



Counsel to Newly-Wed Couple

Ellen G. White

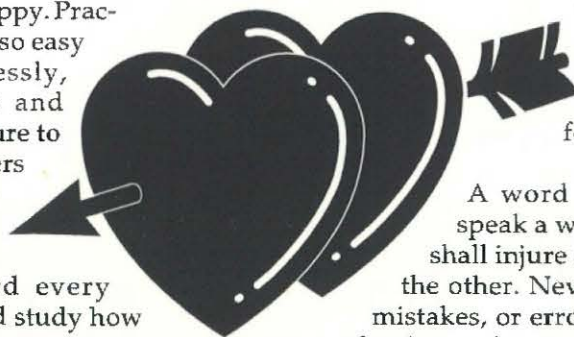
Live for the glory of God. Be tender, kind, and courteous to each other. The happiness of your life will consist in making God your trust, and in seeking to make each other happy. Practice self-control. It is so easy to speak thoughtlessly, words that grieve and wound. Do not venture to trifle with each others feelings. Practice patience, encourage love, discipline yourselves to guard every word and action, and study how you can be a blessing to each other.

Love is a delicate plant; rude blasts frequently bruise it if they do not uproot it entirely.

Never make a third person your confidant. Your private life is sacred; keep the barriers high, that no one may presume to intrude into the sacred circle.

Be calm and tranquil, patient, forbearing, and forgiving.

A word more: do not speak a word in jest that shall injure or reflect upon the other. Never recount the mistakes, or errors, or faults of each other in the presence of a third person or in company, be the circle ever so select. Live for God and for each other.



- 3 Time to Share—Unsung Heroines
- 4 Pastor's Page—The Sad Man
- 7 My Miracle
- 8 The Other Woman
- 10 Keeping Our Kids Christian
- 11 Fitness Exercises for Ministers' Wives
- 12 Rekindling Your First Love
- 15 When the Saints Go . . . Marching Out
- 16 Helping a Hurting Friend
- 19 What Are Friends For?
- 22 Shepherdess International News

Between the Covers

A new year has arrived and for many of us that means time for a "new start." As I participated in my church's Christmas evening Communion Service, I silently shared with the Lord my own resolutions which I needed to implement in 1994.

Perhaps you, too, will find something between the covers of this Winter issue that will perk your resolve. Do you need to exercise your faith like Marcia? (p. 7) Maybe plan a funeral to bury your jealousy of "the other woman" (p. 8). Or, renew your resolve to be more consistent with the children's worship time (p. 10).

Personally, I haven't taken to heart "rekindling my first love" (p. 12). Busyness is not holiness. A closer relationship with our lovely Jesus is my prayer in 1994 for each of you.

Sharon

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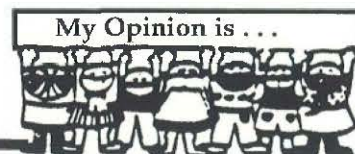
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Time to Share



Unsung Heroines

Delba Bartolome-de Chavez

In the Philippines, it used to be that when we spoke of church growth, there was a tendency to overlook the pastoral wives and their contribution to it. We usually associated church growth to pastors, laymen, church elders and other male church leaders; however, the picture has gradually changed.

After looking closely into the Filipino traits and observing the growth of Seventh-day Adventist churches in the missions/conferences of the North Philippine Union, I came to the conclusion that Filipino Adventist women, particularly pastoral wives are the "unsung heroes" in soul winning.

Filipino women generally are more spiritual and more receptive to religious matters. This can be proven by the preponderance of females over males in Adventist churches and in Methodist churches.

Since Filipino children tend to form a closer bond with their mothers than with their fathers, their religious preference is

greatly influenced by their mothers' religious affiliation. Filipino women who are won to the Adventist church bring with them their children and grandchildren thus contributing to the growth of the church. Many of these mothers who remained faithful, despite the fact that their husbands never accepted the Adventist truth, have spawned generations of faithful and active Adventists.

Filipino pastoral wives, who work outside the home and in non-denominational institutions, share the gospel with their colleagues more freely than do their male counterparts. Their openness and ease in discussing Adventist lifestyle and doctrines with their co-workers, both male and female, has led many to the Seventh-day Adventist church. Pastoral wives are in the forefront of this evangelistic outreach.

A month ago, I talked to a newly-baptized couple. I learned from our conversation that they were introduced to Adventism by the lifestyle of two Adventist women in their office. One of these women loves to sing hymns from the Church Hymnal during office breaks while the other woman reads her Bible. It didn't take long before their office mates

began asking questions regarding their religion. Questions led to Bible studies which later ended in baptism.

Just two weeks ago, with some other pastoral wives, I attended the first Union-Wide Women's Ministries' Spiritual Retreat. In one of the afternoon sessions, selected women from the five missions/conferences reported on the number of Bible seminars, evangelistic meetings, and other soul-winning programs they have launched in their respective territories.

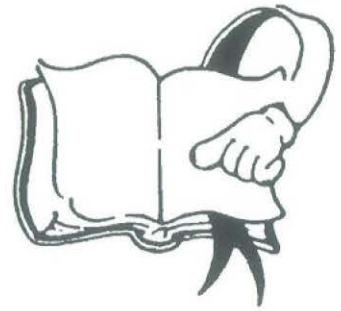
Women Bible instructors (Filipino term for women pastors) and pastoral wives have been working hand-in-hand with laywomen in conducting all these programs. People who were led to the truth by these dedicated, nurturing women find it easy to adjust into their new "status." The new believers are also more ready to share their new-found faith with non-believing friends because they feel secure in the caring and nurturing attitude of the women who led them to the Lord.

Filipino pastoral wives have experienced the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and have devoted their time, money, efforts, and talents to the finishing of the work in our generation. ❁

Delba is a pastoral wife in the North Philippine Union. Used with permission.

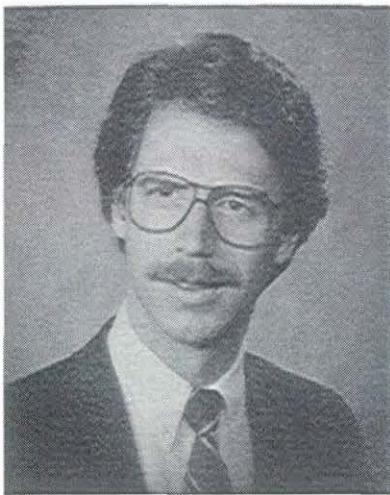
—Via Shepherdess International

Pastor's Page



The Sad Man

Loren Seibold



This article appeared in Virtue magazine, March/April 1993 under the title, "What the Sad Man Really Wanted." Used with permission.

Loren is the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Palo Alto, California. He and his wife, Carmen, make a point of spending time each year with a mission in Mexico.

—Via Shepherdess International

Once there was a boy who lived in a big house on a wooded hill. He was very much like other boys. He loved dogs and horses, sports cars and music. He played football and admired pretty girls. Other than having to pick up after himself, which he hated, he had a nice life.

One day the boy said to God: "I've been thinking a lot about my life, and I know what I want when I become a man."

"What?" asked God.

"I want to live in a two-story house with a front porch and a barn and lots of horses and two Saint Bernard dogs and a big garden in the back yard. I want to marry a woman who is tall and very beautiful and kind and has long, black hair and blue eyes, who plays the guitar and sings folk songs in a clear, high voice.

"I want to have three big, strong sons who will play football with me in our back yard; and when they grow up, one will be a scientist and one a senator and the youngest will quarterback for the 49ers.

"As for me, I want to be an adventurer who sails vast oceans and climbs tall mountains and

rescues people. And I want to be wealthy so I can drive a red Ferrari and so I will never have to pick up after myself again."

"That sounds like a nice dream," said God.

"Thank you," said the boy.

"I want you to be happy," said God.

"Thank you again," said the boy.

