

The Journal



A SHEPHERDESS INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

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Number 3



onsider well what a separation from the world,
what purity, what devotion, what exemplary virtue,
are required in those who are to guide others to glory.



would advise you to arrange your affairs by a certain method,
by which means you will learn to improve every precious moment.
Begin and end the day with Him who is the Alpha and Omega,
and if you really experience what it is to love God,
you will redeem all the time you can for His more immediate service.



ndeavor to act upon principle and
do not live like the rest of mankind,
who pass through the world like straws upon a river,
which are carried which way the stream or wind drive them.
Get as deep an impression on your mind as is possible
of the constant presence of the great and holy God.
He is about our beds and about our paths and spies out all our ways.
Whenever you are tempted to the commission of any sin,
or the omission of any duty,
pause and say to yourself,
What am I about to do? God sees me.

—Susanna Wesley

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Editor's Musings

As ministry wives we have so many unique opportunities to serve Jesus and His church. However, our families are also the target of malicious gossip and undeserved criticism. The most hurtful usually comes from the unconverted members. It is particularly grievous for me personally to hear disparaging remarks made about and to ministry families. Here are some quotations from my favorite pastors wife, Ellen White, who understood this both from personal experience and enlightenment from God. I hope they will encourage you as they have me!

"There are many who find special enjoyment in discoursing and dwelling upon the defects, whether real or imaginary, of those who bear heavy responsibility in connection with the institutions of God's cause.

They overlook the good that has been accomplished, the benefits that have resulted from arduous labor and unflinching devotion to the cause, and fasten their attention upon some apparent mistake . . ." 4T 196.

"The time spent in criticizing the motives and works of Christ's servants might better be spent in prayer" 8 T 83.

"Satan has many helpers. Many who profess to be Christians are aiding the tempter . . . The minister's character, motives, and actions and the conduct of fellow members of the church are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander is repeated . . ." COI 45.

"Nothing so offends God as an act that injures the influence of those who are doing His service. He will call to account all who aid Satan in his work of criticizing and discouraging" 6T 42.

Keep a positive Spirit! God sees it all!



The Journal A SHEPHERDESS

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A Lighthouse for the Lord

Maree Worker

Pastor's wives have a unique lifestyle; one that only other pastoral wives can understand. During the seven years I have been in ministry with my husband, I have often wished for advice and counsel from more experienced pastoral wives. Perhaps the thoughts and experiences I can share will help those wives new to the work. It is my hope that you will be strengthened and renewed, encouraged and revitalised, so you do not lose the zeal for the Lord's work that I know you now have.

Maree and her husband, Michael, have two girls, Brianna and Madison. They enjoy the challenge and blessings of ministry. Maree is heavily involved in her local congregation in Australia as music director and personal ministries leader. Her interests are music, singing, teaching, reading, writing, public presenting and friendship.



Quite often I have been asked how I cope with being a pastoral wife. This question doesn't just come from peers; it often comes from the laity, those we mix with every day; those who look up to us every Sabbath.

I used the term "look up to us" hesitantly, because, as I'm sure is the case with many of you, I find that entire concept still doesn't fit me like a comfortable mantle. I like to think we are moving past the need for our church members to place their pastoral family on a pedestal. After all, we know better than them how human we actually are and how our human failings should prohibit us to be held up in this way.

I had myself somewhat fooled about this concept until a few weeks ago. My husband and I were making a hospital visit and we met up with a couple I vaguely knew from a country parish we have never cared for. This lovely lady has a daughter who is married to a minister and, therefore, I was sure she would understand the pressures her daughter must face as a pastoral wife—the expectation that she is expected to be the model wife and mother. The mother agreed with me that her daughter found it hard to be a 'single mum' at church and she found it hard to cope with the children alone during those times when her husband's working commitments kept him away from home for more hours than they wanted to think

about; and that sometimes she was lonely for the company of another adult.

We discussed the fact that pastors' wives, just like all wives, make mistakes. Sometimes they yell at their kids, argue with their husbands, struggle to balance the budget and have the same trials as many women have. The mother agreed until I said pastoral wives don't like being put on pedestals. Her response left me speechless. She said, "Oh, but we need that pedestal. We still need to revere the pastor and his family!" Wow, talk about an instant dose of reality. She knew the trials her daughter was going through, yet she still thought the pastoral family should be held to a different standard.

It reminded me once again of my responsibility to show my church family my humanity. How many of us feel that we can only show perfection when we are at church? Those of us with children feel an added pressure to have our children well-behaved, model children. Is the pressure we put on ourselves even realistic? From experience, I know how these often-unrealistic expectations make our Sabbath day stressful. I have often told my husband that mothers with young children are the most spiritually undernourished church members. We don't have the advantage of being able to listen to a sermon in the blissful state of 'uninterruptedness'.

How many of you have had the unnerving experience of turning your attention away from one of your children for just a few seconds to supervise another, only to turn back and realise that child number one has just casually wandered up to the pulpit to spend some time with daddy? There have been times during our ministry—as I’m sure many of you can appreciate—when daddy has left to begin his Sabbath duties before the children were even awake. The first time the children see their daddy, he is in the pulpit. It is only natural for children to want to speak to their father. It is hard for them to understand they can look but not touch!

There have been times in our ministry when I wondered why God let me meet my theology-student husband and fall in love with him. The reality of being a pastor’s wife can be unsettling. Though we have always believed (and still do) that God has called us to the ministry and we can make a difference, there is a heartbreaking side of being a pastoral wife.

The first time I had an elder approach me and tell me that I was a terrible parent and an inadequate wife, I was devastated. It took me a long time to recover from that blow. But I eventually realised that most of the time I am a great parent and wonderful wife! Still, his words left a scar.

During our second year of ministry, we were assigned to a new church. Upon our arrival, I told the members I was happy to be with them and looked forward to meeting them all. I told them my name was Maree, not just “the pastor’s wife.” Well, that comment caused me much grief. Certainly I had no problem being referred to as the pastor’s wife; after all that’s what I am, but I wanted to get the point across that I was also a somewhat separate entity to my pastor

husband. My inexperience certainly was made clear with that remark!

But think about it. Have you ever introduced someone as “the plumber’s wife” or “the accountant’s wife”? I certainly questioned “the pastor’s wife” label. Then a tragedy in our church family put everything in perspective. A member’s daughter had been murdered and my husband and I were at their home offering our support when some police detectives arrived. The mother (who is not a member) duly introduced us to the detectives as follows. “I would like you to meet our pastor, Michael, and this is our pastor’s wife, Maree.” The inflection she gave my title made it just that, a title...a title of respect. In calling me the pastor’s wife, she was crediting me with the same role as my husband. She wanted to honour and respect my role in her life. In that moment of grief and tragedy many things became clear for me, and since then I have been honoured whenever I am introduced as “the pastor’s wife.” People don’t introduce me as the pastor’s wife to place me in a box but to honour who I am in their lives, just as they would introduce my husband as their pastor, Michael.

