

The Journal

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*Life is mostly froth
and bubble,
Two things stand in
stone:
Kindness in another's
trouble,
Courage in your own.*

The Journal

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Editor's Musings

My friend, Julia, recently shared with me a cute story. It seems a mother was preparing pancakes for her two sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait,'" she commented. Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus."

A cute story and a lesson that touched my heart. Sometimes children can be so direct and countless numbers of times I have learned life lessons from the mouths of babes.

Recently, I was complaining to Jim about how rude so many people are and how if they just practiced a little more common courtesy and politeness how much better off our society would be. "It would be so much easier for me if they could just approach life with civility!" I moaned. "If I were treated more kindly by them then I wouldn't have these feelings of hostility—but when I am cut off on the highway, cursed at, or rudely ignored in a store I get agitated—but it is a reaction to them!" In the middle of my pontificating and trying to excuse my negative thoughts toward rude and boorish behavior, this little story came to mind.

You see, I want everybody else to act like Jesus so that life will be easier for me. Unfortunately, on this earth that is not going to happen. So, as clergy spouses, I guess we just have to continue striving to be the ones like Jesus. Believe me, that is the hard part!

Have a good day!



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Hyacinths to Feed Your Soul

Karen Holford

*If of all worldly things you are bereft,
and have but only two loaves
that are left,
Sell one, and with the dole,
buy hyacinths to feed your soul.*

Source unknown

Living in the 1990s is a draining experience. Life is faster-paced than ever before, expectations are higher, needs are everywhere. Life in a ministerial family can be especially draining for a variety of reasons.

Pastoral families are more aware of the ever-present needs of the church family. Pastors often work long hours and never feel a sense of accomplishment. They are on call 24 hours a day. Many consider the home their workplace; the line between home and work often blur. Because of the long hours their husbands keep, some pastors' wives feel neglected or unsupported. Many wives work outside the home to supplement the family budget. Quality time between spouses is sometimes nonexistent. Moving is an ongoing issue; living near supportive family members is not always an option. Many pastors' wives refrain from forming deep relationships with church members because they are afraid they will be criticized for showing favoritism.

With all that faces the pastoral family, it is important that its members realize they are human. Everyone needs closeness, friendship, and support. Wives and husbands need time to refresh themselves. They need time away from the hectic rush and bustle of life. Jesus understood these needs. "And He said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.'" Mark 6:31.

Women seem to have a hard time nurturing themselves. They feel selfish when they take time for themselves. But in reality, such actions are not selfish; rather they are healthy. Taking care of oneself is as important as breathing fresh air. No one else is going to make sure you are nurtured. It is your responsibility, and it is not always an easy one to accomplish.

Taking care of yourself can be a great challenge because, as pastoral wives, we are used to pouring our whole lives into ministry. To be able to nurture others, you first have to be nurtured. If you have unmet needs of your own, you may drain those you wish to help.

The Golden Rule of doing unto others as we would have them do to us is equally valid when reversed. "Do to yourself only what you would want to do to others."

Karen Holford is the wife of Bernie Holford, the family life director of the South England Conference. Together they enjoy developing seminars on all aspects of family life. They have three children: Bethany, Nathan, and Joel. Karen has written several books, including, Please God, Make My Mummy Nice!—a warm and humorous look at mothering and what it can teach us about God's love for our families. She also enjoys crafts of all kinds.



Do we demand more of ourselves than we would ever dream of demanding of others? If so, why?

Personal Spiritual Nurture

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. The most important need you have is to nurture yourself spiritually. Above all, whatever else you do, make sure you are spiritually fed.

Collect texts that encourage and inspire you.

Listen to tapes of the Bible or inspiring interviews and sermons as you drive in your car or work in the kitchen.

Keep devotional material all over the house, by your bed, by your chair in the lounge, in your handbag, and even in the bathroom, so that whenever you flop, or have a few minutes to spare, you can pick up a Bible, study guide, prayer diary, or inspirational book and have a mini-feast.

Try to spend a specific amount of time each day with God. Guard the time, and ask your husband and family members to help you keep that time clear. Choose a time which suits your family's schedule and your own needs.



Prayer

Take time to evaluate your own nurture needs and list them clearly. Pray specifically for those needs to be met.

Find a prayer partner and pray for each other's needs. It can be helpful to choose another pastor's wife as a prayer partner as you share similar concerns and understand the unique pressures and joys of ministry work. It can be very gratifying to know that someone understands your specific needs and is praying for you. You can pray together over the phone or plan a specific time to pray for one

another. You can have a prayer pen-pal correspondence or even an e-mail prayer partner.

If you are having a very challenging time, don't be afraid to focus your prayers on your own needs. Now may not be the best time to pray for everyone else's needs. You need healing and ministry too.


*If you are having a very
challenging time, don't
be afraid to focus your
prayers on your own
needs. . . . You need
healing and ministry too.*


Fellowship

If you can, find a small women's fellowship group. You may be fortunate enough to belong to such a group at your church. Be open and honest about your needs. If your church does not have such a group, look to the community. You may be able to start a group with fellow pastors' wives.

Plan time with your husband. Fellowship with your spouse is invaluable. Don't forget your children. Make your family worship time as meaningful and creative as you can.

For those who like to write or use the computer, start a correspondence fellowship.

Emotional needs

If your life feels out of control, ask yourself why it feels that way. Is

your life too hectic and pressured? It's very hard to learn to say one tiny word, "no". We have been taught that we should work hard and be helpful. It's easy to feel that because something is God's work, it's also God's will for us to do it. That isn't always true. Though the task may be God's work, perhaps others need the opportunity to discover their own ministry. Maybe God is calling someone else to do the work. Learn to delegate and organize systems at your church, work, and home.

When committing to yet another project, ask yourself, "If I don't do it, what is the worst that will happen? What is the best that will happen? Will this activity fit easily into my schedule?"

When you do agree to take on another task, break it down into small chunks or let go of one of your other tasks. Pray about each potential commitment and make sure it is something God really wants you to do.

Friendship

Develop strong friendships with other women. If you don't know where to start, choose a colleague, neighbor, or church member with whom you have a common interest. Join a class and find others with similar interests.

Discover ways to nurture your friendships. Send inexpensive cards or gifts. Talk on the phone, pray together, share flowers from your garden, plan outings together.

Especially take time to encourage other ministry wives and families. Call them, invite them over for a meal, or go out for a picnic or fast food together.

Don't forget those who used to be ministry wives. Because of death, divorce, or a husband's career change, they may now feel isolated from the "ministerial family."

Make sure your relationship with your husband is growing closer, not further apart.

Take time to be with your spouse. Cherish one another. Listen, hug, and pamper your spouse. Take care to show him how important he is to you.

Go on a Christian Marriage enrichment event.

Whisk him away from his desk and do something special with him, even if it just going for a walk or eating ice-cream together.

Find ways to delight him. He's probably a workaholic, and he needs your soothing influence more than he realizes!

Nurture someone else

Even when you need nurturing yourself, there can be incredible healing in reaching out and nurturing another person. Look out for others who may be needing some encouragement, a hug, a listening ear. Give that person some of your valuable time. Share your nurtured heart with others, and pass the blessing on. Aim to encourage and nurture one other person each week.

Soon there will be hyacinths growing everywhere!

What are your hyacinths?

What feeds your soul? What Bible texts have encouraged and comforted you in the past?

Write them out below. Then write them on tiny cards to slip into your handbag. Carry them with you to read often. Write your own thoughts and responses on the back of the cards.

