



THE JOURNAL

A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

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Friendship



ON THE COVER

Companionship. It's what we all long for, but developing close friendships while in ministry can be challenging! Learn tips for reaching out, overcoming loneliness, and finding value in your relationship with Christ.



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The Friendship You Crave

WE ALL WANT TO BE heard and understood. We all want someone to listen to us.

If you are feeling lonely, friendless, misunderstood, or sure that nobody listens to you, there is someone who will. God will.

“Yeah, I know that. But it’s not the same as a human being I can see,” you say.

I agree that it’s not the same. It’s actually better! God longs to show up in our lives in amazing ways if we will simply do what His Word instructs: “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10, NKJV).

God longs for people who will simply be still and know Him. He longs to put His arms of comfort around us and pour His love into our hearts.

“How do I do this when I live in a house filled with people and noise?” you ask. “My life is consumed with responsibilities—husband, children, work, church. I have no private space.”

I understand. I’ve been there. As the wife of a pastor and then a conference president, I was lonely, disappointed, and frustrated. Yet I felt that I was too busy to take quality time with God. Then God began to teach me how to find the friendship I craved in His wonderful presence.

Here are some practical tips that helped me form a friendship with God:

1. Ask God to wake you up when He wants to spend time with you. Ask Him to kick you out of bed and keep you wide awake. He is able to call you, just as He did for Samuel (1 Samuel 3).

2. Open your heart to Him as to a friend (*Steps to Christ*, p. 93). Then give Him time to answer. How does He answer? Often He will do it as we spend time reading and praying through His Word.

3. As you read the Bible, let God lead. Praise Him, thank Him, worship Him, confess sin, pray for someone or some situation that is on God’s heart.

4. Ask God what He wants you to pray for. This can lead to an amazing revelation of what is on God’s heart and what He wants to do through your prayers.

5. Throughout the day keep communing with God. Besides asking “Help me do this” or “Please do this, God,” try to do more thanking, praising, and worshiping Him.

Recently I heard a speaker say, “When we thank God, He starts listening. When we praise God, we feel His presence. When we worship God, He starts moving on our behalf.” She also shared a few suggestions: Spend one minute thanking God, then spend another minute praising Him, then a minute worshiping Him. Repeat this often during the day while you are working, washing dishes, walking, driving, or sitting in a committee. God’s love and joy will flood your heart as you continue to do this.

A woman in New Zealand decided to try this for three days. She kept praising, thanking, and worshiping God all day long. By the third day, she was filled with joy. She could not believe it. “God is real, intimate, and caring!” she told me.

I’ve found in my own experience that as I worship, praise, and thank God while reading the Word, He so floods my heart with His love that I feel like my heart will burst!

I don’t know what you are going through. Maybe you feel as if you have no earthly friend right now, no one who really understands or listens to you. Maybe you have the weight of the world on your shoulders or you feel that you are in darkness and can’t find the way out.

Don’t give up! Go to God. Pour out your heart to Him with all of your cares. Then start thanking and praising Him. Even try to thank and praise Him that you have no friend and that you have so many problems. It is incredible what happens when we thank and praise God for allowing trials in our lives! Then listen to God by reading and meditating on what He has to say to you in the Bible.

You are loved! Always remember Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing” (NKJV).

I pray that you will experience God’s friendship in an amazing new way in 2017.

Janet Page serves as associate ministerial secretary for pastoral spouses, families, and prayer.

Finding Friendship

HERE'S THE BEST ADVICE FOR OVERCOMING
LONELINESS AND MAKING FRIENDS.

ONE AUGUST DAY IN 2010 our lives changed. My husband got a call to minister to two churches in Perth, Western Australia. This meant leaving the home we had enjoyed for the previous four years in New South Wales and moving almost 4,000 kilometers (2,500 miles) away.

I felt both excited and overwhelmed. But my greatest concern was for our three children—their ages then were 13, 9, and 2. *What a drastic change for them to wake up one day friendless*, I thought anxiously. I knew we would all have to start from scratch and form our circle of friends all over again.

This would be our fourth move since we'd entered ministry, and yet it felt like the first time. I experienced all the emotions that come with leaving a familiar area and moving to a place foreign to us.

My husband seemed to have a better coping mechanism. When we arrived at our new location, he went straight to seeing people and carrying out his duties. I envied him, wishing I could have the same resilience to spring back so quickly.

Secretly, I also resented the move. So did my oldest son. At the delicate age of 13, he was determined to let us know that he was not happy and that he did not want to be here. It pained me to see him so unhappy. I would cry often in prayer, letting God know how I felt.