One day, while playing football, the boy fell and hurt his knee. After that, his knee was always a little painful. He couldn't climb tall mountains or even tall trees, much less sail vast oceans. So he went to college and studied marketing and started a business selling medical supplies.

He married a girl who was very beautiful and very kind and who had long, black hair. But she was short, not tall, and had brown eyes, not blue, and she couldn't play the guitar or even the accordion, and she couldn't sing at all. She prepared wonderful meals seasoned with rare Chinese spices, however, and she painted magnificent pictures of birds that looked so real it seemed they could fly off the canvas.

He and his wife lived near the top of a tall building in a warm,

comfortable apartment with a balcony that looked out over the twinkling city lights and blue ocean. He didn't have room for two Saint Bernard dogs, but he did have a fat, fluffy, gray cat that nestled on his lap and purred.

He had three daughters, all of them very beautiful. The youngest, who couldn't walk and so was in a wheelchair, was the loveliest of all. She could play the guitar and sing folk songs in a low, mysterious voice.

All three daughters were intelligent and all three loved their father very much. They brought him tea and cookies, and they rubbed his neck when he was tired, and they found the remote control for him when it got lost somewhere in the Sunday paper.

They didn't play football with their father in the back yard—there was no back yard. But sometimes they went to the park and tossed a Frisbee.

He didn't have a stable of horses, but sometimes he took his family for a ride through the park in an old-fashioned, horse-drawn carriage.

He made enough money to live comfortably, but he didn't drive a red Ferrari. In fact, he never even rode in one. Instead, he rode in a taxicab or the subway. And sometimes he had to pick things up and put them away—even things that didn't belong to him.

Then one morning the boy awoke and realized that he was now a man. And he remembered his dream and became very sad.

"I am very sad," he said to his best friend.

"Why?" asked his best friend.

"Because I once dreamed of

marrying a tall woman with black hair and blue eyes who would play the guitar and sing in a high, clear voice. My wife cannot play the guitar or sing, and she has brown eyes, and she's not tall."

"Your wife is very beautiful and very kind," said his best friend. "And she paints splendid pictures and fixes delectable Chinese food."

But the man wasn't listening. And his best friend worried about him.

"I am very sad," the man said to his wife.

"Why?" asked his wife.

"Because I once dreamed of living in a two-story house with a porch, and of having a barn and

"I am very sad," the man said to his therapist.

"Why?" asked the therapist.

"Because I once dreamed that when I grew up I would be a great adventurer, rescuing people at the tops of high mountains or far out on the ocean. Instead, I'm a bald businessman with a potbelly and a bad knee."

"The medical supplies you sell have saved many lives," said the therapist.

But the man wasn't listening. So his therapist said something incomprehensible about super-egos and self-differentiation, and charged him \$110 and sent him home.

"I am very sad," the man said to his minister.

"Why?" asked the minister.

"Because I once dreamed of having three strong sons who would play football with me in the back yard; I dreamed that one of them would grow up to be a scientist, another, a politician; and the youngest, the quarterback for the 49ers."

"You have three very beautiful, intelligent daughters," said the minister. "They love you very much, and have all done well in the things they've chosen. One of them is a nurse, another an artist, and the youngest teaches music to children."

But the man wasn't listening. After he left, his minister prayed for him.

"I am very sad," the man said to his accountant.

"Why?" asked his accountant.

"Because I once dreamed of being wealthy and driving a red Ferrari and never having to pick up after myself again. Instead, I ride in a Chevrolet taxicab; and

"God, why didn't you give me the things I dreamed of?" asked the man.

"I wanted to surprise you with things you didn't dream of," said God.

horses and two Saint Bernard dogs and a back yard with a garden. Instead, I live on the 47th floor in an apartment with a 20-square-foot patio that has some potted geraniums on it."

"Our apartment is warm and comfortable, and we can see the ocean from our living-room couch," replied his wife. "It's filled with love and laughter and paintings of birds and a fluffy, gray cat—not to mention our three children."

But the man wasn't listening. And his wife felt like she failed her husband. She began to feel sad, too, and lost interest in her paints and rare spices.

sometimes when I'm dog-tired after working all day, I still have to clean up around my house."

"You make enough money to live in a nice apartment," said his accountant. "You eat out frequently at good restaurants, and your investment portfolio doesn't look at all bad."

But the man wasn't listening. And his accountant charged him \$100 for the time he's spent listening to him.

The man was sad. And because he was sad, other people became sad with him.

The man was so sad that one day he became very sick. He went to the hospital where he lay in a white room on white sheets surrounded by nurses dressed in white, with tubes and wires leading from his body to beeping, blinking machines.

He was terribly, tragically sad. And his family and friends gathered around his bed, and they were all deeply sad, too.

Then one night, when everything was dark and quiet, the man said to God, "Remember when I was a boy and I told you all the things I wanted when I grew up?"

"Sure," said God. "It was a lovely dream."

"Why didn't you give me the things I dreamed of?" asked the man.

"I could have," said God. "But I wanted to surprise you with some things you didn't dream of. I suppose you've noticed what I've given you: a kind, beautiful wife; a good business; a nice place to live; three lovely daughters—one of the best packages I've ever put together—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted the man. "But I thought You were going to give me what I really wanted."

"And I thought you were going to give Me what I really wanted," said God.

"What did You want?" asked the man, surprised—for it had never occurred to him that God was in want of anything.

"I wanted to make you happy with the things I've given you," said God.

Then God went home, too, because He knew the man needed some time alone. And the man lay in the dark all night, just thinking. He lay there while the machines at his bedside blinked and beeped. He thought and thought, and toward morning he decided to dream a new dream. It was a dream he wished he'd chosen for

himself many years before. He decided to dream that what he most wanted in life were the very things he already had.

And the man got well and went home and lived happily on the 47th floor and enjoyed the purring of his fluffy, gray cat, and his children's and grandchildren's beautiful voices, and his wife's deep brown eyes and delicately spiced cuisine, and the glorious pictures of birds. And at night he had tea and cookies as he gazed at the ocean and watched the city lights twinkling on, one by one. ❀

To Risk . . .

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool,
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
To expose feeling is to risk exposing your true self,
To place your ideas, your dreams before the crowd is to risk their loss.

To love is to risk not being loved in return,
To live is to risk dying,
To hope is to risk despair,
To try is to risk failure.

But risk must be taken, because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.

The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing, and is nothing.

We may avoid suffering and sorrow, but we simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, live.

Chained by our certitudes, we are slaves, we have forfeited our freedom.

Only a person who risks . . . is free.

—Author Unknown

My Miracle

Maria Sae Yang

My husband and I worked in an area where we had a good support system of other Adventists. I had a good job as food service director in the cafeteria of the local Adventist college. Then we were asked to go to a new district which needed leadership, far from our group of friends and colleagues. It was a very hard time for me.

After much prayer, we accepted this new assignment. It was very difficult for me to be in a new place where I didn't know anyone, and particularly difficult because I had no employment. There was no possibility for me to obtain a job in this small village.

I knew I needed to work, so I got the idea of beginning a Child Care. There was none in this small



Maria is a pastor's wife who writes from the Chiang Kong Church District in Northern Thailand. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

town. It would also give me an avenue to meet more adults by providing care for their children and get adult Bible studies going. I was able to secure a place to have the Child Care and the first day I registered ten children.

Then trouble started. First of all there were caterpillars. They came from everywhere and secreted a poison on the children's skin, which made them break out in a rash. I simply couldn't keep those caterpillars off the children. Because of the invasion, four of the children dropped out.

The trouble continued. Mosquitoes swarmed us without mercy. The children were being eaten alive. The parents said they were not going to send the children back anymore if the problem did not stop. They didn't like the children having bites all over them.