Make a prayer list of your own very specific nurture needs.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What nurtures you?

People—list names:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Activities—list things you do which you enjoy and leave you feeling refreshed and happy.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



Experiences—list experiences which build you up.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

What drains you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Look at what drains you and see if there is anything you can do to avoid being drained, or to turn draining experiences into positive experiences.

List ideas:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

From what you have learned, set three small goals that you will try to achieve by the end of the week.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Name one person you know who needs nurturing, and write out one way in which you will reach out to that person and nurture them this week.

Person:

Nurture Activity:

Share and Pray

Date

Choose a text and write it down:

Meditation: write down any thoughts that come to your mind as you have meditated on this text:

Answer the following questions:

How has this text enhanced my relationship with God?

How can this text enhance my relationship with others?

How can I apply this text to my life?

What one thing can I do today, or this week, to put what I have learned into practice?

My current spiritual goals are:

My current ministry goals are:

My current prayer concerns are:

I praise God for:



When There's No Time for Quiet Time

Patricia Breithaupt

The young woman at my kitchen table had bags under her eyes. "What can I do?" she wailed. "My pastor says to have a regular devotional time, but my baby has me up so much I'm too tired to concentrate. I feel terrible that I'm not reading my Bible and praying like I should."

Her dilemma was not new to me. The summer I was 11, a camp counselor stressed the importance of a devotional time for all believers. I took her seriously. For 20 years I studied the Bible and prayed, usually at the same time each day. Then God gave me a wonderful Christian husband, one of the most spontaneous people He ever created. My comfortable schedule disintegrated.

Our first child had cancer, which hospitalized her for long periods. She could not be left alone, so I stayed by her side, sleeping on a cot and responding to her cries at all hours. During those long days and nights I began to learn that a walk with God does not consist of externals like a certain chair or an exact spot on the clock. Walking with God became, instead, a seeking after Him in every moment. He became more, not less, precious as I communed with Him.

My friend's complaint reminded me that other women face circumstances which make a regular devotional time almost impossible. Caring for a new baby, a seriously ill

patient, or an elderly parent can make enormous demands on one's time. Women sometimes flounder in guilt and frustration. To help my friend, and others like her, I began compiling a list of suggestions. I quizzed older Christians who had come through difficult situations.

The results were encouraging; different methods worked. My list is still growing:

Focus on your walk with God

Focus on your walk with God, not on legalism. God understands your situation. He even permitted it. A ritualistic attitude can actually be a form of salvation by works. We are not earning achievement points with God. We seek fellowship with Someone we love. Insisting on perfection could lead to giving up and never being alone with God.

Accept interruptions

No doubt your meals and sleep are also interrupted. Conversations with friends may be haphazard. Few wives wouldn't stop talking to their husbands when the baby cries, even in the middle of a sentence. The best way to deal with interruption is to relax and resume later where you left off. Remember that Jesus' prayer times and preaching often yielded to the pressing needs around Him. He met the needs—then went right back to prayer and preaching.

From Home Life, June 1992. © Copyright 1992 The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. All rights reserved.

Readjust your schedule as necessary

Perhaps at first the baby will take only short naps and you will be too tired to read or pray more than five minutes at a time. Do this several times a day and then rest with the baby. When regular afternoon naps start, change to having a longer quiet time during the nap. His schedule will vary. Adapt to it. The needs of a sick person may change even more frequently. Each day ask the Lord to help you capture opportunities to meet Him. Gigi Graham Tchvidjian, mother of seven, calls these small amounts of time "Jesus Breaks."

Pray without ceasing

False religions associate prayer with a certain position, time, or place. Christians can pray anywhere, aloud or silently. Pray while you wash dishes, diapers, or dirty bodies. Pray while you feed the baby. Baby care experts recommend talking to the baby from earliest infancy to stimulate his mental development. Might praying aloud as you take care of the baby stimulate his or her spiritual development? Certainly praying aloud with my second child has helped her to feel comfortable with spontaneous prayer throughout the day.



Often hormonal change in new mothers or emotional upset in those who care for loved ones with great physical needs will cause insomnia. If you are awake at night, try praying. Pray about the day's problems, but don't use prayer as an excuse to dwell on worries.

In stressful periods I made a rule for myself that nighttime prayer must focus on thanksgiving and praise. Your difficulties cannot fall outside of 1 Thessalonians 5:18. "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (NIV). So get your body into a relaxed position, take a deep

breath, and start telling God why you love Him. You'll go to sleep easier and wake up feeling more at peace.

Make small segments of Scripture available

If you have several Bibles, have them scattered in places you are likely to sit. Read while you nurse the baby. Be sure to keep devotional material in the bathroom. Taking time for your own physical needs is important, so read your Bible in the bathroom and take a refreshing break. In your rare free moments, copy helpful Bible verses on index cards. Post them on your refrigerator or over your kitchen sink, or carry them in your purse. If you can't read, meditate on verses you've memorized.


*Meeting with God,
whether in one block of
time or in little chunks,
keeps us close to Him.*


When someone is ill, Christian friends often send cards with Bible verses. Keep these visible. Choose just one verse to think about throughout the day, and you will find that it accompanies you into the night as well. Short sessions of study scattered throughout the day are the best method of memorization. For a list of verses and inspirational sayings for hard times, see Warren Wiersbe's book *Why Us? When Bad Things Happen to God's People* (Revell, 1985).

Find comfort in music

When Cathy Trewin's daughter was small, she screamed day and night. But this handicapped youngster

and her mother found comfort when Cathy sang to her. Cathy even wrote her own song that reached out to God in their particular need.


Hymns and gospel songs consoled my own daughter when medications no longer soothed her pain. If you can't sing, play Christian music on the radio or cassette player. Scripture set to music speaks to the heart when troubles drown out the written Word.

Use your circumstances for ministry and learning

You probably can't teach a class right now. But you can minister where you are. If the person you are caring for is able to understand Scripture, read aloud and you will both be blessed. There is nothing wrong with a three-way conversation with God. Look around you. Are there neighbors, nurses, doctors, other patients, other caregivers? You needn't preach to witness to these people. Pray for them. Reach out to their spiritual needs. Learn with them how God works in tough times.

If you are at home with small children, remember to read Bible stories to them. When you're too tired to make sense of scripture, a child's Bible story may be a means for God to teach you. Once when I was discouraged about the growth of evil in our town, I read a children's story of Jonah. It reminded me that God can bring the most wicked to repentance.

Resume regular habits

When possible, resume regular habits of prayer and Bible study. This situation will not last forever. A scheduled time and place are of value, not to God, but to us. Just like a marriage, a walk with God demands some conscious planning of time together. Meeting with God, whether in one block of time or in little chunks, keeps us close to Him. 

A Missed Concert

Hannele Ottshofski



"It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way" (Prov. 19:2, NIV).

I got a newsletter from my Christian book club with a list of concerts to be held in the next few months. Hella Heizmann, one of my favorite Christian singers was due to hold a concert in Schoemberg. Oh, that was just fine; it was only about 25 kilometers away. Of course I would go there. I phoned the contact number to find out about the location and time. The man on the phone asked where we would be coming from and then said, "Oh, you are coming from so far away." We thought he had a funny notion of what "far" is.

Hannele Ottshofski 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.

So I drove to the town on the specified night and started looking for the "Kurhaus" (main building in a spa) where the concert was to be held. But there was not one single poster in sight in the whole town. That was a bit funny. I asked a few passerbys where the Kurhaus would be. But there was no Kurhaus either! They directed me to the municipal hall but that was deserted.


