickly broken."** (Ecclesiastes 4:12) In marriage, God can be invited to be the third cord and with him, nothing that you pray and work for is impossible to achieve. You can approach the specific area of

ministry to which your husband is called as a team. How you divide up the work will be up to the two of you based on your personal gift sets and prayer as you seek God's plan.

I also believe that one of the remarkable duties of a pastor's wife is to place balance in the ministry and marriage. Too often, a pastor can be so busy helping and giving out to others, he neglects family life and intimacy with his wife. If we truly have a picture of Christ and His bride, the church, there will be balance. Let your husband be the lead pastor of the church and let him be your heartbeat! Have fun and enjoy one another to the fullest! Make time for small outings together and alone. Don't let vacations be surrounding around ministry activities but make time for one another. Remember, once your ministry is over, you hope to still have one another, loving and caring for each other.

**Don't be intimidated!** Some wives become intimidated by previous pastor's wives doing things differently. Congregations often remind a pastor's wife that the former pastor's wife did it this way or that way. This can be very annoying and almost creates a confrontation. Be patient. People are creatures of habit. It is easier to do things the same way for years. It may take some time but be yourself. Love the people, win them over, and create change slowly.

**Be real!** Don't try to live up to the expectations of others but gently be yourself. People often place the pastor and his family on a pedestal. It is good that others show respect for the office of pastor, but people need to see that you are also human and real. People are looking for realness, both spiritually as well as personally.

**Be careful in who you confide with!** Many pastors and their wives have chosen to find a person outside of the church with whom to confide on personal and church issues. Due to the high expectations from others and the nature of pastors dealing with the weaknesses of others, people can often lose their respect for the role of the pastor.

**Don't gossip or share anything negative about a church member!** You are a witness as well as an example for others to follow. We should be encouraging everyone to think on those things that are good! Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4:8.

**Find a spiritual mentor!** It is hard for church members to know the difficulties of the ministry. It is good to have someone that can bring encouragement in your life as well as godly wisdom. Don't try to do everything by yourself. God has placed people on this earth that can help, if you will allow them to do so.

**Compliment and help create your dynasty!** Never talk negatively about your spouse in front of anyone. Team together for one purpose, produce unity at every level, help build your ministry

as a team that will be lasting and fulfilling. I do not believe any church should have a revolving door with ministers coming and going.

**Help encourage church members to catch the vision of the pastor!** Pastor's wives can be instrumental in encouraging others to catch the vision and purpose of the church. Do not argue with others who do not share the same vision or have other ways to obtain goals. I am reminded that there are different ways to paint a house. It is not important to argue which is the best way but all to work together for the same goal. Positive statements along with positive non-verbal communication can guide others along a positive path. Does a soft word turneth away wrath, proverbs 15:1? There are times when we need to overlook or avoid battles for the sake of winning the war.

**Pray with your husband everyday!!!** It is imperative that every pastor's wife pray for the hedge of protection to be around her husband and family every day. Pray that God will place guardian angels around about, protecting and guarding against all evil or hindrances that may cause harm or problems for you. Pray for wisdom, protecting all your possessions, and sending provision from the north, south, east, and west, blessing your health and work places, and to be the person God wants for you to be that day! Some things are only accomplished through prayer and fasting! Mark 9:29.

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