I prayed. "Lord, this is your work. You know I want to witness here with these children. If the mosquitoes keep coming, the children will go away. Lord, if it is your will that I continue this Child Care Program, please get rid of these mosquitoes."

The next day I went back to the place where we held the Child Care and stuck out my arm to see how many mosquitoes swarmed around it. I waited a minute—no mosquitoes. I stuck it out for five minutes, ten minutes, 20 minutes, still no mosquitoes. It was an answer to prayer!

A few children came. At nap time, they asked me why I didn't cover them with the mosquito netting. "The mosquitoes are gone," I replied.

"Why?" they persisted.

I shared with them how I prayed to my Jesus and He had taken the mosquitoes away. "They will not be back to ever bother us again."

That evening, the children went home and told their parents. One mother could not believe it. She brought her child the next day and asked me about it, and I told her the story. Still not convinced, she stayed the whole day to see if it was really true. She spread the word throughout the village—no more mosquitoes!

The next week 20 children came to the Child Care. In a couple of weeks our numbers grew to 40, then to 60. Many cried when they found out I had no more room to include them in the program.

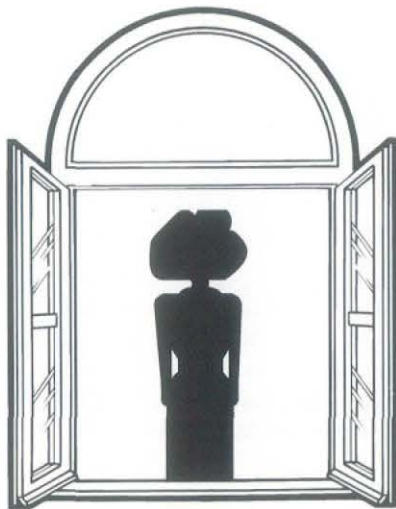
I am able to witness and minister to these people because Jesus knew the importance of little children and that a ministry was needed especially for them and their parents.

The Lord does care about pastoral wives, and He is especially watching to pour out blessings when they claim His promises to do His work.

Praise God for the miracle of the mosquitoes. ❀

The Other Woman

Jackie Oesch



Jackie is the originator and president of Christian Women's Ministries, and has been instrumental in the development and implementation of Women's Ministries as an organizational model. She presently serves as director of Women's Ministries at St. John's Lutheran Church in Orange, California, where she lives with her husband and four children.

This article appeared in Just Between Us, Winter 1993. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

The keynote speaker asked the audience of pastors and their wives a question that made me want to jump up out of my chair: What is the most difficult aspect of ministry? Oh, I knew the answer to that question! I wanted to shout it out. The most difficult aspect of ministry was learning to live with his "mistress."

I remember well the day we arrived in San Antonio eager to begin ministry at a small church on the southside. Quickly our private life as husband and wife was invaded by an invisible intruder that was burrowing its way into our newly established home. Norb was involved in the work he was called to do and preoccupied with ministry responsibilities and he was unaware of what I was discovering about our life together.

I could not pinpoint what was happening. I only knew Norb was no longer all mine. He would leave early in the morning all showered and fresh—dressed with a clean shirt and pressed slacks, smoothly shaven face—and with the alluring aroma of aftershave. With a quick kiss he was out the door yelling over his shoulder something about looking forward to being home for dinner but that he had a meeting at seven.

What could I say? Pastors

were *supposed* to be busy. They were often needed at a moment's notice. His life was not his own. Of course, he was excited about finally doing the work the seminary had trained him to do. As for me—well, I considered these early days a necessary phase—all part of adjusting to my new role as "the pastor's wife."

It did not take long for me to discover what this "mistress" was like. She was extremely presumptuous. She demanded his time and his energy which meant that he would come home late at night tired and exhausted. She monopolized his thoughts so when I would ask him to share what he was thinking, he usually responded with something pertaining to her. In bed at night his final comments reflected his concern for her health and well-being. She seemed to have his permission to invade our privacy any time—day or night. She took him out of town for conventions and speaking engagements. Life in a parsonage meant that she dictated the home in which we lived and even determined when the repairs would be completed. She ran our home and our relationship. Because of her we found ourselves giving each other the leftovers of our lives.

What did this do to me? I was a jealous woman. I became resentful and bitter toward them and

their relationship. I could not get rid of her and I was not about to compete with her. I found myself closing off my feelings. I wasn't going to let the intimacy they were sharing continue to hurt me. I felt I was being robbed of something that was mine. It was painful to realize that Norb chose to nurture this relationship and encouraged it to continue. He seemed to stand for her, justifying her position within our marriage.

By turning my anger inward I allowed waves of depression to invade my life. I was struggling to cope with what was happening. Divorce was out of the question and yet the loneliness and separation seemed unbearable. Another big problem was guilt. How could I possibly resent the fact that Norb was spending his time and energy doing "the Lord's work."

The relationship persisted. She continually encouraged him by giving him strokes of love and gratitude for all that he had done for her by ministering to her at such critical times. She would tell him how meaningful sermons and Bible studies had been which caused him to strive to do better and to do more. He would be encouraged as she grew in size and burdened by her as she grew in needs.

My guilt intensified as church members would share with me how fortunate I was to be married to such a "man of God." They would insist on sharing with me how loving, caring and considerate he was, how knowledgeable he was of Scripture and how eager he was to visit with them in their home. Their compliments compounded my guilt and provided fuel for my anger. My depression continued. How was I ever to compete with God?

After eight and a half years

in San Antonio we accepted a call to a growing congregation in Bakersfield, California. Our family with two children soon grew to a family of four. Life as a mother was demanding. The children consumed my time and energy and I found myself directing my feelings into constructive time with them. They became my friends. We understood and accepted each other. We enjoyed one another's company. I wanted to spend time with them. My periods of depression became less frequent. I allowed the children to fill the intense void I felt as a result of Norb's preoccupation with the demands of pastoral ministry.

About ten years into our marriage Norb decided to begin his doctoral program. I became involved in the program as a member of his required advisory board. I found the discussions regarding ministry challenging and stimulating. However, the assignment that brought about the biggest revelation for me was the question: What is *your* ministry? As I wrestled with this question I was forced to identify those in my life whom the Lord had called me to serve, those to whom by meeting their needs God enabled me to bring the Gospel, namely Jesus Christ. I began to recognize that both Norb and I had specific and unique ministries. I was called to identify and accept not only my ministry, but Norb's also. God was busy teaching me many things during this period of my life. I began to understand the concept of ministry. I had been reacting to his ministry as his "mistress" until I realized that I also was in ministry! No longer did I find myself competing with a "mistress" but rather participating in a ministry with Norb. By changing my attitude the Lord brought me from

This "mistress" ran our home and our relationship. Because of her we found ourselves giving each other the leftovers of our lives.

resentment of a "mistress" to the love and excitement of a ministry. Together we would be able to reach out to serve.

I began to understand that Norb was part of the ministry God had given me. I looked for ways of caring for his needs in order that he might better function in his ministry. I realized that by feeding and caring for him, by being attentive to him and loving him I was developing a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment which came from knowing that I was doing ministry specifically designed by God for me. I was beginning to understand the same to be true regarding our children, the women who gathered with me for Wednesday morning Bible study, and for members of the congregation with their countless needs.

Today life is exciting. Saying "yes" or "no" to opportunities is determined by the specific ministry which is mine, ministry enables me to be Jesus to the world around me, the ministry of bringing the good news of the Gospel to those I am called to serve. ✿

Keeping Our Kids Christian

Amy Hagerup

The image of a family sitting reverently, hands folded in laps, listening as father reads from the treasured family Bible seems, unfortunately, to be found only in storybooks about our nation's past. Our minds can picture these little cherubs enraptured by the reading of the Word of God as they hear the fire crackling in the wood stove with the gentle mooing of the cows outside. But we are a different generation and sounds in today's home include the microwave's humming, Nintendo beeping, and nameless (and often tuneless) sounds coming from our kids' stereos. We sigh in resignation that family devotions are a thing of the past.