Finally one lady said, "Maybe you mean Schoemberg in the Black Forest. That's about 100 kilometers from here. That's a spa and there is a Kurhaus there."

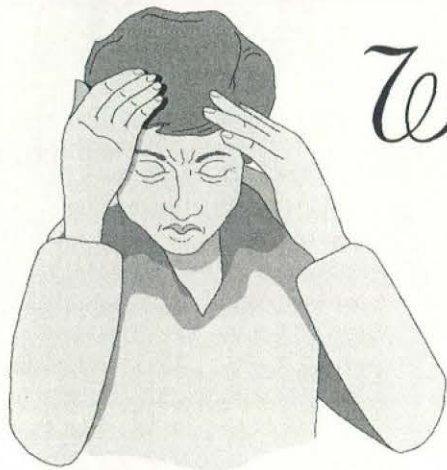
Well, I had to laugh at my stupidity. I didn't know that there was more than one Schoemberg and as the zip code started with a 7, I was sure it was in our region. I hadn't looked it up in the book. I relied on my limited knowledge and experience.

As I drove home with my daughter, I started wondering if I was superficial in more important matters as well. I had to think of what Jesus said to His disciples concerning the time shortly before His second coming, "For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time" (Matt. 24:24, 25, NIV, italics supplied).

If I had looked up the zip code, I would not have been deceived into going to a wrong place. God has given us His book so that we can look up things and be sure. But if we don't bother to find out, we will surely be deceived. And we'd better take time to find out about things now so that we are not guided by our limited and superficial knowledge and experience as I was.

Besides, if I had really listened to what the man on the phone at the contact number said, I should have realized that I was thinking of some other place than he was. But I was so wrapped up in my own expectations that the bell didn't ring at that time. I didn't understand what he was really saying. Similarly, if we pray to God and don't listen to what He has to say to us with open ears, we probably will not understand His message. We expect a certain kind of answer and don't realize that God is answering in a better or different way.

At least I learned a lesson from my experience and decided to be more careful the next time. But if we are deceived in more important matters, there will be no next time. So let's take time today to find out what God has to say to us through His word and in prayer. 



When the Hurt Won't Go Away

Rae Lee Cooper

Part two in the
"Loss, Grief, and
Recovery" series.

Rae Lee Cooper and her husband live in Maryland where she works as an emergency room nurse, teaches music, enjoys aerobics, reading, gardening, and talking on the phone to her children in California.



If you were to visit Mary in her home, you might find it hard to know what to say or how to react. You see, there's something strange about Mary. Oh, I don't mean she's ill or hard to get along with. No, there isn't anyone sweeter than Mary. She is loving and friendly to all she meets and is completely devoted to her husband.

About a year ago Mary's little two-year-old son was found dead in the garden water tank. It was a terrible shock to Mary and her husband for this only child was greatly cherished by his parents. Family and friends rallied to the situation and in due time it seemed to everyone that Mary had come to terms with the tragedy. Well, maybe it looked like that on the outside, but what about on the inside? That's where the strangeness comes in.

If you did visit with Mary in her home, one thing she would do is take you on a tour of their pretty little house. A special room she would be sure to show you is a certain bedroom belonging to their dead son, still kept just as if he were alive and occupying it. You would also notice that Mary speaks of her son in the present tense only.

Mary's husband and some of her close, concerned friends have tried to talk to her about these things, but

Mary stoutly states that she has accepted her son's death and there is no problem. She seems most reluctant to even discuss the matter. On the outside she appears to be going about her normal life, but on the inside there is still a carefully guarded and maintained relationship that Mary is holding on to with her little son.

There's only one you

During the past few years there have been many studies regarding the emotions of grief. Research has shown that everyone basically goes through somewhat the same process of recovery: 1) shock and denial, 2) anger, 3) bargaining, 4) depression, and 5) acceptance. However, research has also recognized that people cannot all be placed in the same emotional boxes.

There is no *one* way to grieve over a loss. In fact, there are as many ways to grieve as there are people who grieve, because each person is created unique. The feelings, the intensity of one's grief cannot be compared to someone else. Should you and I lose our mothers through some tragedy, your reactions would be totally different to mine. Nobody has the right to judge you for feeling the way you do. And I could not truthfully say to you, "I know exactly how you feel."

You feel the way you do because you are you. These emotions and feelings are not wrong or harmful. What you do about your feelings, however, is a different matter. Deny and hide them, and you may delay grief and also create emotional problems for yourself like in the case of Mary.

Sometimes we can get "stuck" in one area of grief recovery and remain there for a long time, maybe permanently. Have you ever met someone who became an angry person after losing something important in his/her life? Have you known of an individual who never came out of depression over some major loss? It happens all too often.

"What can I do about my feelings?" you ask. "Is there anything that I can do when the hurt just won't go away?"

Believe it happened

A mother of a World War II pilot said, "Nobody will ever convince me that my boy is dead. If his plane was shot down, he survived. He was such a self-reliant young man. He'd find ways of surviving in enemy territory. Maybe he settled down in Europe after the war and has a family. Some of our friends told us we were foolish for holding out hopes, and we finally cut ourselves off from them because they just didn't understand."

A person who refuses to believe that a tragedy happened can remain in their grief for a very long time. We have to admit to ourselves that it happened in order to recover from the pain of loss. Sometimes people will avoid facing reality by taking on extra work and keeping very busy. Some may travel extensively; others will join in on many social events, adopting an active lifestyle through which they can run away from reality for years.

As in the case of Mary, refusal to believe death happened often takes place when a person insists on

keeping the relationship with the loved one alive. Much energy is expended in doing this; talking of or to the person, washing and rewashing their clothes, keeping things just as they were in an effort to keep the relationship alive.

A certain amount of this behavior is normal for a short time, but when it goes on indefinitely and becomes distorted, it can throw a real blockade against the door to adjustment. There is a price to pay for the emotional stress which is usually demonstrated in physical illness, emotional exhaustion, broken relationships, disrupted families, shattered careers, and callousness.

Grieving is a time to cry out for help. Friends, family, neighbors all can be a strong support to us in time of loss. Disclosure of inner feelings to another human being is indispensable to recovery. Sometimes even this good support isn't enough and we may need more professional help. Consulting a physician or chaplain may guide us to someone who is trained to help in specific problems.

The sooner you hurt, the sooner you heal

Occasionally we may hear a well-meaning friend advise some grieving person to stop thinking about the loss. Such counsel is not wise. Thinking about and talking about the relationship with a loved one is important to the healing process. Expressing some feelings about the loss confirms the reality of it and facilitates the experience of pain which produces a mellowing effect. It's much better to think and talk about the loss immediately after it occurs. The pain will be intense, but it won't be dragged out unmercifully.

"I've been struggling with my 19-year-old son's death for 12 years. Even though it's been 12 years, it hasn't gotten any easier," Jane told her counselor.

Jane presented a picture of a perfectly controlled individual. She was a quiet person with a rigid posture with a muscle-tensed appearance which seemed to defy anyone who might invade her shell.

The counselor advised Jane to "Go on memory trips." He told her to remember every facet of her relationship with her son; drive by his school, go back to the places and events connected with his life. He told her that it would be painful—just about as painful as going through his actual death again. Then he advised her to record her feelings in a journal and to talk about them to a friend. He said to cry freely as the tears make their way to her eyes. Don't fight the pain—let it happen because with every tear wiped away, also wipes away a little bit of the hurt.