The other biggest obstacle I have had to overcome in my role as a pastor’s wife is the loneliness, the many hours of time when my husband is not with me. Most husbands and wives have evening time together, but our husbands are out working at night. During the first few months of ministry I really struggled with this, to the point where I cried out to God time and time again about how unfair it was. We had spent our college years surrounded by friends; our first church was located in a small country town full of strangers. Oh, I knew my husband was working for the Lord; I knew what he was doing was not only important, but necessary. Unfortunately that

knowledge didn’t make it easier to cope with my loneliness. After a few months of self-pity, I gave myself a pretty stern lecture.

I realised that I had two basic options. I could leave my husband (of course, this was not really an option) or I could get over my angst and learn to accept and live with the reality of pastoral life. A change in my attitude did not happen overnight. There were (and still are) times when I resented the hours my husband had to work. I am still sometimes saddened by the lack of time we have together, but now, with small children to demand my time, my hours of solitude in the evenings are wonderful. Those nights alone are “me” time. Today I cherish my solitude. I enjoy my evenings alone; they allow me time to relax or work without interruption. No longer do I sit around thinking that I should be allowed to have my husband with me; instead I spend that time looking after and nurturing myself, doing the things that I want to do.

There are other advantages of being a pastor’s wife. How many wives do you know who can have their husbands available during the morning hours? How many dads can sometimes help with car pooling? What about keeping an eye on the children during the day while you run an errand or take a piano lesson? Pastors can sometimes arrange their schedules to accommodate their wives. That’s certainly a perk!

After seven years of ministry, I would have to say that being a pastor’s wife is more joyful than not. There are more rewards than losses; more happiness than pain. Being part of a pastoral family is a blessing. We have a purpose; we have a mission. And, if we have to be on a pedestal high above everyone else, we may as well use the advantage of height and strive to be a lighthouse for the Lord!



The Worthwhile Race



Maeve Maurer

Maeve Maurer is the Shepherdess Coordinator for the Euro-Africa Division in Switzerland. She enjoys horseback riding and hiking. Maeve and her husband, Gabriel, have two daughters.



People who know me are aware of the fact that I like jogging. On Sunday, June 18, 2000, I ran the Bern Women's Race. I can still remember that day.

I awaken and eagerly anticipate the day ahead. For the second time, I am participating in the annual Bern Women's Race. The race is only five kilometers long so I know there will be a crowd.

At 11:10 a.m., I begin warming up for the race. It is already 27 degrees centigrade. About 13,000 women are participating. Several Olympic champions, including Anita Weyermann from Switzerland, are competing.

The countdown for the elite runners begins at 11:30 a.m. With a shot, the race begins. I, along with the runners of my caliber, advance to the next position. Our beginning shot sounds at 11:36 a.m.

The first 500 meters are downhill. I try to get out of the crowd, but I have to take care not to use all my strength early in the race. I remember the last kilometer is uphill. Last year, many runners broke down on that hill. I do not want the same fate.

After running two kilometers, I feel the sprinkle of rain. No, it isn't actually rain. Spectators are sprinkling us in an effort to cool us

down. Refreshments are located on the sides of the road. Fresh banana pieces and water can be had by all. Not all the runners take advantage of the food, but I do.

I'm feeling pretty good. I mentally congratulate myself on not having dessert yesterday.

It's really getting hot now. Perspiration runs in rivulets down my back. I begin to wonder why I ever started this race. I know I'm not going to win first place. The only thing I'll get for participating is a t-shirt. But then I realize how much I enjoy the atmosphere.

I see more sprinklers ahead. It's hard to believe I've only gone three kilometers. Think positively—I'm over half way to the finish line. I see more refreshments at kilometer four. I don't stop though because I'm afraid I won't be able to regain my speed. That hill is looming ahead.

The spectators along the side of the road cheer us on. I pass a mother and daughter running side by side. The daughter is breaking down and the mother tries to encourage her. "The goal is so close; we're almost there."

I reach the entrance of the station. Only 300 meters to go. The sun is particularly hot on the tarmac. With a final burst of energy, I manage one last spurt and cross the finish line. I

am totally exhausted but incredibly happy. I sip on a bottled drink as I head for the showers.

On my way, I meet an old lady who ran the race in 26 minutes. I ask her if she will tell me her age and her training schedule. She says she has just turned 70 and she trains with her granddaughter three times a week.

Like the 70-year-old woman, I like to exercise. The verses found in 2 Timothy 4:7, 8 have special meaning to me. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished [my] course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

The participants of the race have varied fitness levels; some are trained athletes, some walk the whole distance. They can be compared to Christians. Some have a good knowledge of the Bible; some are just beginning to read God's word.

Many cheered me along as I ran the race. In the race of faith, many have encouraged and supported me.

During the race, I was given refreshments that helped me keep up my strength. What are the refreshments in my spiritual life? Perhaps it was that sermon that spoke to my special needs. Or maybe it was that retreat that soothed my soul.

During the race, many are tempted to stay too long at the refreshment stands. Is that what happens when we visit one retreat after another, listen to joyous experiences other people have and neglect our own Bible study? Do our families, careers and hobbies keep us from personal Bible study?

A vehicle follows that last block of starters in a race. Any people slower than the vehicle are no longer considered race participants. Those

who neglect their relationships with God will also be considered "too late."

That 70-year-old woman made the race. She trained constantly and had the support of her granddaughter. If we constantly *train* with God and spend time with other believers, we can finish the greatest race ever. Jesus and His angels are with us always;

they cheer us on and give us renewed strength and encouragement.

I experienced great joy when I finished the Bern's Women's Race and won a t-shirt. But that joy will pale in comparison when I finish this earthly race and receive the crown of righteousness. That is the ultimate prize and makes the race worthwhile.



The Jar

The preacher placed two identical jars on the table next to the pulpit. He quoted 1 Samuel 16:7, "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

"These jars came from the same factory, were made of the same materials, and can hold the same amount. But they are different," he explained.

Then he upset one and it oozed out honey.

He turned over the other, and vinegar spilled out.

"When a jar is upset, whatever is in it comes out.

Until the jars were upset, they looked alike.

The difference was within, and could not be seen.

When they were upset, their contents were revealed.

Until we are upset we put on a good front.

But when we are upset, we reveal our innermost thoughts and attitudes, for "out of abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" Luke 6:45.

What if someone tipped you over today? What would flow out? Would you reveal the "honey" of grace and patience, or the "vinegar" of anger and sarcasm?

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins" 1 Peter 4:8.

Have a terrific day knowing that the one who upsets you may be just looking for some honey!



A Place for Prayer

Mary Barrett

Two women. They never met. They lived very different lives. They were of different nationalities. And yet, both are remembered as women who saved lives. One saved the lives of millions and her action is celebrated in a yearly festival. The other saved the life of only one and those who read her story celebrate her action too.

Come with me and meet the woman who saved millions. She was a real live Cinderella. Her story is that of a poor orphan girl who became a Queen. Her beauty was so heart stirring, so heart thrilling, so heart swelling that she won a beauty contest. In fact, there was hardly any competition, because to go along with her Hollywood looks was a character of equal beauty that captivated the onlooker.