“A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Proverbs 18:24

DO YOU RELATE?

Many of us have gone through this experience. We have felt the pain and tears as we face new territories. We are territorial beings! We enjoy community. This is how God created each of us—to be social beings and to enjoy the company of other humans in friendship.

How interesting to realize that in the Garden of Eden, Adam was in constant face-to-face communion with his Creator, and yet he felt that something was missing! He yearned for another human who would understand him, because friendship is a God-given gift to the human race.

Throughout the inspired pages of the Bible we can see again and again how friendship has a transforming power on those who experience this amazing gift. Here is one wonderful example:

Abraham was God’s friend!

- Isaiah 41:8: “But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend.”¹
- James 2:23: “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God.”
- 2 Chronicles 20:7: “Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?”

The Bible also gives us the key to having and making friends. Proverbs 18:24 says, “A man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” We must be friendly first!

Yet as we face new territories, we must be careful about whom we choose as friends. We’ve heard the proverb that says “by beholding we become changed.” Negative or ungodly companions corrupt good morals. We become more like those we associate with. During those fragile chapters in our lives in ministry when we start a new territory, the friends we make will produce good memories or destroy our effectiveness. Godly friends kindle godly behaviors.

Ellen White wrote: “It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.”²

SURVIVAL 101

So, how did I make it through this new transition? First, I put a lot of effort into making sure our children were connected and well established in our new church. For several Sabbaths I observed a group of kids whom I could invite over. There was intentional effort and lots of prayers sent to God’s throne of grace. And by the end of the first year, they were established and content in their circle of friends and active in the church.

But what about us spouses? We can get so submerged in making others happy that we forget that we must look after our emotional selves if we want to effectively serve our spouses, kids, and churches.

*God will
present
to you the
friends
that will
complement
your life.*

One day about a year after our move, I realized an answer to my prayer. I was taking my youngest son to his swimming lesson. Every week I had seen a woman sitting all by herself, waiting for the lesson to finish before making a quick exit. She seemed to be absorbed on her phone during every lesson—a clear indication that she was not interested in starting a conversation with any nearby parents. Week after week I saw her there, alone and seemingly friendless.

Finally I found the courage to approach her, given that her daughter and my son were both taking swimming lessons and getting along quite well. I took this as an opportunity to start a casual conversation. Now, more than five years later, she has become my most trusted and loyal friend. We've shared many meals and outings together, and she has started coming back to church with her family. We have Bible studies once a week, during which we chat and share about life.

I've learned an important principle: We don't need to have a crowd of friends to experience fulfillment. And to make friends, we must be friendly first!

"Things will go wrong with every one; sadness and discouragement press every soul; then a personal presence, a friend who will comfort and impart strength, will turn back the darts of the enemy that are aimed to destroy. Christian friends are not half as plentiful as they should be. In hours of temptation, in a crisis, what a value is a true friend! Satan at such times sends along his agents to cause the trembling limbs to stumble; but the true friends who will counsel, who will impart magnetic hopefulness, the calming faith that uplifts the soul,—oh, such help is worth more than precious pearls."³

Friends are essential in our lives, and the older a person gets the more valuable friendships become. There is something special about having a friend with whom we can open our hearts, unburden our troubles, and share our joys of life. It's not just about ministering to them, but being ministered to by them.

As we move about, obeying God's calling, friendships are one of the most important assets in a ministerial couple's life. God will present to you the friends that will complement your life. Just make sure you ask Him. Proverbs 27:9 says, "Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of a friend springs from their heartfelt advice" (NIV). **7**

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, Bible texts are from the New King James Version.

² Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 555.

³ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1163

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Me and Hospitality?

CONSIDER THIS GREAT WAY TO FORGE FRIENDSHIPS
AND MINISTER TO PEOPLE.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE being invited over to someone's house to eat. The fellowship that takes place and the stories shared over a meal make and strengthen friendships. Hearts soften and open when plates are passed and tummies are filled.

Hospitality—it's hard for some, easy for others, overwhelming for many. The word "hospitality" came from the word "hospital," a place one went for sickness. Originally, the reason they were called hospitals is because people went there for spiritual and emotional health.

So showing hospitality by having people over for a meal is not simply about the food. The whole idea is taking care of them spiritually and emotionally.