A week later when Jane returned, she looked more relaxed. She reported that she had relived the whole experience during the past week. At first she was afraid to open it up again after closing the door on her feelings for 12 years. She had done a lot of thinking and a lot of writing and had come out of the experience feeling lighter and at peace with herself. She had started to heal at long last.

Say goodbye

Have you ever gone to a train station or an airport to see some loved one off? Until it's time for them to leave, you all stand around talking about many different things: the weather, business, relatives, plans, etc. Suddenly the time comes for the person to part from you. The pretense at merriment suddenly stops. Tears come to the eyes as there are hugs and last words of love and good wishes. Why is saying goodbye so difficult?

Saying goodbye means separation, deprivation, loneliness, and change. It means losing control over a part

of life together. It's a painful reminder of reality.

Similarly, saying goodbye after a person dies is an extremely painful reminder of reality. It's impossible to do so until you establish in your own mind that the life of your loved one was of value. You can do this by deliberately reviewing and reconstructing your relationship with your loved one. Reminiscing about every aspect of your life with that person is important. In addition to reviewing your relationship with your loved one, take every opportunity to learn about that person's relationship with others.

We can never say goodbye to our memories of loved ones. We can only say goodbye to the relationship we had with them. That relationship can never be reestablished in this life. In fact, as in the case of Mary, trying to sustain that relationship can only result in frustration, making it impossible to invest in meaningful relationships in the future.

Refocus your life

Just about the time you think life is bearable, an anniversary, a holiday, a favorite song, or a familiar place does strange things to your emotions. You spend months and years discovering the full significance of a lost relationship, but unexpected events and places can trigger a deep sorrow and a flood of tears.

Don't be alarmed. You haven't slipped back to the emotional state you were in during the first few months of grief. Experience the pain that has been aroused. Let the tears flow. Say goodbye to the relationship that is so spontaneously brought to your attention. Regression is common during the time of refocusing.

During the months of intense grief there are enough activities to absorb your time and energy. After you move toward refocusing, the mask falls away and suddenly you feel

extremely exhausted. It would be well to have a good examination by your physician. Get plenty of rest and be sure to eat a balanced diet. Make time every day for some exercise, even if it is only a relaxing walk. Try to avoid major changes in your life the next year or so. Conserve your energy.

In early grief, all your memories are tied to the person or situation you have lost. You have not developed a history apart from that relationship. Meaninglessness persists. Refocusing is the time when you



No two persons put the ingredients of resolution together in exactly the same way. Allowing for personal differences is essential if adequate adjustment is to occur.



begin creating a history that does not include a relationship that you formerly had. You may find yourself in a quandary—unable to make decisions. The forward movement of life has ceased and meaning is non-existent.

Give yourself time—time will enhance the chances of a satisfactory outcome. For some it takes more time and they can become discouraged. Each person must

refocus life in a unique way because no two people grieve alike.

Grief has a way of reducing your support system. You realize that the world you were accustomed to has disappeared. Loss always changes things—it changes you. If you remain open to new relationships, you'll find people with whom you can develop a strong level of trust. Losing a few friends in the process of grieving is not unusual. Some people just do not feel comfortable around those who grieve. That's why it's so important to be open to new relationships. Enlarging your family of supportive friends can make up for the loss of friends who can't relate to you in your grief.

For some, looking beyond their own pain and getting involved in helping someone else makes the pain easier to bear. Andrea learned this lesson a few years after her husband died in a motorcycle accident. She desperately clung to the relationship until she was about to destroy herself with anger. She knew she had to do something to change the picture.

With the help of a close friend, she slowly cut the emotional ties with her husband. After a series of good-byes to the relationship, Andrea took time to notice other widows who were struggling like she had and organized a monthly luncheon for her hurting friends. Healing happened and Andrea discovered that she was healed in the act of healing others.

In summary

Feeling hundreds of emotions, painfully coming to accept reality, saying goodbye to relationships that are no more and refocusing—these are the ingredients of resolution. No two persons put the ingredients together in exactly the same way. Allowing for personal differences is essential if adequate adjustment is to occur.



The Rebel Queen

Vasti Viana

Queen Vashti considered herself to be a good queen. However, she was considered by many to be a rebellious queen, a law-breaker, a sinner. Look at the first chapter of Esther to discover the story of this defiant queen.

During his third year as king, the great monarch Xerxes summoned to his presence his governors, military chiefs and all nobles in the city of Susa. Doubtlessly there was a long agenda of administrative plans to be considered by this select group.

These meetings were held for a period of six months. Extensive banquets were frequent and the monarch boasted his riches and the splendor of the court with pride.

To end this encounter with the greats from his kingdom, Xerxes scheduled a week of banquets and feasting, ordering drinks to be served according to each one's fancy. The invitation was extended to all the inhabitants of Susa, and the citizens were served generously in the royal palace gardens.

In cooperation with the King Xerxes politics to strengthen popular loyalty to the throne, Queen Vashti offered a simultaneous festive banquet to the guests' wives in the palace.

After the seven days of feasting and drinking, Xerxes and his guests could not think normally. They were a little "high" and "happy".

At that time Vashti was ordered by the king to appear before him wearing the royal crown. He wanted to present the queen in her magnificence and

physical beauty to his guests; this would be the culmination of his feast.

Vashti went through moments of great anxiety because she felt she should not go, but at the same time, she knew that refusing could possibly mean the death decree for her.

She had to think and act quickly. She chose to be open to the misunderstanding and punishment, be it fatal if it were. She did not wish to be morally insulted. She did not want to go through the shameful situation of entering the royal stage to face whistles, applause and brazen remarks. She did not want to risk suffering physical aggression in that great auditorium of drunken men.

The seven servants the king sent to get her returned without the queen, and of course, Xerxes was furious. Nevertheless, some very important reason made him control himself; in all probability Vashti was the daughter of one of the greats present there. Therefore, Xerxes did not issue her execution.

Xerxes consulted with his advisors regarding the laws and they found no punishment in the books because this type of behavior had never happened before. The case was considered a State problem. The queen's sentence was to never again appear before the king.

Vashti considered herself fortunate to have been dethroned and not decapitated. However, she was saddened when she saw that her attitude of good sense was broadcast

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Vasti holds a piano degree. She encourages her children, Ricardo and Joyce, and her piano pupils to participate in church music and congregational singing, which is a source of spiritual energy.



as being that of a law breaker. Many thought she had sinned against the king, his greats and the citizens. Vashti was saddened because she had not been understood. Moreover, her rebellion had to be punished because her actions affected the marital relationships throughout the kingdom. The king had to find a better woman to be his queen.

Vashti's adherence to good habits and to being prudent was misinterpreted and it seems her sacrifice in favor of good sense was lost, wasn't it?

However, upon analyzing the consequences of her courageous decision for personal dignity, it can be seen that the results were highly positive, even if she was unable to perceive it.

Vashti's noble attitude attributed worth to the woman as a person, and discreetly, nevertheless very clearly, she gave the king and his subjects and to all the people a great lesson in the field of human relationships. It saved many of the women of her day from having to yield, even unwillingly, to abusive and improper orders from their husbands, orders that were based on insensitivity or authoritarianism.


The men became aware of the reality that they should be more considerate when giving their wives orders. They realized that women have courage and are able to give up their lives instead of bowing to abusive orders.