That contest transformed her from Orphan Esther to Queen Esther. The prize? To marry King Ahasuerus. He was a man of great power, great wealth, great influence who ruled during the 5th century BC. With one lingering look from the King, Esther went from the poverty of a tiny village home to a palace beyond her imagination. With one open-mouthed look of admiration from the King, Esther was transformed from the owner of three dresses to the owner of closets overflowing with garments of the most dazzling colours and

scrumptious fabrics and textures. With one gaze of desire from the King, Esther went from a young woman who ate simple stew and brown bread, to sit at tables heavily laden with food that she didn't even know the names of. She lived in a world that young girls dream of—and some older ones too—a world of beauty, riches, extravagance, luxury, indulgence—with a man, no, not just a man, but with a King who adored her!

The other woman? No beauty contests for her. No Cinderella story for her. She was probably middle-aged, with a few gray hairs beginning to creep through her coarse black hair. Her face was tired. Her eyes were tired. Her body was tired. Everything about her portrayed weariness. There was nothing outstanding about her appearance to warrant a second look. Or was there? For if you looked deep into her eyes, you could see something more than weariness. She was a woman with a purpose. She was a woman who couldn't give up. Something in her eyes showed that she was not a quitter. She was a fighter. She knew what she wanted and she had determination to keep on pursuing it.

Two women, so different, and yet they both faced a crisis that could rip their worlds into shreds. The beauty Queen faced the possible death of

Mary is paid by the local church to work in ministry with her husband. She is also a writer and speaker. They have two daughters in their late teens and for relaxation, she just enjoys being with family and friends!



the Jewish nation. The middle-aged women faced the possible death of her much-loved daughter.

What did each woman do with her dilemma? She took them to an expert in dealing with problems—God.

Let's observe how each woman did that.

For Esther, the crisis occurred when Mordecai told her of Haman's plans to wipe out the Jewish nation. Esther and Mordecai knew that she was the only one who could speak to the King and warn him about what was happening. Esther had the conviction that it was only possible for her to speak to her King, if she spoke to another King first, the King of Heaven. For three days, Esther talked with God as she prepared herself to talk to her husband. She also asked Jewish people to support her by praying and fasting with her.

After 36 hours she knocked on the door of the King's court. With wisdom from God she invited the King and Haman to a banquet where Esther courageously told the King of Haman's plans. The King believed her. Instead of ordering the death of the Jews as Haman had planned, the King ordered the death of Haman. Esther and her God had saved the Jewish people.

The other woman's crisis occurred when she realized that her daughter was possessed by a demon. To see her daughter, day after day, suffer, finally caused her to pull her skirts around her and decide that she was going to look for someone to help and she was not coming back until she had. But no one could help. There was no doctor, no old wives remedy, no herbal medicine, no one who could heal her daughter. No one that is, apart from God. So that's where she went.

She had heard about Jesus and how He was visiting in Tyre and Sidon. She hurried over to meet with

Him and cried out, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, King David's Son!" Again she pleaded, "Sir, help me!"

Do you know what Jesus did when He heard the cry of that mother; saw the pain in her heart and the tears in her eyes?"

He did nothing. Nothing at all. Nothing! She came to God with a passionate hope, a great sense of need and incredible persistence. And Jesus did nothing.

*This woman
just kept
on and on and on,
asking.*

The most amazing thing however, is that this woman just kept on and on and on, asking. She had so much confidence in Jesus' power to heal her child, that she was not going to stop asking, begging, pleading for Him to give her daughter a new chance of life. Possibly the woman was able to see past Jesus' apparent coolness and see the warmth in His eyes, sense the compassion in His heart, and feel the acceptance He had of her. So she refused to relinquish her request.

You know what happened. Jesus granted her heart-cry and her daughter was healed instantly. Jesus affirmed her by saying, "Woman, your faith is large, and your request is granted."

Two women. Both faced a crisis that they took to God. And both received the answers they sought. As workers in ministry, we too, face a crisis. We have a message to share with people who do not want to hear

it. And we have become a church where our relationship with God no longer excites us enough to share that message with passion. How do we find an answer to the crisis? I believe that the stories of Esther and the Canaanite woman can help.

Before Esther spoke to the King, she spent three days asking God to prepare the way for her. Don't you think it is incredible, that this beautiful woman depended upon God instead of her beauty to soften the heart of her husband? She could have relied on her beauty, her riches, her charms, to persuade the King to listen to what she had to say, but instead she turned to God and the prayers of those she trusted.

As ministers, we can be tempted to depend upon our own skills or the talents of our members more than we depend upon God. Our abilities, our wisdom, our solutions to the problems of our churches are never a match for what God can do when we truly lean on Him in our ministry.

Like Esther, we need to have a team to pray and support the ministries of our church (Esther 4:16). When my husband and I first began ministering in the Central London Church, at times it was just one lady and myself meeting for prayer. We prayed that God would develop an intercessory prayer group in the church. We now have about 30-35 people who pray every month for baptisms, for members, for our church to become a magnet to draw unchurched people to God, and for our church to value the holiness and righteousness of God. Together as a team, we are asking God to do amazing things for our church.

What does the Canaanite woman teach us? She shows us that we need to know the God we go to for help. To know Him in such a way that even though He may not answer our prayers in the way in which we would like and when we would like,

we will not give up on prayer. As ministers we need to possess the most incredible determination and faith in God, so that even though God may not be answering our prayers to suit us we will not waver in our confidence in what God can do.

Establishing Prayer Ministries in the Local Church

Believing that these key principles have a part to play in dealing with the “crisis” that we meet, can be the basis to starting a strong prayer ministry in your church. There are several ways to do this. Here are some of the things that we are doing in our church to promote dependency upon God rather than ourselves.

Good Morning God

This takes place every Sabbath before the church service begins for the day. Open to anyone in the church this is where we pray for personal concerns and also for the church in general. Usually when someone comes to me with a problem, if it is appropriate, I ask him or her to come to the prayer group where they themselves can ask God to meet their needs. It is also good for the individual to know that others are willing to support them in prayer. It also helps the church members to depend on God, rather than just the prayers of my husband or myself.

At times when we talk with God we use a map of the church and pray for the various teams that will minister throughout the day, as well as for the general ministry of the church. For example, pointing to the seating area in the church we will ask God to give everyone who sits in the church a real desire to worship God, pointing to the doors of the church, we pray that all who come through our doors will sense a warm welcome, pointing to the pastor’s

office we pray that the Holy Spirit will be effective in speaking to those in the pastor’s baptismal class.

Training Class

This takes place during the Sabbath School lesson time and those interested will leave their classes for one morning each month. We study how to be an effective Intercessory Prayer Team. Time is

Here are some of the things that we are doing in our church to promote dependency upon God rather than ourselves.

also spent praying for the work of our church. This group is made up of those with the spiritual gifts of faith and intercession. We have found it wise to ask for a recommitment each year from those who are on the team. This ensures that those on the team have a passion to serve God in this way.

