

A husband and wife serving together in the ministry can bring much excitement, joy and satisfaction; but serving together in pastoral ministry can also bring frustration, stress, and heartache.

DISTURBING STATISTICS:

Fifteen hundred pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, Spiritual burnout or contention in their churches.

Four thousand new churches start each year, but over seven thousand churches close.

Fifty percent of pastors are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way to make a living.

Fifty percent of pastors' marriages will end in divorce.

Eighty percent of pastors' wives feel pressured to do things, and be something in the church that they are really not.

The majority of pastors' wives surveyed said that the most destructive event that has occurred in their marriage and family was the day they entered the ministry.

Eighty percent of pastors surveyed spend less than fifteen minutes a day in prayer.

Ninety five percent of pastors do not regularly pray with their spouses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Which of these statistics do you find the most shocking and why?

What steps could be taken by ordaining bodies to mitigate these alarming statistics?

BE ON THE SAME PAGE REGARDING:

CLEAR SENSE OF CALL

What is the call to ministry?

What if the spouse does not share the sense of call?

PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Leadership style

Dealing with problem people

FINANCES

Full time, Part time?

What are the expectations of the congregation?

BALANCE

What constitutes a balanced life?

AGREE ON DEFINITION OF SUCCESS AND HOW TO DEFINE FAILURE

Attendance

Do your emotions ride the wave of high and low attendance?

Growth

How do you measure growth?

Lives changed

How do you measure spiritual growth?

DECIDE ON THE LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT FOR SPOUSE

Tough job

The job description of a pastor's wife

Co-pastor

The issue of having responsibility without authority

Work outside home

To fulfill career aspirations or to avoid church involvement

Gifts

How spiritual gifts can bring unity or division to a pastor and spouse

Frustration

Why a large percentage of pastors' wives think that entering the ministry was the worst thing that ever happened to their family

Protecting against over involvement

Learning to say no without feeling guilty

WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN COUNSELING?

Pastoral counseling vs. professional counseling

Being careful with terminology

Legal responsibility

SCHEDULE COUNSELING BASED ON YOUR AVAILABILITY

Gives you time to prepare

Better stewardship of your time

Cut to the chase

Reduce resentment in your family

SIMPLE COUNSELING GUIDELINES

The three meeting rule

Homework

Limit the time for each counseling session

Know when to refer [see handout]

Maintaining the right atmosphere in the home is vital for successful ministry

1 Timothy 3:1-5 NASB

¹It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. ²An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵(but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

The following guidelines will be very helpful

ESTABLISH BOUNDRIES

Day off

Make time for each other

Call Screening

Mealtime sacred

FAMILY NIGHT

If you have school age children, set aside one evening a week to eat a meal together. Talk a little bit. Pray a little bit, and then do something fun together.

WATCH YOUR CONVERSATION AROUND THE CHILDREN

Don't criticize church members

Don't argue about church stuff

Don't complain

PREPARE FOR LEAN TIMES

TRUST GOD TO MEET YOUR NEEDS AND DON'T LIVE BEYOND YOUR MEANS

Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without

NEVER TELL YOUR KIDS THAT THEY CAN'T HAVE SOMETHING BECAUSE YOU CAN'T AFFORD IT

MAKE TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE

DO YOUR BEST TO BALANCE LOVE AND DISCIPLINE WITH YOUR CHILDREN

ALLOW YOUR CHILDREN TO MAKE AS MANY OF THEIR OWN DECISIONS AS POSSIBLE WITHIN THE SAFETY OF YOUR PREDETERMINED EVER EXPANDING LIMITATIONS BASED ON THE CHILDS AGE AND LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT

THESE LIMITATIONS MUST BE ENFORCED BY THE PROPER USE OF CONSEQUENCES

DON'T BE OVERLY RESTRICTIVE BECAUSE THEY ARE PREACHER'S KIDS

ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN TO INVITE THEIR FRIENDS TO YOUR HOUSE AND MAKE YOUR HOME THE FUN PLACE. THE LOVING PLACE, THE GOOD SNACK PLACE TO BE

GIVE PRAYER A PROMINENT PLACE IN YOUR HOME

You and your spouse pray together out loud everyday

Brief prayer at mealtime

Pray for the children at bedtime

When they leave for school

Before embarking on a trip

The Apostle Paul reminds us that we should pray at all times and pray about everything. and peace will be our reward.

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR MARRIAGE FROM STRIFE