In addition, the next queen received much more respect and was valued. So much that a short while later, Esther was well received during an off season and was listened to with full attention and love by the same monarch. Her courageous petition was granted and her people were saved from extinction.

How much of the attention that Queen Esther received is owed to the decisive actions of the previous queen in favor of feminine dignity?

It is hard to know. But it is clear Vashti made an impact on the king and his subjects.

Is it possible that some of us are not being understood, or even being ridiculed by those closest to us because of our definite posture in

favor of what is right and worthy? We must be patient while praying fervently to God who sees everything. Though we may feel the cause is lost, God knows the beginning to the end and our actions often help shape and improve the future. 

Bidding from the Heart

Rita Price

Jayne Fisher watched anxiously as her 17-year-old daughter, Katie, pulled her unruly lamb into the arena of the Madison County Junior Livestock sale. With luck, Katie wouldn't collapse, as she had during a livestock show the day before.


Katie was battling cancer. This was her first chance in months to be outdoors having fun, away from hospitals and chemotherapy treatments, and she had come with high hopes for earning some sizable spending money. She had wavered a little on her decision to part with the lamb, but with lamb averaging two dollars a pound, Katie was looking forward to a lot more than pin money. So she entered the lamb for viewing, and the bidding began.

This story from Wales was submitted by David Currie, president of the Trans-Australian Union Conference in Australia.

That's when Roger Wilson, the auctioneer, had a sudden inspiration that bought some unexpected results. "We sort of let folks know that Katie had a situation that wasn't too pleasant," is how he tells it. He hoped that his introduction would push the bidding up, at least a little bit.

Well, the lamb sold for \$11.50 a pound, but things didn't stop there. The buyer paid up, then decided to give the lamb back so that it could be sold again.

That started a chain reaction, with families buying the animal and giving it back, over and over again. When local businesses started buying and returning, the earnings really began to pile up. The first sale is the only one Katie's mom remembers. After that, she was crying too hard as the crowd kept shouting, "Resell! Resell!"

Katie's lamb was sold 36 times that day, and the last buyer gave it back for good. Katie ended up with more than \$16,000 for a fund to pay her medical expenses—and she still got to keep her famous lamb. 

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My Daughter's Wedding



Marlene Miller

I am sitting on an airplane on an interstate flight. I am going to my daughter's wedding. But instead of being happy, I am very miserable. I am close to tears and stare intently at the book I am holding, hoping that the person next to me isn't sociable enough to ask the purpose of the flight.

Sandra is our oldest child. Her birth was the answer to our prayers and with gratitude and joy we presented her to the Lord. We dedicated her, along with us, to Him and His work.

During her teen years, Sandra's focus dwindled from spiritual activities. Her attention was focused on social activities. When she was in her early adulthood, her father received a call to an interstate position and Sandra chose to stay where she was. After a year, Sandra did not even attend the social events of the church.

Now Sandra is getting married and I am so sad! I admit that I am ashamed. It will not be an Adventist wedding. Her father will not be conducting the service. We hardly desire to invite our friends.

I carry a bag that has a collection of treasures from Sandra's child-

hood. I have her cards that say, "Mummy, I love Jesus and I love you." There are notes that say, "Dear Jesus, Thank you for these things, my mummy and daddy, my baby sister, my angel and my cat, Tiddles." I hope there is an opportunity for me to show these to Sandra and discuss them.

Sandra is so excited about the wedding. Her phone calls have been increasing in anticipation of the big day. I wish, for her sake, I could share her feelings. I am scared that my feelings may spoil the happiest day of her life.

I am weepy. The person sitting next to me has left and I can pull out a tissue and indulge my tears.

"Madam, are you all right?" the flight attendant asks me. "Yes," I mutter, "just a sad story."

I grieve when I think of the decisions my daughter has made during the last two years. She is taking one step at a time away from Jesus. Her decision will have eternal ramifications. She knows the truth, but she is turning the other way. I ask myself what we could have done wrong. What could we have done differently? Why has our child chosen the wrong path?

Marlene Millar is a nom de plume. Marlene is a minister's wife and is committed to a ministry for Adventist parents who pray for absent children.

I close my eyes and pray, "Well, God, I shall be landing soon. Sandra will know I am sad. She is very perceptive. She and I are very close, close enough to know each other's moods. Please help me to make her day happy."

The plane lands. We meet and hug. Darren, her fiancé, gives me a hug too. Sandra shows me her engagement ring. It is a beauty and compliments Darren's other gifts of genuine jewelry.

They take me home and show me my room. "I hope you will be comfortable, Mum," says Sandra with a big smile. She is so proud of her hostess skills. I must confess I would be a lot more comfortable if Darren went home to his parents until the wedding. But Sandra knows this. We have had many telephone "discussions" on that subject.

The next morning, I spend a long time in prayer with my Lord. At breakfast, Sandra suddenly blurts out, "What's wrong, Mum?"

I feel like dissolving in tears and pleading with her to stop the wedding. I want us to go home and start again. I want her to be 16 so we can have another chance. But I ask the Lord for strength and tell her how much I love her. I tell her that her dad, God and I want the very best for her in this life and the eternal life to come. We do cry a little and then we hug.

The wedding takes place on Sabbath. I awake early and begin praying.

"My God, my heavenly Father. This is your day and I long to spend it in worship with you. This afternoon, Sandra and Darren are getting married.

"We have had some wonderful talks over the past couple of weeks and they have told me that they want a home with Christian influences. They want to bring up their children like we did! This shows some progress and I thank you and praise you for that.

"But now, how do we get through today? My husband, who has just flown in yesterday, is unwell, so there's no church for us this morning. I don't want to break your holy day. I don't know what to do.


"I also don't know how to control my emotions. I feel dreadful! I feel like crying all the time. But I don't want to spoil Sandra's wedding. Help me, please."

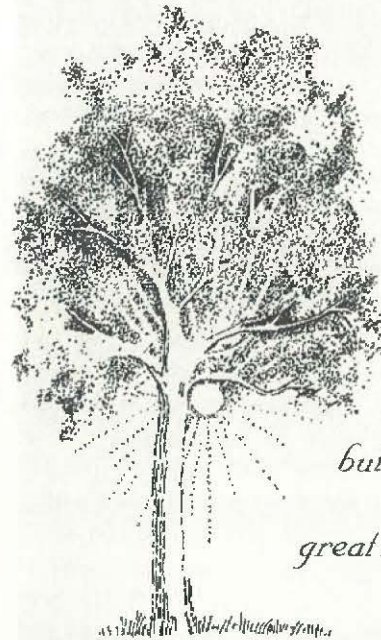
And God spoke back to me in my heart: "My dear, I will answer your prayer. I have given you a large portion of my love already. That is why you love her so much. Now I will give you a portion of my joy. It will be my gift to you that you may give to her. You will have joy and happiness that you can share with her today. Today is so important to her and this will be our gift to her for this day.

"Now, about your fears about keeping the Sabbath holy. Let me assure you that my presence will be with you all through this day, as long as you keep yourself close to me.

"When I came to this earth, I was continually in a sinful environment, but there was no way that it could taint me. I and my Father are one, and in our presence, one cannot help but be on holy ground."

God kept His promise. I was able to share the love, peace and joy from God with Sandra and Darren. We rejoiced with them in their vows of life-long commitment and love.

We have now moved into a new mode. We keep the communication lines hot with activity and we pray for them constantly. As God answered our prayers on their wedding day, we look forward to answered prayers for their salvation. 