We also have a special library for those on the team, where they have access to books and cassettes exclusively focusing on prayer. Notebooks are distributed, so that the team can make a record of how our prayer requests are answered.

Prayer Cards For Those on the Prayer Team

These are issued once a month to those on the Prayer Team and also to those in leadership positions. Currently we have about 35 people receiving these cards. This means that every day 35 people will be praying for the same thing. We pray

specifics—for those in the baptismal class to make a commitment, for our outreach teams to be effective, for problems that plague the church, for my husband as he ministers. We claim biblical passages as a solution to our problems and at times have adapted the famous “Prayer of Jabez” to our needs. For example, for those having Bible studies we pray that God will enlarge their ability to love and commit to Him.

Prayer Cards For All Members

On the prayer cards we also pray for individual members of the church. The members do not have to have a specific problem. We just want to pray for every member of our church and ask God to bless him or her. We then send a card to the member telling him or her that the Prayer Team has prayed for them. The impact of this is great. It helps the members to feel that they are valued and cared for. It is also amazing how many members have told us that the day we were praying for them, they really needed our prayers!

The Role of Elders

We work prayer ministries in our church in such a way so that one group is supporting another in prayer. The Elders of our church will receive a different prayer card to those on the Intercessory Prayer Team. They also receive their cards once a month. On their card, they are invited to pray for the Prayer Team as well as things of a confidential nature that threaten to destroy the ministry of our church. Each day the elders will pray for two members of the Prayer Team, asking God to enable them to use their spiritual gift of intercession unhindered by Satan, that their prayers will be answered and that God will enlarge their gift of praying—yet again another adaptation of the “Prayer of Jabez.”

Days of Special Prayer

We set aside special times where we can pray about specific things. For example, we may have a time when mothers can come to pray for their children or have a prayer breakfast for the women of our church on a Sabbath morning.

We also set aside times of prayer and fasting where we tend to focus on well-known books on prayer or a scripture passage. We will then produce a worksheet to go along with the book or scripture passage. Usually in these prayer sessions we pray in creative ways. It is also a good idea to let the "Prayer Team" organize these, so that their enthusiasm about prayer can overflow to the rest of the church.

A Personal Prayer Partner

I meet once a week with a prayer partner. She works in ministry. We pray for our families, our husbands, and the situations that seek to fragment our churches. We pray for our prayer teams, our elders and specific problems of some of the members. We also pray about the struggles that we are going through as we minister. We invite God constantly to be the focal point in the plans and programmes that are taking place in our churches.

Is Prayer Ministry Really Worth the Time and Effort?

Yes, I believe that it is. Ellen G. White says, "At the sound of fervent prayer, Satan's whole host trembles." (*Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 345, 346). Satan has very limited power in our ministry when we make prayer the foundation of all that we do in our churches. In our church we have seen God work since we have been more determined and more disciplined about establishing a "Prayer Ministry". Try it for yourselves and see what a difference it can make, not only to your church, but to your ministry too!



Bonte Indoor Campaign



Rosaline Amoah

Recently, I, along with ten other lay preachers of the district, were asked to conduct Indoor Campaigns throughout the district. Excerpts from Pastor Evan's *Comprehensive Handbook for Christian Victory* were photocopied and sent to us. I was scheduled to conduct my campaign at Bonte, four miles from Busunya, my hometown.

The campaign was to last two weeks. Because I teach during the day, I was unable to stay in Bonte. I had to travel there every day and return each evening. Since there were no commercial vehicles on that route, my only means of transportation was a bicycle. Unfortunately, I am not a bicycle rider. I had to get a volunteer from the church to take me to and from Bonte on a bicycle.

The ride was not an easy one. The road was rough and sitting on the

bare iron handle of the bicycle was very uncomfortable. Sometimes my companion and I had to disembark when we came to very bad parts of the road. It was scary walking in the dark, knowing that we were exposed and could be prey for dangerous snakes and scorpions. Fortunately, our merciful Father saw us safely through during those two weeks.

The Bonte church members were excited about the campaign and invited many guests. I had been given rich material from which to preach and I felt moved by the Omnipotent Spirit. The sermon delivery was successful each night and the response from the congregation was positive. Each night questions were asked, answers were given and God's presence could be felt.

Response to the altar calls increased each night. On the last night of the campaign, twenty-four souls came forward. Twenty of those souls were baptized two weeks later.

The uncomfortable experiences on the bicycle in no way reduced the exceeding joy of seeing twenty souls give their lives to Christ. I thank the merciful Father for the rich, spiritual experience. May He grant me even greater evangelistic achievements in the future.



Rosaline Amoah and her husband, Pastor M. K. Amoah, live in Ghana where they work as a team. Rosaline is the Shepherdess leader for the Fiagya District of the Mid-West Ghana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. She is also a teacher. Her main interest is personal evangelism. She spends most of her leisure hours visiting home after home in an effort to win souls for Christ.

God's Divine Comfort

Edith Lefume

As a mother comforts her son, so will I myself comfort you. —Isaiah 66:13

The death of a loved one, whether expected or not, always comes as a shock. The sorrow and finality death brings is overwhelming. Many are so filled with loneliness and heartache, it is almost impossible to cope. Besides the sorrow, there are often difficult decisions that have to be made.

If you have ever been in such a situation, you realize the feelings of helplessness and discouragement. The pain is almost unbearable. It is during these times that you must cling to God's promise found in Isaiah 66:13: "As a mother comforts her son, so will I myself comfort you." When God's children cry out in pain and ask why, He answers, "I am with you, I will strengthen you."

I understand that pain. I have experienced it. My husband and I married in 1997 and were blessed with the birth of an adorable baby boy in September 2000. We named him Xabisco which means valuable gift from God. I was looking forward to mothering my first born child. My husband and I prayed for him daily; we asked God to protect Xabisco from all hidden dangers.

When Xabisco was 12 months old, I became pregnant again. Our home was filled with joy. We felt our home would be complete with two children.

Five months later, my husband was transferred to a new district. Due to my pregnancy, the move was not easy. It took me over a week to unpack our belongings in our new home. On our second Sabbath, we met with new district leaders to make plans for the coming year. After the meeting, my husband received a call on his cell phone. My youngest sister-in-law had died.

We drove to London the next day to help with the funeral arrangements. After the funeral, we returned home.

On Wednesday of that same week, a prayer meeting was conducted at our home. It was 6 p.m. and I was busy preparing cool drinks and biscuits for the people in our home. My son was outside playing with some other children. At about 6:20 p.m., I heard my husband's voice. He was asking if anyone was skilled in first aid. I left the kitchen and found him carrying our unconscious child. The lawn people had forgotten to close the gate to the pool when they left for the day. Our son had wandered through the gate and fell into the pool. Someone tried to resuscitate him but failed. My husband and a friend rushed my son to the nearest hospital. The doctors and nurses tried their best to revive my child but they, too, were unsuccessful. My beautiful young boy died.