But the Lord's command to us in Deuteronomy 6:7 to be teaching our children daily is just as true in this decade as it was in Laura Ingall's time! Sunday

Amy R. Hagerup and her husband are church-planting missionaries with SIM in Ghana, Africa. Their 16 years of service there have been instrumental in planting several area churches. The inspiration for this article came from the three Hagerup children. They have recently adopted a Ghanaian baby.

This article appeared in Just Between Us, Fall 1992. Used with permission.

—Via Shepherdess International

School and church-sponsored missionary groups are good training for our kids ... but none of them are to take the place of teaching God's Word in our homes. Something as important as devotions must be scheduled and held sacred.

Here are some ideas for making it a reality in today's Christian home:

1. **Choose a time for regular devotions and schedule it with everyone.** Put aside the stereotype that it has to be at suppertime. Some families with school-aged children find mornings before school better than evenings. After supper suits us best but since we're in Africa, we don't have conflicting evening schedules like most Americans do. Arrange a time that suits your family's needs. Don't wait for your husband to do it. Godly husbands will usually take the lead, but as the family mealtime and bedtime organizer, the wife is in a better position to at least get it started.

2. **Use a readable Bible for your kids' ages.** Read a short portion, comment about the truths and applications, and encourage dialogue. Help your children to learn to "feel" with the characters (fear, anticipation, wonder, etc). The Gospels are a good place to begin. Genesis also is an action-packed book. Take one book

and read it through little by little before going to another book. Feel free to skip heavy portions.

3. **Involve the entire family.** Let school-aged children read the Scripture occasionally. Seek their insights. Children can come up with refreshing perceptions as they learn God's Word. When asked what Canaan was, our then five-year-old son jumped up eagerly and said, "It was just like America ... with lots of milk and honey!" Having spent four of his five years in Africa, he had developed his own ideas of the prosperity of America—and Canaan must have been just like it! Another time, the question for review was asked: "What did Peter say to the Lord when they began hauling in all those fish?" Our four-year-old daughter piped up, "Get out of here quick, because I am sooooo bad!" These are their own interpretations—unadulterated, simple, first impressions of these wonderful truths!

4. **Keep it short!** Long, boring readings soon brand "Family Devotions" as drudgery to be endured.

5. **Let active participation be voluntary.** Not all members of the family will be equally enthusiastic about devotion time. But do require them to come!

6. **Have a prayer time when everyone can pray.** It helps to

have a plan to avoid trite prayers like "Bless Aunt Mary!" We always assign a prayer topic and everyone chooses a person to pray for under that topic: extended family, missionaries, friends, staff at school, church members, neighbors, etc. Personal requests and thanksgivings should be shared too—and checked up on: "How did your test go yesterday?"

7. *Be flexible.* If everyone is particularly tired, then we have just one person lead in prayer. If a family member is off at a friend's for the night, we go ahead without them. If we miss a day or two, that's all right! Remember the devil is going to fight us on this and try to discourage us from continuing!

8. *Be creative.* If your family is musical, you may want to include singing. Or if your youngsters are uninhibited, try role-playing the Bible story. If you want a change for an evening, read a short Psalm instead of the normal reading. There are lots of Bible games at Christian bookstores—why not try one of them on Saturday for some variation?

9. *Encourage all family members to give suggestions for the devotions.* Recently when our 15-year-old son came home from boarding school, he advised us that we should have our prayer time on our knees. He elaborated that their new dorm-dad insists that they all pray on their knees—and so, we've been praying on our knees ever since!

Opening the Word of God as a family is one of the most precious experiences you can have together. All too soon those kids will be gone! Catch them now in the joy of listening to God and talking together with Him and that will go a long way in *Keeping Your Kids Christian!* ❀

Fitness Exercises for Ministers' Wives

Laura Sisk

The firm-hand routine—You perform this exercise using several small children who are determined to embarrass you in public. By firmly gripping their hands, you attempt to correct their socially unacceptable behavior without resorting to public violence. You must never vacillate while *firm handling* or you will fall on your face.

Skin thickener—The *skin thickener* is executed by rubbing shoulders with the gossips and critics in the congregation. When you have done this exercise regularly, you will notice a new, protective layer of skin forming over the epidermis. This will cause any friction to be less painful.

Foot press (otherwise referred to as "putting your foot down")—Perform this difficult move only while properly positioned. The exercise requires both strength and grace. You must press firmly without stepping on anyone else's toes.

One-leg stands—This workout is really helpful when you need a leg to stand on. It is often done right after a botched *foot press*. Balance on one foot and with both hands slowly ease the other foot from your oral cavity.

Lip stiffener—For the upper

lip that twitches uncontrollably with emotion, this exercise is a must. Pressing lips firmly together, pull them inward and continue to press until the crisis passes. The *lip stiffener* is usually performed during board meetings or funerals.

Mouth workouts—With teeth clinched, make a n-n-n sound while gradually forming the lips into a perfect O. Do this clearly and distinctly. Use this exercise when responding to the nominating committee list of five jobs for you.

Stationary tongue—The *stationary tongue* is executed by clamping the jaws tightly together and keeping the tongue firmly in place between the palates. This is an advanced exercise that few do well.

Neck thrust—Sticking your neck out can be a hazardous activity. Remember to thrust only when necessary or expedient. Some performers have lost their heads. If you are careful you may only lose face.

Double-knee bend—A guaranteed exercise for complete well being. Must be performed several times a day. Lower the body to a kneeling position. Fold hands. Remain in this stance as long as needed. If you find yourself suffering from performing exercises one through eight, the *double-knee bend* will never fail to keep you in good form. ❀

—This article appeared in *Arizona Women*, March 1986. Used with permission.

—Via *Shepherdess International*

Rekindling Your First Love

Shelly Esser

Among many Christian women today there is a growing attitude that spiritual intimacy and renewal come from involvement in more and more activities. We somehow conclude that God is most pleased with us when our schedules, our relationships, and our ministries have been maximized.

If we're really honest with ourselves, though, many of us would have to admit we're doing more and enjoying it less. At the very center of our quest for deeper intimacy with Christ there is a nagging emptiness, a dullness, a joylessness, a distance that penetrates our inner spirits. We wonder how this can be. Perhaps the greatest challenge facing us today as Christian women is to keep first things first—to keep our love for Christ passionate and alive. Consequently, every day we have to work at putting our First Love as our top priority which will often mean some conscious rearranging of our priorities.

I've often struggled with this in my own life and have had to seriously examine myself recognizing the desperate condition of my own heart—facing the reality that I can so easily suffer from *heart trouble*.

The Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-4 was another group of believers who experienced severe *heart trouble*—the kind of heart trouble that threatened their love life with Jesus. They were church people like you and me who made the mistake of getting caught up in the busyness of the ministry losing sight of the purpose in the process. From all appearances, they looked like the perfect church—committed, dedicated, good Christians, living for Christ, or so they thought. However, Jesus looked into their hearts and came up with a very different diagnosis. I wonder if He were to look into our hearts the first ladies of the church—what diagnosis he would have for us?

In verse 4, Jesus harshly rebukes this busy little church, "Yet, I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love." This busy, separated, sacrificing church had *abandoned* or *left* their first love, replacing it with sound doctrine and busy activity—not bad things in themselves. Sure, these believers were involved in ministering for Christ, but they carelessly put all of their emphasis on service at the expense of deep devotion to Christ. They had reached the place in their lives of all output with no input.

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—Via Shepherdess International

If we're not careful, we can make the same mistake.