A Life Like His

*The life of Christ's disciples
is to be like His, a series of
uninterrupted victories
—not seen to be such here,
but recognized as such in the
great hereafter.*

—Gospel Workers, page 515

My God Supplies My Needs in Advance!



Jacqueline Hope HoShing-Clarke

I do not only count my blessings I tell them and I journal them. In this way, I will always remember what the Lord has done.

In Philippians 4:19 the apostle Paul says, "But my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

It was close to December 1998 that I had a financial need. I needed \$20,000 Jamaican dollars (about US\$560). As far as I could recall this was my first major financial need because God usually supplies my needs in advance. As a result of this, I have a way of saying that I am God's spoiled child because whatever I need, He supplies. God has been very faithful to me and as such, I do more "Thank you Lord" prayers than "Lord, I need . . ." prayers.

"But what's happening this time, Lord? Have you forgotten me? Did I upset you? You always supply my

needs even before I ask, I need this money urgently. I have checked out all my financial resources but nothing is happening, what is going on, Lord?" I prayed.

After praying for about one week, I was sitting at my office desk one morning when the Lord spoke to my heart. He said, "Jackie, when was the last time you read your salary statement? Why don't you take it from your handbag now and look it over."

As I looked the statement over the Lord spoke to me again. This time He said, "What about that item on the car loan that you have been repaying? How much longer are you going to pay that loan? Don't you think it's time to stop?"

I immediately got the message as clear as crystal. Picking up the telephone I called the business office and inquired how much longer I needed to repay my car loan. The person at the other end quickly accessed my account then made a big laugh and said, "Girl, you have money."

"I have money? What are you talking about?" I asked.

"Well," she said, "you have overpaid your loan. We owe you approximately \$40,000 (about

US\$1,111.00). Come on up to the office and request your money."

I was stunned; I was unable to move. But I learned my lesson well. Jesus wanted us to talk about it together. I was to stop taking Him for granted. He was still supplying my needs in advance. He had not changed, no one can upset Jesus. He wanted us to talk together. And so after one week of fellowship with Him, He opened my eyes to money He had provided in advance. What a mighty God we serve. My thank you prayer was in this song.

*Great is Thy faithfulness,
O God my Father,
There is no shadow
of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not,
Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been
Thou forever wilt be.*

*Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning
new mercies I see;
All I have needed
Thy hand hath provided,
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Lord unto me!*



Jackie is the director of pre-college studies at West Indies College, Jamaica. She and her husband, Pastor Bylton Clarke have two teenage children, Deidre and Deneil. She enjoys sharing God's goodness with others, reading, writing, traveling, and flower gardening.

Leading on Your Knees

Shelly Esser

Shelly Esser has been an associate pastor's wife. Currently, she and her husband John, are in ministry transition. In addition to coordinating women's ministries for ten years, she is a writer, speaker and co-editor of *Just Between Us*. She and her husband reside in Germantown, Wisconsin, with their two young daughters.

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How many hours in the past year did you spend in prayer for your husband, your congregation, your ministry area, the people under your leadership? When was the last time you were on your knees for the leadership in your church and the many concerns that face the ministry? Perhaps the greatest weakness of the church today is the lack of intercession by the leaders for their people.

So what should be the role of prayer in your life as a leader or co-partner in ministry? It should be the same as the Apostles gave in Acts 6:4, "... And (we'll) give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." Prayer was the Apostles' first priority; it took up the largest amount of their time. And as was so evident in their ministries, they could only lead as they prayed and the same is true for us.

Since my husband's resignation as associate pastor a little over a year ago, I've had a lot of time to reflect on the ministry we had—what was good, what was bad and what things I'd do differently if given the opportunity. At the top of my list of things I'd change, is my own prayerlessness in regard to our ministry. In fact, I have been deeply grieved by my omission in this area.

We had always heard coming into ministry, that relationships are often the first place the enemy will strike to dismantle a work. I believed it, I had even witnessed it before, but I thought it would never happen to us,

especially coming into a church on the tails of a church split where relationships had already been fragmented and attacked. "Surely it won't happen again," I reasoned.

As a result, I didn't bother to pray for protection or for the relationships among the staff—in fact, I didn't pray much at all, at least not about the important things. I became overly confident, neglecting the place and power of prayer in our ministry lives.

A soldier would never think of stepping into the front lines of battle unequipped or unprepared; you can bet he would have all of the necessary weaponry needed to wage the battle he was engaging in. Yet, as leaders in the church, stepping daily onto the enemy's battlefield, we naively think we can do it alone, or do it without the weapon of prayer and so we mistakenly let our guards down. Scripture tells us over and over again, the battle we are engaged in is not a battle with human flesh but against the darkness and principalities of this world. Yet we aren't watchful and prayerful as we're so adamantly instructed to be.

One of our greatest offensive weapons in battle is prayer; but unfortunately, all too often, we use it as a last resort or not at all. Unfortunately, many churches are full of the casualties of war and destructive forces operating beneath the surface because of our neglect.

I don't know if the outcome of our situation might have changed as a result of intercession, but I do

believe that many things in the church could have been different and that God's power could have been unleashed in many ways if we, as leaders, would have regularly come together in prayer for each other and the flock. I am convinced that there would be less complaining, disunity, bitter roots, criticism, fleshly behavior and the quenching and grieving of the Holy Spirit in a praying church. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 tells us, "Do not put out the Spirit's fire." A sure way to quench that fire in a church is prayerlessness and self-reliance.

A Christian writer once proposed this question: "What if there are some things God will not do until people pray?" A very challenging and sobering question. That question has haunted me many times as I have looked back and reflected on my own prayerlessness. God has made us active participants in the fulfillment of his kingdom and will through prayer, yet how often we fail to respond in this privileged way.

E. M. Bounds said, "Each leader must be preeminently a man of prayer. His heart must graduate in the school of prayer. No earnestness, no diligence, no study, no gifts will supply its lack. Talking to men for God is a great thing, but talking to God for men is greater still. He will never talk well and with real success to men for God who has not learned well how to talk to God for men." One of the reasons so many Christian workers today have such little influence is the prayerlessness of their service. To effectively learn how to pray and be empowered by the Holy Spirit and guided through prayer is the most important task of our preparation as leaders.

Think about your individual ministry or church for a minute. What do you spend most of your time on as a leader? Planning? Publicity? Refreshments? Delegating? Organization? Prayer is often tagged

on as an afterthought, isn't it? Prayer must be the foundation of all we do or we're building our ministries and churches on sand. All success apart from the spiritual empowerment and touch of the Holy Spirit, is a house or ministry or church built on sand—and when the winds come it will fall; it won't last. I wonder how many church splits and discords have been birthed in prayerlessness?

Wesley Duewel said, "You will never be a greater leader than your prayers. Effectiveness in leadership is dependent on our spiritual life, on our prayer life. Our very usefulness is dependent on prayer. It is prayer that prepares us for every aspect of



There is no better example in Scripture—besides the Lord Jesus himself—than the Apostle Paul, when it comes to displaying a model leader's prayer life.



the work because spiritual ministry demands spiritual power not ministry done in the flesh. One danger of operating ministry life devoid of prayer is that we become too dependent on the flesh and the methods of the flesh."

The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but men and women. He does not anoint plans and programs, but men and women. It's very easy, especially over the years, to become too reliant on our own plans and methods. Especially here, we need to be careful that everything we do is God-made and not man-made—that we keep totally dependent on God for the work of the ministry though prayer and the

empowerment of the Holy Spirit. As leaders, we need to remain close to God's heart on a daily basis so we're ready and knowledgeable for his marching orders and desires for the ministry he has entrusted to us.