I did not believe I could survive such a tragedy. I felt like I was in a dream. I kept asking myself questions

Edith and her husband, Pastor Lefume, work in South Africa in the Southern Hope Conference. Their family

includes a daughter, Palesa. Edith enjoys helping her husband spread the Gospel. She also finds reading spiritual books, cooking and singing a pleasure.



like: Why had God allowed this to happen? Where is God when things like this occur? How am I going to cope?

I was crying out like Job, "Even today my complaint is bitter: His hand is heavy in spite of my groaning. If only I knew where to find him: If only I could go to his dwelling! I would state my case before him and fill my mouth with arguments, I would find out what he would answer me and consider what he would say. Would he oppose me with great power? No, he would not press charges against me." Job 23:2-6

Often, my husband and I had spoken words of comfort and hope to our church members when there were deaths. Those words were meaningless to me now. I prayed for God's comfort because He could understand my pain for He, too, had lost a son. I knew only He could heal my shattered spirit and grant me hope.

A loss doesn't end with pain—it is actually a new beginning. There is a struggle to deal with the loss of a loved one. The struggle is eased by drawing comfort from the Scriptures and from leaning on others who have experienced the same pain. Those who have lost loved ones genuinely care. Though they cannot bring the comfort that will heal the shattered heart, God can use them as channels for His love and comfort. When you quietly trust in God day to day, His love will be like a spring rain in a barren wilderness. He will give you divine comfort. 

The opposite of joy

is not sorrow.

It is unbelief.

—Leslie D. Weatherhead

Think About This

Think about this. You may not realize it, but it's 100% true!

1. At least 2 people in this world love you so much they would die for you.
2. At least 15 people in this world love you in some way.
3. The only reason anyone would ever hate you is because they want to be just like you.
4. A smile from you can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't like you.
5. Every night, *someone* thinks about you before they go to sleep.
6. You mean the world to someone.
7. If not for you, someone may not be living.
8. You are special and unique.
9. Someone that you don't even know exists, loves you.
10. When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good comes from it.
11. When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look: you most likely turned your back on the world.
12. When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you believe in yourself, probably sooner or later, you will get it.
13. Always remember the compliments you received. Forget about the rude remarks.
14. Always tell someone how you feel about them; you will feel much better when they know.
15. If you have a great friend, take the time to let them know that they are great.

Share this with all the people you care about. If you do so, you will certainly brighten someone's day and might change their perspective on life, for the better. Think about it.

Make Deposits in the Love Bank

*Barry and Carol
St. Clair*

Occasionally we get a notice from the bank notifying us that we have overdrawn our account. We have noticed that it always happens to us when something big is occurring, like going on vacation. One time as we walked out the door for our vacation, we grabbed the mail. We opened the notice from the bank and discovered an error of several thousand dollars. That led to total panic. All other activities came to a halt. Frantically we called the bank and then went over there for a personal visit. A big deposit had been recorded incorrectly. We worked through the process of fixing the problem. This problem distracted me (Carol) so much that when we finally resolved it and got into the car to leave for vacation, I left my wallet at the house. Having to do without the wallet reminded us of the problem during the entire vacation.

The lesson from the deficit: Don't overdraw your account. Even better, make enough deposits to ensure plenty of margin in the account. If we overdraw, then we not only have to make the extra effort to fix it, but sometimes we also have to live with the frustrating consequences it typically always causes.

Opening an Unconditional Love Account

Our children's lives parallel that account. They have a need for security and significance that come from unconditional love. When a deficit occurs in their lives, that threatens their security and significance, and then they panic. It's not hard to spot it when their account gets overdrawn.

- ✿ They seek attention
- ✿ They want to control the situation.
- ✿ They get revenge (usually by clobbering a sibling!).
- ✿ They resist and rebel.
- ✿ They turn to their friends.
- ✿ They get depressed.

Only through communicating unconditional love can we make deposits in their account and get them out of a big deficit.

Daily deposits of loving communication bring very positive results. Our children—

- ✿ have positive self-worth.
- ✿ have a willingness to obey.
- ✿ are less drawn to peer pressure.
- ✿ develop openness and honesty.
- ✿ Set a pattern for healthy communication as they become more independent.

Barry and Carol St. Clair have raised four children who are living proof of the message of their book. Barry is on the leading edge of national and international youth ministry. A popular speaker and author, he is the president of Reach Out Youth Solutions. Carol was a teacher, discipler, speaker, but above all, a loving mother until her death in August 1998.

The most positive result, however, is that they will grasp God's love more easily because of the concrete example of love they have experienced. Many parents fall into the trap of expressing "if" love to their children. That means they love them if they perform properly. For example: "I love you if you get good grades." Other parents get trapped into expressing "because" love. For example: "I love you because you are beautiful/handsome." Sometimes we express that form of superficial love without even knowing it. Every time we do it, we undermine our children's sense of security and significance. Yet God desires for us to express "in spite of" love to our children. "I love you in spite of your attitude right now." That kind of love is totally unconditional. It comes from God to us, then through us to our children. It encourages our children's sense of security and significance. "In spite of" love from us prepares our children's hearts to receive God's love for them.

Communicating unconditional love to our children creates closeness and emotional warmth with them so that when we have to say "no" or discipline them, we can draw from a surplus account. As parents we are responsible to make the deposits that keep our children's accounts in the black until they learn for themselves how to let Jesus make deposits. Even then our children need consistent deposits of unconditional love from their parents.

Ross Campbell, child psychologist and author of *How to Really Love Your Teenager*, reinforces how critical communicating unconditional love really is by using the word picture of a gas tank instead of a bank account.

A teenager will strive for independence in typical adolescent ways—doing things by himself, going places without family, testing parental rules. But he will eventually

run out of emotional gasoline and come back to the parent for conditional maintenance—for a refill.

During times when a teenager is striving for independence he may upset his parents to such an extent that the parent over-reacts emotionally, and usually with excessive anger. This emotional overreaction, if too excessive or frequent, make it extremely difficult, and perhaps impossible, for the teenager to return to his parents for

*How can we make
daily deposits
of loving
communication
in our children's
lives?*

emotional refills. Then if parent-child communication is broken, a teenager may turn to his peers for emotional nurture. What a dangerous and frequently disastrous situation this is! [Ross Campbell, *How to Really Love Your Teenager*, Chariot Victor Publishing, 1981, p. 27, 30]

Using the Checkbook

Before making deposits in our bank account, we need to know how the checkbook works. In our relationship with our children, unconditional love is our asset in the bank and our communication skills are the checkbook. These skills create a channel through which our love can flow. Our communications checkbook allows us to disperse love, acceptance, affirmation, physical warmth, and availability. In order to do that we must be aware of our need to move from superficial levels of communication to deeper ones.

Communication experts point out five levels of communication that can move us from surface responses to intimate sharing.

1. Clichés. "How are you?"
2. Facts. "What did you eat for lunch?"
3. Ideas. "What do you think about that?"
4. Feelings. "How do you feel when that happens?"
5. Intimate sharing. "What is on your heart about that?" This level of conversation occurs only in those few relationships in which a person can open his or her heart and share deeply.