Have you ever noticed how busyness has become a way of life in our society—even in the church? It's almost an addiction. We often think that the busier we are, the more spiritual we are. As the Church of Ephesus exemplifies, that is simply not true. Jesus wants our hearts, not just our hands and heads. "The most crucial danger to a leader is to be so busy as to neglect to love Jesus, to fail to live a life of ardent devotion and 'in-loveness' to Jesus."¹

Christian service is a poor substitute for Jesus Himself. We must ask ourselves, Do I want to run myself ragged doing things for God, or do I want the best part—being His friend and loving Him face to face? Yes, service is very important, but not apart from the one whom we serve. If our focus is only on important, but not apart from the one whom we serve. If our focus is only on ministry rather than our walk with Christ, we will never truly put Him first.

There must be a balance, of course, but more often than not we err on the side of being too busy. Millie Dienert once said, "Any activity we involve ourselves in that is not directed by the Holy Spirit is just a bunch of busyness." How true. Sadly, we get to the places in our lives and ministries where our activities become passionless, even Christless. We need to be careful that we do not become *busied out* or "hurried out" of our relationship with Christ.² Christian living is living in love with Jesus! Daily, we must choose to love Jesus.

How do we know when we've lost our First Love? I believe it begins when we lose our sense of needing Christ. When you think about it, it's our need for Christ

in the first place that is the very motivation for our salvation. But often, once God begins to meet the needs in our lives, we tend to forget we still have them, don't we? We become self-sufficient and self-absorbed. I'm sure those in the Church of Ephesus were running the church efficiently. They knew how to implement all the right programs. They knew all of the latest techniques and formulas for ministry. However, they left out the Lord in the process. They became busy for God, not busy with God and there is a big difference. What we are in public stems from what we are in private.

Whether we realize it or not, we are always in deep, acute need of Jesus Christ in our lives. We are in danger of losing our First Love when we don't recognize the continual depth of our need. That's why praise is so important in the Christian life. It keeps us aware that everything we have in life only comes through God's loving and gracious hand.

Perhaps you haven't fallen into the busyness trap like the Ephesians did, but there are many other traps that have the potential to give us heart trouble: possessions, success, relationships—to name a few. God did not create us to find satisfaction in things—not even in ministry. He created us to find complete satisfaction in Him. Did you know that fear of loss is often God's first signal to us that we have transferred our dependence from Him onto something or someone else? What are you holding on to today? What's giving you heart trouble? Are you willing to let it go so you can be a First-Love Christian? We often wonder why we're so weary, always running on empty. Only Jesus can satisfy. Only He can keep us from heart trouble.

Have you ever noticed how busyness has become a way of life in our society—even in the church?

Well, this could all get pretty discouraging and hopeless, but we need to go back to our text. In verse 5 we discover that Christ doesn't just rebuke the believers there; he goes on to give them a prescription for their heart trouble: "Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first." The Ephesians were first "to keep on remembering" the height from which they had fallen.

What does that mean? These believers had once enjoyed a close relationship with God; they were to remember and recall that. We must never forget what Christ has saved us from. We need to remember the depth of His grace, and forgiveness in our lives—we need to remember the cross. Have you lost the thrill of knowing Christ? Then go back and remember what it is that caused you to fall in love with Him in the beginning. Think about those first days as a believer.

Secondly, to rekindle our First Love we are to repent. We must change our attitudes and affections. Like the Ephesians, we must turn away from our coldness and our indifference, and return once again to a vital relationship with Christ. Likewise, we need to realize our own sinfulness and susceptibility to let

The most important and difficult task before us today as ministering women is to make more room in our hearts for God and to keep Him first.

other things—good things—take first place in our lives. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things." We need to know our own hearts well and the competitors that live there. At the first indication of heart trouble, we need to repent and pray for God's power to keep Him first. If our hearts are truly focused on Christ, the world can never steal our love for Him away. This will mean regular time in God's Word and prayer so the Holy Spirit can condition our hearts to love Christ first. Susanna Wesley told her children that anything that dulled their desire for God was sin for them. Each of us must regularly assess our own lives and develop an awareness to the areas that can easily hinder our love for Christ. Having regular "First Love checks" can help us keep Christ first.

The last part of the prescription is a warning to *read the label carefully*. Jesus told the church that He would "remove the lampstand from its place." In other words, the church would cease to be an effective church if

they continued on this loveless course. They needed to return to Him to experience the continued blessing of God on their ministry. The same can happen to us. There may be times when God cuts us off from all ministry because we're having heart trouble. Yet in so doing, God reminds us that we're created for Him. He wants our hearts, not what we can do for Him. We will only experience an effective ministry as we focus on our love for Christ.

The most important and difficult task before us today as ministering women is to make more room in our hearts for God and to keep Him first. One of the ironies of ministry is that the very person who works in God's name is often hardest pressed to find time for Him. Just as the clerk in the candystore often loses his taste for candy; so the person who ministers can lose his love for God. Busy ministry, if we're not careful, can in the end become the breeding ground for the development of a cold heart towards God—a lost love.

Are you suffering from heart trouble today? Then *remember, repent, and return* again to your First Love. For we were created to know and love Christ. The best thing in life bringing us the most joy, purpose, fulfillment, delight and contentment is knowing and loving Him intimately.

Oh, that we would always be First-Love Christians! ❀

* Scriptures are from the New International Version.

¹ Wesley L. Duwel, *Ablaze for God*, (Grand Rapids: Asbury Press, 1989), pp. 101.

² Gigi Graham Tchividjian, *A Woman's Quest for Serenity*, (Sugar Creek, OH: Serenity Communciations, 1981) pp. 74.



"The strength acquired in prayer to God, united with individual effort in training the mind in thoughtfulness and care-taking, prepares the person for daily duties and keeps the spirit in peace under all circumstances, however trying."

—*Testimonies to the Church*
Vol. 4, p. 459



When the Saints Go . . . Marching Out

Jacquie Z. Randall, M.F.C.C.

Sometimes it is not easy for us as wives of pastors and it's especially not easy for our husbands, when members of our churches become upset, disgruntled, disapproving, and unsatisfied and either stop attending or leave our church. It also hurts when they begin attending another nearby church and possibly rave about it. It's hard for our husbands not to take this personally. Sometimes going through this type of experience tears the scab off a deep wound inside. No, it is not pleasant when the saints go . . . marching out.

One comfort I have found when facing this form of rejection is thinking about Jesus and that He understands how we feel because He has been through similar circumstances. I believe

God can turn events such as this into a positive outcome for us and for His kingdom. One verse that I've pondered a great deal and wondered about is, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth" (2 Cor. 13:8).

A picture I love which illustrates this concept is the picture of what happened in the temple after Jesus cleansed it. I'm quoting from *Desire of Ages*:

"Slowly and thoughtfully, but with hate in their hearts, they (priests and rulers) returned to the temple. But what a change had taken place during their absence! When they fled, the poor remained behind; and these were now looking to Jesus, whose countenance expressed His love and sympathy. . . .

"The people pressed into Christ's presence with urgent, pitiful appeals: Master, bless me. His ear heard every cry. With pity exceeding that of a tender mother He bent over the suffering little ones. All received attention. Everyone was healed of whatever disease he had. The dumb opened their lips in praise; the blind be-

held the face of their Restorer. The hearts of the sufferers were made glad.

"As the priests and temple officials witnessed this great work, what a revelation to them were the sounds that fell on their ears! The people were relating the story of the pain they had suffered, of their disappointed hopes, of painful days and sleepless nights. When the last spark of hope seemed to be dead, Christ had healed them. The burden was so heavy, one said; but I have found a helper. . . . The voices . . . blended in thanksgiving and praise. . . . They were restored soul and body, and they returned home, proclaiming everywhere the matchless love of Jesus."—*Desire of Ages*, pp. 162, 163, parentheses supplied

It is possible that when those we esteem leave, even though it hurts; perhaps it makes room for ministry to those who previously felt inferior, poor, looked down upon, and more insignificant. Perhaps God can turn our losses into blessings. He has a way of doing that. ❀

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—Via Shepherdess International

Helping a Hurting Friend



Frances Bradley

Nine ways to express your love and care.