God has given us a great responsibility to intercede for our people. We must pray for our ministry, the services in the church, the outreach, the families, the individuals and the church at large. 1 Samuel 12:23 very soberly reminds us, "... far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you." Too often we neglect praying for our people and ministry. Personal prayer is to be our daily ministry and work, especially as a Christian leader.

There is no better example in Scripture—besides the Lord Jesus himself—than the Apostle Paul, when it comes to displaying a model leader's prayer life. Paul was a man who was committed to praying for his people, his co-workers, his brothers and sisters in Christ and the lost. At least 41 verses in his writings refer to his prayer and subjects for prayer. His ministry grew out of his unceasing prayer life. It was the very foundation of his ministry and effectiveness as a leader. And as a by-product of his life, he developed a praying people. When we as leaders model prayer in our churches and corners of ministry, it will become contagious.

We are currently attending a church where the pastor has wisely made prayer a central focus of the church. Opportunities for prayer abound everywhere and the amazing thing is people are responding and catching the vision for the need for prayer in their personal lives and the life of the church. Men are coming together regularly to pray for the pastor, the church leadership and the Spirit's anointing. Exciting things are beginning to happen as a result. People are coming to Christ, and God's people are learning to pray,

many for the first time. There is such a spirit of unity, love, warmth, and the Holy Spirit's presence is so evidently resident in the church—the fruit of a praying church.

What did Paul pray? First, Paul prayed in thanksgiving to God and for the believers he was writing to. What did he pray for these people? He prayed that they would be encouraged. Throughout his letters he continually tells his readers, "I have not stopped praying for you," "I kneel before the Father continually, day and night wrestling in prayer for you." Could it be said of you that you are always wrestling in prayer for your people, for your teammates, for your husband?

Additionally, Paul prayed for the perseverance in the faith and ministry, for their empowerment, that they would be active in sharing their faith and for their spiritual growth and witness. The bulk of Paul's prayer life was praying faithfully for others. In Ephesians 1:15-20, he tells the believers this, "For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." Wow! I'd love for someone to be praying that kind of prayer on my behalf.

Paul also encouraged the believers to pray for one another. He spoke of this in eight of his letters. As leaders we need each other's intercession, don't we? Again, this is an area I would do over again. I deeply regret

not having initiated prayer with our church's other ministry wife. We needed it, our husbands needed it, our children needed it and the church desperately needed it. We need a ministry prayer partner. If not in your own church, perhaps another ministry wife in a neighboring church would be delighted to have a prayer partner. There is no greater and more comforting way to bear one another's burdens than through prayer. When two or three gather in his name there is power, the Bible tells us in Matthew 18:19 and 20.


Finally, Paul requested prayer for himself. Very few of Paul's prayers were for himself, but he knew that he was dependent on the prayers of his people. How often have we failed to pray for our leaders because we thought either they didn't need it or surely many others were committed to praying for them. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 clearly instructs us to pray for all of our leaders. Leaders, especially, need our continual prayers. In Ephesians 6:19 and 20, Paul says, "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

May the Lord help us to become women of prayer, women who will turn our churches upside down because we have learned to commune regularly with the Master.

Here are some practical suggestions for becoming a praying leader:

- ✿ Evaluate your current prayer life, gauge where changes need to be made and make a new commitment to the Lord today to either begin anew, or improve and extend what you have already been doing.
- ✿ Plan your prayer time for your husband, church and leaders. Reserve a special daily or weekly

time for praying very specifically for these needs. As a leader, your people should constantly be on your heart—like Paul's were.

- ✿ Have a place where you can pray for them. You need a prayer closet (room, chair, car, shower, someplace where you can regularly pray for their needs). Use a prayer list. God greatly blesses the use of prayer lists. There is great evidence that Paul used them. If your church has a pictorial or non-pictorial church directory, this is an excellent way to pray by name, for your people.
- ✿ Plan how you will cover the needs of your church and people. Plan ways to pray regularly for all those people, especially for whom you are spiritually responsible and accountable to God. Try to keep this list updated. Remember you can bear burdens for one another through prayer. Other things to cover in your prayer time would include: unity, integrity, godly living, a praying people (which by the way, is modeled by the leadership of the church), a witnessing people, revival, a growing, healthy church, to name a few.
- ✿ If you have a difficult time verbalizing exactly what to pray for your leaders, use some of Paul's prayers found in his letters. Make them your own, praying his request for your own leaders. Praying Scripture into people's lives, is a great basis for prayer. (Start with 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, Philemon 1:4-6, Ephesians 1:15-20.)
- ✿ Find a prayer partner, either in your own church or a ministry wife in another church. 

The Bible verses in this article are from the Holy Bible, New International Version, copyright (c) 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Protecting Your Husband from Other Women

Sharon Drury

I'm broken hearted! Three more ministers' wives writing to tell me about their husband's adultery and their broken lives. I believe this disaster is often preventable. I'm not saying you can guarantee a husband's faithfulness, as if it's your fault if he sins. You can do everything right and lose your children, and the same is true for your husband. That's free will. But you can cut down the odds. Here's my advice on protecting your husband from other women. Read it and act before you ignore it and weep.

Know your man

Men frequently have a stronger sexual desire than women, at least in the early years of marriage. (We catch up later!) In general, men struggle with impure thoughts more often than women. Know your man because the key to sexual understanding in marriage will be understanding each other. Learn your husband's needs and desires. Talk about sex. The two least discussed topics among ministry couples are our personal spiritual walks and sex. Schedule some time to talk about both. If your husband goes to the pulpit being unduly tempted because you've defrauded him (1 Cor. 7:5), his preaching will lack the power it needs. So share frankly with each other about what makes each of you

"tick." Study your man carefully to discover how you can light his fire. After all, someone else with designs on him might be studying him. You may not think he's that attractive anymore, but his position, power, prestige, and even his spiritual commitment makes him a special target for other women. Study hard and learn your husband's ways so you can beat them to it!

Lighten up!

Some of you are already tense just reading about sex. You don't like sex, and you think it is dirty and shouldn't be talked about by good Christians. Now, don't start accusing the other ministers' wives of this. I find far more freedom among them than among younger wives. And don't accuse the "conservatives" of prudery. Many conservative ministers' wives are more in tune with their own sexuality than some "liberated" females in the church. If you haven't learned to lighten up, your attitude probably makes you "motherly" with your husband. What a turn-off! You're not his mom, neither are you his spiritual authority or watchdog. Some wives feel that if they start to really enjoy sexual expression it will ignite some sort of fire in their husband and he will go off the deep end. Give him an inch, he'll take a mile, they say.


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Wrong. Indeed, the very opposite may occur. So, lighten up. Start being the joyful playmate God intended you to be.

Share your radar alerts

Women have a sixth sense about other women. We can spot another woman who has designs on our husbands a mile away. It's a God-given radar alert. It's purpose is not to provoke jealousy, but to share these impressions with your husband. The first time I did this, we worked at a summer camp where a female lifeguard kept coming to my husband for "spiritual counseling" on her way to the beach, of course. I couldn't believe how dumb he was! He thought she really was interested in the Bible! I got jealous because I waited too long to warn him. Both of us approached it with a wrong attitude. Nevertheless, he did stop meeting with the "counseling coed." Since that time, I have learned to share my impressions with my husband right away. And he has learned to listen. When warning bells go off, say so. You may save your husband from disaster.