Some people find it easier than others to move from one level to another level. But if we want to communicate deeply into our children's lives, then we must make significant love deposits to reach the level of most intimate sharing. All families progress to the first three levels. Others may move to Level 4. But only families surrounded by unconditional love enjoy the opportunity to reach Level 5. ☺

Excerpts taken from Ignite the Fire by Barry and Carol St. Clair, Chariot Victor Publishing. This article originally appeared in the Cook Communications newsletter.

Helpmate

Hannele Ottschofski



When God created Eve, He wanted to give Adam a partner who would be a perfect fit. He wanted the two to be intellectually, psychologically and physically suited for one another. Man and woman were created to be a perfect pair; they were created to bring each other joy and happiness.

During a wedding, both the man and woman make vows and promise to love, respect and honor the other. Each partner promises to care for the other in health and sickness, in good days or bad, through thick and thin until death parts them. These promises are not given lightly.

As a pastor's wife, I have given much thought to this subject. In today's world, the central theme is, "I am important." Of course, this is a true statement. Every person is important. We should love ourselves, otherwise, we can't love our neighbors. If each partner in a

marriage loves his/her partner as himself/herself, there would be no problem. But, unfortunately, this is not always true.

For many of us, it seems our partners love themselves more than they love us. Our first reaction is to force them to give us the love that is our due. We insist on our rights! We think, "It is my right not only to give, but to take as well." But, if we remember our wedding vows, there is nothing about taking, the vows are all about giving. Acts 20:35 says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Of course, in a marriage, this works both ways. If one partner feels he or she is the only one giving, problems arise.

But, for the Christian woman, the world does not revolve around her. Neither does her world revolve around her husband. She knows she does not need to be totally dependent on her spouse. The Christian woman realizes her fulfillment is based on her relationship with Christ. She is not one who constantly focuses on women's rights. Neither does she think her sole interest should be the nurturing of her husband and children. Though she wants to please her husband, she wants to please Christ more. The Christian women endeavors to balance the expectations of family, society and church; she wants to submit to our Lord Jesus and let Him guide her actions. She adheres to the verse found in

2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us, called [us] with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began."

Women have needs that need to be met if they are to have good mental health. Love, acceptance, recognition and purpose are examples of such needs. It is my belief that these needs will be fulfilled if women give to others what they would like to receive themselves. Demanding fulfillment for self is not the answer; God gives us gifts which we should share with others. Sometimes we receive recognition for what we do, more often, we do not. Our feelings of worth should be dependent on the fact that God loves us and for Him, we are of great worth.

When God made Eve, He made her as a partner for Adam. Isn't it wonderful that we can fulfil God's plan for us when we help our husbands? Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. When two people do something together, their strengths can complement one another's. That is why teamwork is so effective; it is useful and beneficial in marriage.

Christians have one goal—to carry the Gospel into all the world. It is our most important duty in life. As helpmates, we can complement our husbands and work to make sure this goal is reached.



Hannele Ottschofski was born in Finland, grew up in Sweden and England, and married a German pastor with whom she has been actively involved in the ministry in Germany and in Central Africa. She has four daughters. She loves music and sewing, as well as reading and writing.

I Don't Know How to Pray!

Betty Kramer

Betty Kramer is a pastor's wife, homemaker, and mother of three. Her hobbies include: yard sales, buying and selling antiques and collectibles for investment, and doing jigsaw puzzles.



Never before had I felt like such a failure! Why couldn't I help her? Why couldn't I point her to the answers she so desperately and obviously needed!

I was visiting a lady for the first time in our new district. Her name was on the church books, but I had never seen her at church. Slowly, as she began to trust me with her friendship and confidence, she began to pour out the agony of her heart—the disappointments in her marriage, her feelings that no one liked her at church, her inability to pray. She said that she had tried to pray many times but she always got a mental block and could think of nothing to say to God! My heart ached for her because I could see that she was miserable, and I couldn't see how she could be helped without prayer.

I tried to help her by reading Bible texts about prayer—what it was, what it was not, what conditions would prevent our prayers from being answered. I quoted Ellen White's definition of prayer: "Prayer is the key in the hand of faith to unlock Heaven's storehouse ..." (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 94, 95). "Prayer is the breath of the soul" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 254). "Prayer is the

opening of the heart to God as to a friend" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 93). I prayed with my new friend and left, feeling like I had somehow failed her. But I didn't give up!

One Sabbath my friend visited the church, but left before the sermon was finished. From then on, I would look for her and literally "sprint" across the foyer to catch her at the door as she was leaving. I would shake her hand, tell her how glad I was to see her and invite her to come again. Though she visited our church from time to time, she began attending another church in our district. She made some friends there and she began to occasionally stay for fellowship dinner. At times her husband, who was of another faith, attended with her.

I kept praying for Donna (not her real name), and I refused to give up on her.

When an evangelist came for a series of meetings, his wife took a special interest in her, talked to her, listened to her, hugged her, sat by her. We began to see Donna blossom and come out of the protective shell she had crawled into to keep from being hurt and rejected.

In time I encouraged my friend to transfer her membership to the church she was attending, and she

did this gladly. She was beginning to feel like she belonged and that she had a caring church family.

About this time a retired couple moved to the area. The lady immediately sensed that Donna needed friends and lots of “warm fuzzies” to help build up her self-esteem. This lady invited Donna to her house for a small prayer meeting with a few church members. In time Donna invited the group to her house, and her husband even took part in the meeting. She began to be able to not only “receive” from her church family but to “give” to them.

A Communion service was planned and Donna and her husband attended the service. Both participated. Time went on. Donna continued to grow in the Lord, and I took her to a Ladies’ Retreat. She thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship. After returning home, she called three or four people to share her enthusiasm and urged them to attend the following year.

Donna was at the following Communion service. I invited her to share with me in the preparatory experience of the foot washing. She gladly agreed. She offered to wash my feet first, and after she had done so, with love and humility, she remained on her knees in front of me, she grasped my hands, bowed her head, and *prayed for me!* The tears of joy, relief and appreciation for God’s answered prayers on her behalf rolled down my cheeks and hers! When she finished, I said in awed tone, “Donna, you *prayed!*” Her face just glowed with happiness. I praised God for her healing and thanked Him for His lesson to me that God will accomplish all things “in His time,” not in mine. I am humbly grateful!



Taxes

A tax assessor came one day to a poor pastor to determine the amount of taxes the pastor would have to pay. The following conversation took place:

“What property do you possess?” asked the assessor.

“I am a very wealthy man,” replied the minister.

“List your possessions, please,” the assessor instructed.

“First, I have everlasting life” John 3:16.

“Second, I have a mansion in heaven” John 14:2.

“Third, I have peace that passeth understanding” Phillipians 4:7.

“Fourth, I have joy unspeakable” 1 Peter 1:8.

“Fifth, I have divine love which never faileth” 1 Corinthians 13:8.