One Thanksgiving our ranch was buzzing with activity. Family and friends had gathered to enjoy the beautiful fall weather. Returning from the grocery store with my niece, we saw one of the couples at the turnoff. Waving for us to stop, they told us my husband had been hurt. The ambulance was on the way, and they would show them the way. We hurried to the house, and prayed as we drove.

When we got to the barn, my husband was lying on the ground. I knelt beside him, and he said, "Honey I can't move my arms or legs." I knew he was paralyzed. I was in shock and near tears. They told me he had been pitching hay out of the barn and slipped on the slick hay. In trying to catch himself, he leaned against the barn wall, but the hinged opening was unfastened and he fell through it to the ground below. The eight feet would have knocked the

breath out of him, but his head hit a foundation stone and that broke his neck. He died two weeks later.

Until the death of my husband, I had lived without tragedy. Many times I held myself at arm's length when friends were hurting. I would send cards or flowers and assure myself that someone closer to them was comforting them. I asked them to call if they needed me. No one ever called to say they needed me.

Maybe you feel the same way. Here are some suggestions I wish I had been given long ago when heartbreak was a stranger to me.

Visiting is not intruding

My heart went out to friends who were hurting. Because I didn't know what to say, I called or made a "duty" visit and then kept away. They needed someone who understood, I thought, and could comfort them better than I could. I didn't know that just being there was a comfort.

I wish I had been given these suggestions long ago when heartbreak was a stranger to me.

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—Via Shepherdess International

A few years ago my next door neighbor was dying of cancer. I have learned that he would have welcomed a "sit down visit" where we could discuss what was going on in the outside world, his life, and the lives of our families. My friend must have felt alone and forgotten.

I could have helped prepare his children for his death by sharing this Bible verse: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion, and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Cor. 1:3-4, NIV)* Unbelievers also need to hear that God loves them and is grieving with them.

Offer practical help

Your suffering friend may be too dysfunctional to know what he or she needs. After my husband's accident, two of my pastors and several of my dearest friends arrived at the hospital intensive care unit. I was so glad to see them. I don't know who called them. We waited together. I called the children, and then a friend took over the phone and called my family and friends. We formed a circle and prayed. One of my friends heard a nurse say, "What a loving family they are!" This can be true in a Christian body.

Many friends brought food. One organized meals and put a book by the phone to record the messages and names of visitors. Because it was damp and rainy, my son went to the store and bought several umbrellas. Another brought a throw rug to put by the door to protect my carpet. After the funeral, one woman took all the envelopes for thank-you notes. She addressed and

stamped them for me so I had more time to write the notes.

God showed me His love through the kind acts of my friends.

Isaiah gave me comfort: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. ... Since you are precious to me and honored in my sight, and because I love you" (Isa. 43:2-4, NIV).

Use words sparingly

When my father died, we went to mother as soon as possible. She was glad to see us but was yearning to talk with a neighbor whose husband had died a few months earlier. It was a shock to know she was seeking the comfort of a friend over the family, but I came to realize she needed all of us in a different way.

When my daughter-in-law miscarried, I did not understand her pain. Later she told me how much she suffered. She grieved as one would over the death of any child. One person said, "I'm sorry, but you are young and can have other children." This hurt. There will never be another just like the one she lost.

A dear widow understood how I would feel in my empty house. She offered to come spend the night with me for two months. We enjoyed each other, and it filled that void. She also helped me with my income tax forms, which I had never done before. God used her in a mighty way.

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Ps. 147:3, NIV).

Let friends cry on your shoulder

We can't see the "silver lining" when grief overwhelms us. Minimizing the grief makes one feel inadequate. It hurts. We need a friend to listen and empathize

*Your suffering friend
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with us as we grieve. Perhaps a crisis is not a time to evangelize, but we can share how God has comforted us.

When I was told my husband had died, I started crying. My family put their arms around me, and we cried together. Then we praised God that he was with the Lord and no longer suffering.

What a comfort it was to me when a dear friend searched the Scriptures for the promises God gives to the widow. My favorite one is, "Do not be afraid; ... for your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name" (Isa. 54:4-5, NIV). What a joy to know that He will give me wisdom and guidance and provide for us like a husband.

My sister called me every morning for a long time after the funeral. What a comfort that was. She wanted to know how I was, and let me know she loved me.

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18, NIV).

Write a letter of condolence

Printed cards are better than nothing, but they do not take the place of a note from the heart. I received many cards. Months later I took the time to go through them again. I read each message and personal note. They were a double comfort to me.

The most meaningful letters were those describing our happy

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times together or memories we shared. I picked out the ones from people my children knew and kept them to share the next time we were together.

When my father died, we received a letter from a man who had been in Dad's Sunday School class. It blessed all of us. He said Dad, who was a salesman, would stop work about 5:00, and they would go together many evenings to visit his friends or men in the park. He counted 34 men my dad had won to the Lord. It was easy to see that his life had blessed many people.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10, NIV).

Be realistic in your expectations

One of my friends had been nursing her husband for six years before he died. She was exhausted. Soon after the funeral his business collapsed through circumstances beyond her control. She was faced with almost insurmountable stress because of the business and some misunderstanding among her grown children. Some mornings she could hardly get out of bed. One friend kept trying to get her to go places and do things that were beyond her strength. The friend got mad

and fussed at her, causing more pain. It's good to offer invitations, but pushing can hurt a friendship.

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Ps. 34:18, NIV).

Continue to see your friend socially

When you are physically and emotionally healed, friends can help. It is lonely to be left out because you are no longer a "couple." Fellowship is particularly important to those suffering from the breaking up of a marriage. One of my friends and I took walks together, giving her an opportunity to unload the hurt and confusion.

Going alone to evening functions was difficult for me. It was also stressful to plan social activities. Often I would yearn to just stay at home and "hibernate." I was fortunate to have some close friends who would ask me to go with them to parties. When I entertain, I try to include singles as well as couples. We need one another.

Recovery takes time

What a comfort it was when one friend, seeing the stress and confusion I was going through, would say to me: "Don't try to push yourself. It takes time. One of these days things will be back to normal, but what you are going through now is OK." She said it to me enough times that I believed her and began to relax.

Unfortunately, the government doesn't give a widow time to grieve. There are so many forms to be filled out. The hospital, doctors, and funeral home all have to be paid. The government requires that the names be changed on everything. A widow has to prove, in writing, everything owned on the day of the death.

Insurance forms go back and forth. I found a widow has to establish a credit rating in her own name. This meant I had to buy things on credit and pay them off before I was accepted in the credit world again. I really learned the meaning of Psalm 55:22: "Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall" (NIV).

Love and listen to your friend

Your caring presence and your willingness to listen are the two most precious gifts you can offer a hurting friend. After my neighbor's husband died, I realized how lonely she was. We drank coffee together. She talked and I listened. One friend "washed my feet" by inviting me to dinner and renting a movie I had been wanting to see. After the movie we sat and shared. I went home with a feeling of being loved.

The people I found most helpful were those who would make no attempt to distract me from my grief, but would encourage me to talk about it. This seemed to make it less frightening each time we went over it. One of my neighbor's daughters refused to accept her father's death or talk about it, and I know there must still be a big lump in her heart that will not melt.

Working your way through a crisis or grief is a long, slow process. There are no shortcuts. However, caring friends can make the path smoother and the curves less frightening. You can be that friend to another. We will all face difficulties at some time in our lives. First Peter 4:12-13 shows how to face it. ❀

* From the Holy Bible, *New International Version*, copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. All subsequent quotations will be marked NIV.

What are Friends For?

Jeanne Zornes

They're not just good for the soul, they're also good for your physical and emotional health.