Keep the fire hot at home

Take care of yourself. Take time to be romantic, especially throughout the day. Call him at work and say something surprising! Be rested. Take a nap. Get the kids to bed early. Or arrange for a night at a hotel. Take time to listen to your husband. Look him in the eye. Flirt with him. Buy some surprising lingerie. Relax and develop self-confidence. Admire his physique. Initiate sex sometimes. Wear what he likes and do your hair and makeup the way he likes it. When the fire's hot at home he's less likely to be warming his hands somewhere else. Get interested in your husband before someone else does. A marriage is a terrible thing to waste. 

Forgiveness in Spite of a Great Loss

Beauty N. Wakaba

The date was May 12, 1996. I attended the funeral of Prudence, a girl of only 14 years who was abused and brutally murdered by a serial killer in the southern area of Johannesburg. Prudence came from a Seventh-day Adventist family.

As I listened to different speakers who spoke about her life at home, school and church, I could see that she was a responsible girl with a bright future. Her life was taken away prematurely. Naturally, when this happens, one experiences mixed feelings such as anger, helplessness, insecurity, impatience, and need for justice.


As a minister's wife, I thought it would be appropriate for me to meet the girl's mother and remind her about the promises of Christ, such as "I will come again" (John 14:1-3).

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Coordinator for the Southern Africa Union
Conference.



Even before I could begin talking to her, she told me that she had forgiven the man who killed her daughter. She went on to say, "The death of my daughter has strengthened my faith in the Lord. Nothing will change my faith in Jesus." As I looked at the mother's face, I could see that she meant what she said. She forgave in spite of the great loss. "A church member was setting a good Christian example to a minister's wife," I thought as I listened.

This forgiving spirit reminded me of the Great Forgiver, our Lord Jesus Christ who uttered the words of forgiveness to the men who crucified Him. Jesus forgave in spite of the agony He went through on the cross. "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34, NIV). Jesus taught His disciples to pray to our Father in Heaven: "... Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors ..."

I pray that the Lord will help me and my fellow ministers' wives and all who have the hope of His soon coming to have a forgiving spirit in spite of difficulties. 

Mother Converted...

After 25 Years

Femmy Togas

An interesting and touching story happened in Paal Dua SDA Church during a public evangelistic meeting conducted by the Shepherdess Chapter of Manado City and the Shepherdess Chapter of the East Indonesia Union Conference on March 18-26, 1998. The speakers consisted of Shepherdesses under the leadership of Betty Pungus, Shepherdess Coordinator of North Minahasa Conference and Jeane Sakul, Shepherdess Coordinator of the East Indonesia Union Conference.

By the grace of the Lord, at the end of those meetings many souls surrendered themselves during the altar call to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and to be baptized. Among them was Mrs. K. Sehang. She is the mother-in-law of Pastor Willy Togas the Paal Dua SDA church pastor. The altar call was so thrilling, beginning with the tears of the speaker herself but ending with heavenly joy because an old lady made a decision for baptism.

Her right decision was made, when I, Femmy Togas, her daughter, who happened to be the speaker that night, had spoken with the voice of the Lord in Hebrews 4:7, "Today, when you hear My voice do not harden your heart." The voice of the Lord had long been ignored. Ever since I accepted the Adventist message 25 years ago, my mother

and father and all relatives rejected me. I faced the great challenge, persecution, and mob.

One unforgettable experience happened when I was 14 years old at the second year junior high school. When I was baptized, my mother expelled me from home and did not acknowledge me as her daughter anymore. My parents commanded me to leave the house and did not allow me to bring any clothes. They didn't care about my school fees. Furthermore, they would seek for the pastor who baptized me and planned to beat him.

But the Lord has so many ways of protecting His children. Their plan was not realized. Eventually, they tried another way. They prevented me from attending the church service on Sabbath by asking the school principal to not allow me to go to church. What did I do? While I was prohibited to attend the church service and was forced to attend school classes, every Sabbath morning I left the house wearing school uniform but without their knowing I had prepared my church dress. At 9:00 a.m. I changed my school uniform for my church dress and went to church. After the church service I changed clothes again and put on my school uniform and went home. Every Monday morning I got punished by standing in front of the flag pole for not attending classes on



Femmy Togas (right) is pictured with her mother. Femmy is president of the Shepherdess Chapter in Manado City, Indonesia.

Sabbath. This happened for quite some time. But finally when my mother and father saw the changes in my spiritual life and they knew that I was very earnest and true in my beliefs to the Lord, they did not bother me anymore. One thing which made them understand was my prayer life. Every time they passed my room they saw me kneeling down in prayer which I had never done before. According to my mother's testimony, she was thrilled when she found me praying asking for God's blessings to be poured out to my parents.

Finally, my parents decided to just let me attend the church every Sabbath morning. In fact, they sought for the SDA denomination headquarters to get information regarding the SDA Church boarding school. Then I was sent to our academy at Tompasso II, Kawangkoan. Graduated from that academy, I pursued my studies at Mt. Klabat College. There I met my fiancé, who was a ministerial student. Then I married, Pastor Willy Togas, who is presently a church pastor at Paal Dua Church.


Evidently, it was an uneasy spiritual life experience since I became a pastor's wife. I struggled about my parents because our desire was to win my parents that we may all be together in heaven when Christ comes. And now our dreams have come true. After exactly 25 years, April 4, 1998, my mother was baptized at the mass baptism. What a wonderful victory has happened considering that my parents used to be the Protestant Church Pioneer in Tahuna, Sangihe Talaud Islands. They were very active in their church activities. They were also the pioneers in constructing the biggest Protestant Church building and the founder of the Christian School in my village. They perceived being unable to accept God's call.

But the Lord has many ways to call

His people. The awaiting moment came when my parents were sickly and they needed medical treatment. This made them decide to come to Manado and live with us. This was a precious opportunity for me and my husband to evangelize them. We always invited them to join our family altar, morning and evening worship, opening Sabbath and sun-down worship. They prayed with us. After all, we invited them to attend church service with us. They became attracted to the church program on Sabbath. At that time there was a guest speaker coming from the United States. They were impressed by the sermon.

This situation was supported by the public evangelistic meeting by the Shepherdess at Paal Dua Church. There they learned much about the truth. It was continued with the public evangelistic meeting conducted by Dr. and Mrs. Alex Rantung whom every night before giving the Bible lecture they presented the Family Life Evangelism lectures which touched my parent's hearts and attracted the people coming to the

meeting every evening.

However, in the meantime, it's only my mother who responded to the altar call. My father has not decided to be baptized yet. He said that it is not easy to leave his own belief. He was formerly a Tax Head Master of Sangihe Talaud Islands, although he is now retired but he is still an honorable man in the community and a conservative Pioneer of Christianity and has merit in the Protestant Church. He needs further Bible study. Our desire is that hopefully God will prolong his life so that he may accept the truth before the closing of time. It is also our desire that we can worship together on Sabbath in this earth as well as in heaven. 

Editors note: Femmy Togas and her mother rejoiced when God answered their prayers for her father to join them as a part of the Seventh-day Adventist church. In the Spring of 1999 Femmy's father was baptized during the Shepherdess reaping meeting. Praise the Lord!

*For God so loved the world
that He gave
His only begotten Son*



*that whosoever believes
in Him should not perish,
but have everlasting life.*

—John 3:16

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