“Sixth, I have a faithful, precious wife” Proverbs 31:10.

“Seventh, I have healthy, happy, obedient children” Exodus 20:12.

“Eighth, I have true, loyal friends” Proverbs 18:24.

“Ninth, I have songs in the night” Psalm 42:8.

“Tenth, I have a crown of life” James 1:12.

The tax assessor closed his book and said, “Truly you are a very rich man, but your property is not subject to taxation.”

Sidewalk Parenting: Welcome to Your Neighborhood!

*J. Otis Ledbetter
and Randy Scott*

Comedian Buddy Hackett once quipped, “My parents were too poor to have children, so the neighbors had me.” For many of the kids around us, there is much truth in that statement. Their parents may or may not be poor, but they are often absent, nonetheless. Can we help?

I remember a warm, sunny day when I had just finished mowing the lawn. As I knelt down to clean off my mower, I heard a little voice from out of nowhere: “Whatcha doin’?” (It was too feeble to be the voice of God, so I was more startled than afraid.) As I turned around, I faced a little boy about six years old, kneeling down beside me, taking a look at my cleaning efforts.

“Well, I’ve just finished mowing the lawn, and now I’m cleaning up my lawn mower.”

“Need any help?”

“Uh, I think I can finish this up by myself.”

Next thing I knew he was gone. Vanished into thin air.

A week went by, and I was into my lawn mowing routine once again, almost at the exact moment of cleaning up my lawn mower when, once again I heard: “Whatcha doin’?” I turned around, and it was the same little neighbor boy. Well, this time I asked him what his name was, and he told me. He again asked me if he could help, and this time I told him, “Sure.”

I directed him over to a leaf bag and told him to put some of the grass clippings in it. As he was helping me, we began to talk. I asked him where he lived, and he said he lived a number of blocks away with his mother. Then, quite matter of factly, he stopped and looked at me and said, “But my daddy doesn’t live with us anymore.”

“Oh, I’m sorry to hear that.”

But then he thought for a second and he looked at me with those big eyes and said, “That’s okay. My daddy isn’t a very nice man.”

My heart went out to that little boy. I have wondered since, how many other children are in this neighborhood in the same condition? Maybe the single mother is working full-time, trying her best to provide. Maybe a relative is repeat parenting but finding too few hours in the day. Maybe the dad—or the mom—just isn’t very nice.

That day I tried to become a “sidewalk parent.”

A sidewalk parent is a person who befriends and cares about the children in his neighborhood. It’s akin to the caring and availability I spoke of earlier, but it goes a step further—by taking steps out the front door.

We realize that this is a very difficult type of parent to become. You see, we’re living in a day and age in which sometimes a good-hearted stranger’s interest in children is misunderstood. And sadly, some

Excerpt from Extending Your Heritage by J. Otis Ledbetter and Randy Scott, Cook Communications Ministries. J. Otis Ledbetter is senior pastor of Chestnut Baptist Church in Clovis, California and chairman of the board of Heritage Builders Association. His other books include Your Heritage, Family Fragrance and Family Traditions. Randy Scott is vice president and publisher at Cook Communications, Colorado Springs, Colorado, and a Heritage Builders Association board member.

strangers are not good-hearted; we've all heard the stories of abuse. So we must operate with a bit of caution as a sidewalk parent. But one of the greatest things we can do for kids in our neighborhoods is to be out there on the sidewalks with them.

A number of months ago, my wife and I were on a little walk, as we like to do in the evenings. As we wandered a few blocks from our house, we saw a couple of kids playing in a front yard. As it typical, they were ignoring us, and in the past we would have tended to ignore them. But this time, we kind of turned around and said, "Hi" and asked what they were doing. They didn't say much, just said they were playing, and as we strolled another twenty yards down the road, one of them stood up and called, "Hey! Did you know there are snakes in the neighborhood?"

We turned around and said, "No, we didn't know there were any snakes around here." He said, "Well, we saw one in our yard today, so you better be careful." We thanked him for his insight and caution and then went on our way again.

That was the start of something. Yes, a small start. But how many times do we walk through a mall, and as we come to a group of kids, walk the other way? Suppose we were to just look at them, eye to eye, and say, "Hello. How are you doing today?" Would not that, of its own, communicate value to them?

I don't know what is the right way or the best way to communicate to children today. But we do know that a great number of children are hurting. They don't feel safe in their schools, they may not even feel safe in their homes. But when a loving Christian adult acknowledges their existence, develops a conversation (which may or may not lead to a teachable moment), and shows concern—that is what sidewalk parenting is all about.



Nails in the Fence

There once was a little girl who had a bad temper. Her mother gave her a bag of nails and told her that every time she lost her temper, she must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the girl had driven 37 nails into the fence.

Over the next few weeks, as she learned to control her anger, the number of nails hammered daily dwindled down. She discovered it was easier to hold her temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the girl didn't lose her temper at all. She told her mother about it and the mother suggested that the girl now pull out one nail for each day that she was able to hold her temper. The days passed and the young girl was finally able to tell her mother that all the nails were gone. The mother took her daughter by the hand and led her to the fence.

She said, "You have done well, my daughter, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one." You can put a knife in a person and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say, 'I'm sorry', the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one."

As Shepherdesses, let each of us forgive and heal from all those who have ever left a hole in our fences!



©

PK and Proud of It

Kay Fuller

Anticipating the hotel and water park en route to an annual conference last summer, our youngest child, Karly, blurted out, "I'm so glad Daddy's a pastor because we get to do fun things that most kids don't!" My husband and I lifted a silent thank you for her exuberance, then followed it with a prayer that her love for being a pastor's kid would never die.

We've heard the stories of pastors' kids gone astray, and we're often reminded by the jokes of well-meaning parishioners. But we long to beat the odds and raise happy pastor's kids who harbor no resentments towards the church, hoping one day to hear our adult children say, "I'm glad my dad was a pastor."

To work toward that goal, parents in ministry must instill the following principle in their homes; family life will always revolve around God but not always around the church. While we are called and commanded to serve the church, we can't allow it to consume or dictate our lives. The following is a four-point plan to carry out this philosophy.

Leave work at the office

We can't take breaks from church without taking a break from God. Pastors' families need time off from church for normal family activities,

though we can still center our recreational times around God by talking to and about Him. This sends PKs the message that life is about God whether we're at church, home or on vacation. An afternoon of biking, camping, sledding, swimming or raking leaves also relays to our children that the church doesn't own Daddy.

Not part of the job description

Explain to your children why you emphasize biblical practices. For instance, when the kids and I are on our way to church Sunday mornings, I often say, "You know, even if your daddy wasn't the pastor, we'd be going to church because God wants us to." Likewise, when we refer to *Plugged In*, Focus on the Family's magazine that provides media reviews from a Christian perspective, we let them know that our movie-watching decisions have nothing to do with being a pastor's family but everything to do with being followers of Christ. "If Dad were an engineer, we'd be setting the same standards." When we enforce boundaries, we remind them their restrictions are based on our love for God, not on their father's job.