Sipping my tea, I stared out the window at the homes of my as-yet-unknown neighbors. My recent marriage had moved me from Chicago to a small town in the middle of Washington state. Although I had the companionship of my husband, I yearned to spend time with my female friends.

Picking up the mail, I came across a letter from my good friend Judy and eagerly tore it open. Reading her cheerful words, my spirits lifted. Good friends will do that for you, regardless of the distance! But I realized that if I was going to be happy in my new home, I needed to make some friends nearby, too.

Friend Facts

Psychologists have suggested that our "circle of friends" is actually a triangle. At the base are the estimated 500 to 2,500 acquaintances we make each year from contacts through leisure, work, and religious activities. Some of these move to the middle as our 20 to 100 "core friends" whom we know by first name and see more regularly.

Finally, one to seven "intimate friends" emerge at the top. These are the people who "stick closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24) and share our joys and sorrows.

In recent years, psychologists have amassed evidence that suggests friends affect our physical and emotional health:

- Of several thousand residents of Alameda County, California, studied for more than a decade, those with good support systems were two to five times more apt to outlive those with fewer social ties.
- Pregnant women under stress were three times more likely to have complications if they lacked a support system.
- Healthy elderly people with close interpersonal relationships had a stronger immune system and lower levels of cholesterol and uric acid.

The benefits of friendships go deeper than lab tests, however. Friends answer our needs for acceptance, encouragement, and role models. That's why each time I move, I know I need to make the effort to find new friends. In open-

I realized that if I was going to be happy in my new home, I needed to make some friends nearby.

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—Via Shepherdess International

I bump uncomfortably down life's road when my perspective needs realigning—a job I'd trust only to a good friend.

ing myself up to others, I risk rejection—but friends are worth that risk. I've found that the rewards of friendship include the following.

Fun

I met Peggy at a church-sponsored aerobics class we both took to relieve stress. When the leader moved away, Peggy and I admitted to each other that we lacked motivation to continue alone. So, we decided to have our own class—just the two of us—at times that fit our erratic schedules.

There's nothing like the agony of leg-lifts to cut through pretense. As we laughed together, we released the carefree part of each other. We grew to understand each other's sense of humor, delighting in sharing cartoons and making outrageous cards.

Then came one of my forty something birthdays—one I thought would predictably pass with cake and ice cream for family dessert.

But Peggy had other ideas. On my birthday morning, she kidnapped me to a park, set a table with candles and china, popped a birthday hat on me, and ceremoniously served up break-

fast. As joggers sprinted by our silly private party, I felt special.

Proverbs 17:22 says, "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." As we face life's challenges and changes, it makes good sense to surround ourselves with cheerful companions. Having fun with friends helps keep us emotionally healthy.

Realignment

Our car bumps down the road when its tires are out of alignment. And I find that I bump uncomfortably down life's road when my perspective needs realigning—a job I'd trust only to a good friend.

Sometimes that realignment comes unbeckoned, but not unwarranted. "Wounds from a friend can be trusted," says Proverbs 27:6. Friends are willing to be painfully honest when necessary.

My friend May Jo, a former co-worker and widow, had a daughter come out of the hippie culture unwed and pregnant. As I watched Mary Jo mature through that difficult experience, my respect for her grew.

Then the tables turned. My parents died six months apart when I was 31 and still single. Recently unemployed and faced with the overwhelming task of closing out their home, my self-esteem plummeted. One day, Mary Jo called with a short job I could do for her on a free-lance basis.

"I can't do it," I complained. "I'm just not good anymore."

Seeing to the heart of my discouragement, she responded, "I know you're hurting, but you've got to move on. Remember Nehemiah 8:10, 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'" I hung up, admonished—but helped. I decided to take the assignment, and it turned out well. With one

success behind me, I gained enough confidence to go forward.

Other times, the realignment is subtle. Some friends are quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). But their lives speak volumes.

I was as irritable as a cat petted backwards over one relationship problem. When I described my problem to Georgia, a friend whose interpersonal skills I respected, I saw my own blind spots in the situation.

Invigoration

"As iron sharpens iron," says Proverbs 27:17, "so one man sharpens another." Friends can invigorate us, pushing us out of our comfort zones.

I'd never met Libby before we were assigned as roommates in graduate housing. But I soon discovered her heart for urban ministries.

As our friendship grew, she helped me face my middle-class, small-town fear of Chicago. A nondriver, Libby took me with her on subways and buses that threaded through the inner city. She introduced me to nontraditional churches, food co-ops, and economical cooking. To this day, I don't make my own granola without thinking of her.

Several years later, my friend Sandy stroked my feeble interest in sewing as we chatted over bolts of material at a fabric store. As she heaped an arm with knits, I remarked how I wished I could sew tee-shirts for my own children.

Her eyes wide, she exclaimed, "You wouldn't believe how easy they are!" There in the store aisle, she gave me a mini-lesson in sewing knits. I've sewn hundreds since.

Encouragement

Friendship is rooted deeper

when we share anything we have—money, possessions, time, skill—to help another.

I saw that played out the year after my parents died. Pam, a single nurse, used an afternoon off work to help me paint as I readied my parents' home for sale. Ruth, my mother's friend, became my friend, too, as she cried with me, helped me price items for the garage sales, and included me in many family meals. Judy, a former roommate now married to a seminary student, took a bus 150 miles to help me sort through my parents' clothes.

When I started speaking at women's retreats, I had one baby, another on the way, and very little time to prepare my talks. Then Terry, from my Bible study, offered to care for my infant son for a few hours to free me up to study. With the gift of her time, I was able to finish outlines I'd struggled on for weeks. Terry felt good for helping—and I felt good for being helped!

Another friend sometimes brought dinner on nights I struggled under a writing deadline. "I don't know how I can thank you," I'd say as she dropped off a casserole. I had my chance when she broke her foot and was on crutches for three months. Tuesday mornings, I showed up at her door as "Huldah the Housecleaner" and declared, "You can't trust just anybody to wash your underwear!"

Nurturing

In the New Testament, Barnabas modeled nurturing when he took the apostle Paul and John Mark under his spiritual wing. He invested in others' lives because he was "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Our friends should include a mentor—one whose spiritual walk is several

blocks beyond ours.

I was a new Christian, feeling very vulnerable, when I started my first job away from home and began church-shopping. At one church, a widowed nurse with a sharp eye for newcomers invited me home for dinner. Although she was 50 years older than me, I felt comfortable with her.

As I complained about the local laundromat, she invited me to use her washer and dryer. That developed into a standing Friday night date of "leftovers and laundry" for which we both emptied our refrigerators. To compensate for water and electricity, I left money in a piggy bank I bought for her laundry room. But because of her spiritual investment in my life, I'm the one who emerged richer.

As the washer chugged away and we downed leftover spaghetti, she'd field my questions from her well-used Bible. Sometimes, she'd simply share a pearl gleaned from her devotions, asking me for the same. That inspired me to keep reading my Bible and growing spiritually! And she prayed for me, even after I moved away.

Deployment

Friendship is a two-way street. Sometimes, the traffic seems heavier one way as we absorb the benefits of friendship. But it will even out as we're deployed to befriend others.

That was the case with Aileen, a single career woman I knew casually from church. I heard that Aileen was pregnant and alone. Busy with two babies of my own, I could have left her needs to others. But I remembered how many times others reached out to me when it was "inconvenient."

Aileen accepted my offer to be her coach in childbirth classes

Friendship is rooted deeper when we share anything we have—money, possessions, time, skill—to help another.

and the delivery room. As I shared her burden, our friendship deepened. Our relationship reminded me of the verse by American poet Edwin Markham:

He drew a circle that shut me out—

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

Aileen's lonely pregnancy made her feel excluded from others.

But Love and I had the wit to win:

We drew a circle that took him in.

My friendship nourished Aileen with love and care. She kept her baby, forged a new life, and has since begun a ministry of friendship to other single moms.