Attitude adjustment

The pastor's wife needs to realize that her attitude is a powerful influence. Whatever feelings Mom

Kay Fuller and her husband, John, live in Cedar Falls, Iowa, where John is the Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church. They have three children, ages 14, 12, and 10 whom they are crazy about. When Kay isn't at church, soccer games, or school activities, she keeps busy substitute teaching and writing. She loves to run, read and scrapbook. Kay's favorite verse is Jeremiah 32:17.

holds regarding the pastorate will probably be adopted by her children.

Wives from all walks of life get disgusted with their husbands' jobs, bosses, long hours, stress or lack of compensation. Coaches spend evenings out recruiting new players. Pilots are gone for days at a time. Plumbers are summoned on the weekends. Herein lies the kicker: "It's okay if kids turn into adults who dislike basketball, resent flying or haven't the slightest interest in fixing a toilet. It's not okay if *our* kids turn into adults who resent God because the church took their father's first priority. Instead, convince the kids that their dad's job is the greatest by pointing out the perks, such as his flexibility to coach afternoon soccer or the fact that he's rarely gone overnight like truck drivers or businessmen.

*I never felt like
church ate up all
my dad's time.
I don't want my
kids to think
that either.*

"One thing [my parents did right] was that Mom never made church out to be a place that took Dad away," said Andrea Tweeten, an adult PK now married to a pastor. "I never felt like church ate up all my dad's time. I don't want my kids to think that either."

When meetings or emergencies do call Dad away, Mom can ease the

frustration at home through her choice of words. Saying, "Daddy had something at work to tend to" is better than bemoaning "He's at church again." Mothers play an integral part in keeping resentment at bay by portraying the church as a friend, rather than a controlling foe.

They call him "Dad"

If the pastor's focus is on himself or the church, rather than God, he will fail his kids. And any efforts by the mother to portray a positive outlook may be in vain if Dad neglects the family. He needs to remain mindful of his family's sacrifices and prioritize their interests as well.

Joy Young remembers her pastor-dad doing just that. "I had a passion for animals, so Dad bought two horses for us. Every Monday he and I would ride the horses to the mountains. We had great times up there just talking, eating, and of course, giggling. That has always meant a lot to me because I knew I was more important to him than church."

Dad can reveal mutual respect by stepping into his child's world not as a pastor but simply as Dad. When Dad enters the domain of his children, say at a school function or Little League game, he shows his job is not the only important one in the family.

Of course, the best means of ensuring that our kids will not resent being a PK is to go to the One who chose you for this position. God is more accurate than the best of our parenting strategies, and He covers over a thousand pastoral, parental mistakes. Yet we often forget we have 24-hour access to the Parenting Expert. If we ask Him, He can place a love and appreciation in our children's hearts for their special status and even allow them to enjoy being a PK.



What I'm Saying

When I say "I am a Christian"
I'm not shouting "I am saved"
I'm whispering "I was lost"
That's why I chose this way.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I don't speak of this with pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble
and need someone to be my
guide.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak
and pray for strength to carry
on.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed
and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I'm not claiming to be perfect.
My flaws are too visible but,
God believes I am worth it.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I feel the sting of pain,
I have my share of heartaches
which is why I speak His name.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I do not wish to judge.
I have no authority.
I only know I'm loved.

Loving Your Enemies in the Church

Ingrid Lawrenz

*“Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”
Read Luke 6:27-36 & Romans 12:9-21.*

As ministry wives we try so hard to “live at peace with everyone,” especially with the people in our church. We desire to be an example of Christ’s love and to have our church relationships go well, not only for our husbands, but for ourselves as well.

Inevitably we can’t please everyone. Sooner or later we learn of someone’s disappointment with us—or worse yet with our husband or children. The criticism stings—it hits us like a blow in the stomach. “Your husband doesn’t have a preaching gift,” “You are seen as cold and unapproachable,” “Your kids are a constant source of disruption or disrespectful talk.” Then comes the attack on your Christian faith and character. This always seems to offend the most—being judged as less than “Christian” for what stand you’ve taken on certain issues like abortion, rescue missions, psychology, or for sending your children to a public school.

The emotion of shame washes over you: “you are bad,” “inadequate,” “you should quit,” and you feel like hiding. You then need to gain some objectivity by searching your conscience. If you find it clean before

God, then the shame lifts, and righteous indignation and anger sets in.

What do you do with anger you feel toward your brother or sister in Christ? How can you keep ministering to an “enemy” in your own fellowship? The anger says there is a disconnection between you and your brother or sister in Christ. Therefore, something has to change. I have found it most helpful to think in terms of “getting rid of your anger.” The question then becomes *how* do you get rid of your anger? Jesus in Mark 3:5 was angry at the Pharisees but He also said in Matthew 5:22, you are liable for judgment if you are angry at your brother. Therefore, it is pertinent to become angry at the things God is angry at as in judgmental attitudes, slander, and false pride. This is different than an anger over expectations not being met or for selfish pride not being satisfied. Sometimes your anger can be resolved by adjusting your expectations, forgiving, and forbearing. The first step in anger resolution is to admit it to yourself and to talk to God about it, (possibly in a prayer journal). Secondly, decide if this is an issue to forbear or confront.

Anger is dispelled most quickly when you can confront the person directly and mutually seek reconciliation. If this doesn’t work,

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and that anger continues to boil, try confessing it to a trusted confidante with the goal of getting rid of your anger. That way you can forgive instead of slandering. Other ministry wives can be most empathetic on issues such as these. Keeping the other party's name totally anonymous also helps us from slipping into revenge.

You can do everything right in the process but still experience more anger due to ongoing sin on the other person's part. This produces more work at resolution for you and the need for more forgiveness on your part. God's promise that vengeance is His is consoling at this point.

Loving your enemies shows God's supernatural grace toward other people. It doesn't mean you have to like them, or that you have to have affection for them, or that you even have to enjoy their company. Nor does it mean enabling their sin by not confronting their behavior. It means loving God's way—agape style—an undeserved showing of good will. It is hoping the best for them and out of moral principle not seeking to punish or slander them. It means praying for them and helping them if they need help. I find it interesting that the Bible acknowledges us having *enemies* thus validating our hurt, rejection, and disappointment. Jesus showed love toward Judas, His enemy, and let Judas' own conscience condemn him.

There is a sense of peace that calms the unsettling anger and dispels the shame when we rest in the unconditional love of God. (He keeps loving us as imperfect as we are). The knowledge that our heart attitude is constantly seeking God's power to keep loving when we are so inadequate to show that kind of love on our own, brings comfort as well.



*I want to see the King in His
beauty.*

*I want to behold His matchless
charms.*

I want you to behold Him, too.

*Christ will lead His redeemed ones
beside the river of life and will
explain to them all that perplexed
them in this world.*

*The mysteries of grace will unfold
before them. Where their finite
minds discerned only confusion
and broken purposes, they will
see the most perfect and beautiful
harmony.*

—Testimonies for the Church
Vol. 9, pp. 193-194.





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