Seventeenth century English poet John Donne declared, "No man is an island, entire of itself." Life's transitions tend to make us feel emotionally isolated. But all around us are other people seeking friends, too. If we reach out to them, they can become part of our circle of friends. ❀

Scripture texts are from the New International Version.



Shepherdess International News

Eastern Africa Division

- ✿ The Uganda Union elected its first woman as a departmental director. Ruth Kakaire re-



Ruth Kakaire

places Hudson Kibuuka as director for the departments of education and communication. She holds a Master of Teaching Ministry, earned in the Philippines. Mrs. Kakaire is a pastoral wife, married to Dr. Bonface Kakaire, the Union's publishing director and chaplain. They have four children.

Euro-Asia Division

- ✿ Sharon Cress, GC Shepherdess International Coordinator, spent ten days in Moscow training the new Shepherdess leaders for the Euro-Asia Division and beginning the coordination of the organization of Shepherdess in this newest Division. A highlight of the event was a panel discussion on pastoral families



Mellie Viloso presents an award to Shepherdess leader, Violy Aquino. Vilma Nepomuceno, looks on.

answering questions submitted by the audience. The panel participants included Gaspar Colon, Jim Cress, Ron Flowers, Heikke Silvet, Nancy Wilson, and Sharon Cress. Conference leaders requested a repeat of and more time dedicated to a panel presentation at the year-end meetings scheduled for next year.

Far Eastern Division

- ✿ North Philippine Union pastoral wives met in three locations for Shepherdess meetings under the direction of North Philippine Union Shepherdess coordinator, Mellie Viloso, and Sharon Cress, GC Shepherdess International Coordinator. Presentations were on "Team Ministry," "Soul Winning and the Pastoral Wife," and "Pastoral Wife Expectations." The women participated in question and answer sessions and gave input for the upcoming Division Ministerial Councils.



Sharon Cress with Shepherdess leaders in Central Luzon Conference.



Southern Luzon Conference pastoral wives at Lipa Adventist Academy welcoming the Cresses.

- ❖ Under the direction of Mellie Viloso and Women's Ministry, 220 shepherdesses (ministers' wives) of the **North Philippine Union Mission**, launched a joint-community program on livelihood resulting in the baptism of 58 and reclaiming 12 former Adventists.

The program's aim, to augment family income, started with soap, candle and catsup making. The team introduced techniques in the production of tofu, soy sauce, soy milk and other soy products. As the program gained more participants, additional projects were introduced such as dressmaking, hair science, cosmetology, and handicrafts. Special products of the livelihood program are sold and the proceeds used to purchase evangelistic equipment for the evangelistic meetings the ladies conduct. They also conduct small group Bible studies using the Voice of Prophecy lessons. The devotional time includes sharing of Christian experiences and interests for the gospel are growing fast.

- ❖ **Southeast Asia Union Mission** pastoral wives and their husbands met in Singapore for two days of continuing education. Ken Wade, union ministerial secretary and his wife, Debbie; and Jim Cress, secretary of General Conference Ministerial Association and his wife, Sharon, GC Shepherdess International Coordinator, led out in the meetings. The topics? "Reclaiming New Members," "Soul Winning for the Pastoral Couple," and "Marriage Expectations."

- ❖ **Thailand Mission** pastoral wives from the Northern Region joined their husbands in Chiang Mai for five days of ministers' meetings and continuing education. The meetings were directed by Steve Bassham, Thailand Mission president, and Nancy Bassham, Far Eastern Division Shepherdess coordinator. Jim Cress, secretary of General Conference Ministerial Association, spoke to the pastoral wives on "Leading a Person to Christ" and "Decision Making." Sharon Cress, GC Shepherdess International Coordinator, gave workshops on "Team Ministry," "Marital Support in the Pastoral Family," "Soul Winning for the Pastoral Wife," and "Children's Ministries."

Inter-American Division

- ❖ **Venezuela-Antilles Union Mission**, sponsored the first-ever Union wide Pastoral



Pastoral Wives of the Central Venezuela Conference

Spouse-Workers' Meetings specifically for pastoral and administrative spouses. Evelyn Omana, Union Shepherdess Coordinator, directed these meeting. For five days, wives of the union min-

isterial staff were treated to seminars, fellowship, and continuing education. Their pastor-administrator husbands stayed home and took care of the children while these women attended meetings enriching themselves spiritually, mentally, and physically.

Highlights included seminars by Jaime Castrejón, Inter-American Division Ministerial Secretary, who spoke on the "Team Work of Aquila and Priscilla." On Friday night, Ivan Omana, Union President, expressed appreciation to the pastoral wives and challenged them in their work. For Sabbath School and the worship service, the women presented the program. Sharon Cress, GC Shepherdess International Coordinator, gave seminars on "Soul Winning for the Pastoral Wife," "Expectations in the Parsonage," and "Dealing Positively with Stress in the Pastoral Home."

Each day began with early morning hikes in the refreshing country air. Selected pastoral wives shared their testimonies of how the Lord protected them and answered specific prayers for certain needs. The women left this wonderful

experience feeling affirmed and appreciated by the Union administrators. Praise God for administrations that value supportive pastoral wives in the ministry and demonstrate it in a very tangible and real way!

North American Division

- ✿ The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sarasota, Florida, under the direction of retired pastor, Charles Cress, gathered donations of over 500 pairs of brand-new pantyhose which were taken to the pastoral wives in the EuroAsia Division. They will be distributed throughout the division.
- ✿ The Montana Conference Shepherdess club and Mt. Ellis Academy are sponsoring "Prayer Friends." They pray for and are a friend to a student or faculty family at Mt. Ellis Academy for one school year. Involvement may also include writing, calling, or sending a care package.
- ✿ "Prayer Friends" has been in progress for three years by the Upper Columbia Conference pastoral wives. Reports say that "the students, faculty and parents have expressed deep appreciation for (this) personal touch and thanks to

the Lord's blessing . . . there has been an experienced marked growth spiritually, academically, numerically, and financially."

Southern Asia Division

- ✿ Over 150 women attended three days of meetings for pastoral and administrative wives during Annual Council in Bangalore, India. The meetings were directed by Margaret Nathaniel, the Division Shepherdess Coordinator, and Sharon Cress, GC Shepherdess International Coordinator.

Roselyne Raelly, Eastern Africa Division Shepherdess Coordinator, gave the main seminar for the meetings entitled, "Role of the Shepherdess in Ancient Times" and "Role of the Shepherdess in the 20th Century." She presented valuable comparisons that the blessings, expectations, and challenges are much the same even though many

generations have passed.

Devotionals were presented by Margaret Nathaniel and Hazel Gordon. Margaret Nathaniel's topic was "Waiting for the Lord." Hazel Gordon, from the North American Division, shared her personal story about how the Lord has led in her life.

Rae Lee Cooper, from the Southern Asia Division, led the women in stretching exercises each day during the fellowship breaks; everyone enjoyed the refreshing experience.

Rose Otis, GC Women's Ministries Director, presented a slide report on what lay women in the church are doing around the world.

The highlight of the meetings occurred Friday morning when the women took part in the Communion Service. Special bonds of sisterhood were formed and strengthened as committed pastoral and administrative wives washed each others' feet and shared the bread and wine of Jesus' broken body and shed blood for them. Birol Christo, from the Southern Asia Division, presented the Communion Service sermon on heart preparation. As these special women parted, after the final service, it was evident that the cords binding pastoral and administrative wives were tightly woven.

Small appreciation gift packets were given to these committed women by several entities of the church organization including the GC Ministerial Association.



Rae Lee Cooper, Anita Folkenberg, Bharathi Rao, Angammao Pheirim, Mrs. Mathew, Premila Cherian, Margaret Nathaniel, Hepsy Kore, Dorothy Willmott, Sharon Cress.