Here are a few things to keep in mind about hospitality:

- It's not the food that's served that will be remembered most; it's the love with which it's served. This includes encouraging friendly conversation and doing everything you can to make your guests feel comfortable and even part of your family. Whether the meal is haystacks on paper plates or cottage cheese loaf with all the fixings on fine china, as long as it's served with lots of love, it will be remembered.
- Cookies and hot drinks during an afternoon are just as effective as a whole meal.
- Pancakes and popcorn can work for a simple Saturday night supper. It's a great way to stay on your budget if you have a large crowd on a spontaneous moment.

The Lord will bless your efforts, whatever they may be. Don't underestimate the power of inviting others to join you at the table! **J**

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Why Kids Reject God

EVER WONDER WHY CHILDREN WITH AMAZING PARENTS GROW UP AND LEAVE THE CHURCH AND GOD?



AS A PASTOR-DAD, I couldn't figure out why my church friends' kids were walking away from God when they hit 18.

Bob and Carol were one example. They were an amazing couple. As a young husband and father, I looked up to them as role models. They were godly. They had a strong marriage. Every week their family sat together in church. They even homeschooled their kids. I hoped that someday Jana and I could have a marriage and family as solid as theirs.

One day, in passing, I asked Bob why he didn't attend the midweek service. "Oh, that's our family night," he replied.

I was impressed. We had tried family night a time or two, but with small kids it felt impossible. I wished I had the discipline these folks had. But I also thought, *Why not come to church and use any other night for family night?*

I also noticed that they didn't put their kids in the children's ministry and youth programs. That was a little different, but these were awesome parents, and I could sure see great value in having the kids sit with them at church events.

Time passed, and something weird happened. As Bob and Carol's children went off to college, I noticed that the kids didn't attend church. When my kids left home for college or work, they not only immediately found a church but they got active serving in that church.

I couldn't figure it out. I was such a lousy parent compared to Bob and Carol. Our "family nights" consisted of dumping our kids in the nursery, children's program, and later youth group while we attended the adult meetings. I was never able to pull off consistent home devotions. We sure weren't the model family.

Our family is just a tiny part of something much bigger—God’s family.

Why were my kids passionate about God, while the kids in this “perfect family” were running from God as soon as they could break free?

NOW I KNOW

Bob and Carol could have been a fluke, but I’ve seen this same pattern again and again—great parents, but their kids leave the church.

I didn’t give it much thought until folks started asking me why my kids never ran from God. As a pastor I wanted to help them keep their kids on the right path, but I had no idea what made the difference. I prayed and asked the Lord.

You’ve probably heard, “Family first. Don’t get so busy with church activities that your family suffers.” While I agree with that, I think we get into trouble if we forget that our family is just a tiny part of something much bigger—God’s family.

It’s dangerous to separate our family from the bigger picture. The kids were seeing that their family gatherings at home had priority over gathering with other believers. The message they got was that “we” (my family) are more important than “WE” (the family of God).

No one intended it, but these children were being taught that their family was the center of the universe around which everything else revolves—rather than God and His people being the center around which our lives rotate.

Suddenly it all made sense. No wonder these kids wandered away from church—which almost inevitably leads to wandering away from God. Church—gathering with the people of God—was optional, a nice thing to do once a week as long as it was convenient and didn’t conflict with family or other plans.

Off at college, they saw no need to get connected to the local church. They were busy with their lives, their schedule, their priorities.

FAMILY FIRST

I know this probably sounds hyper-legalistic, but let me encourage you: when the people of God gather, you need to be there and be involved. Not out of obligation. Jana and I never went because we had to. It just made sense, and our kids grew up knowing that it was what we all did.

“Family first” meant that when God’s folks gathered, we would be there. While traveling, on vacation, visiting family, whatever, our plans, priorities, and schedules revolved around connecting with God’s eternal “family first.”

Here’s why.

Next time you barbecue, after the coals are nice and red-hot, take about six of them out and set them aside. Then set one aside by itself and watch what happens.

The “family” of six coals will stay hot awhile, but not as long as the big gathering. And the poor coal that is “living on its own”—off at college or working—will cool very quickly apart from the other coals.

If you want to stay red-hot in your walk with God, stay connected to the big pile of coals. Keep your little family tied into the pit. As often as possible, gather with the other coals, where you can draw heat from them and help others by sharing your heat.

“We should not stop gathering together with other believers, as some of you are doing. Instead, we must continue to encourage each other even more as we see the day of the Lord coming.”
—Hebrews 10:25*

“Then Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual he went into the synagogue on the day of rest—a holy day.”—Luke 4:16 7

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Bridging Differences

HOW TO REACH OUT TO NEIGHBORS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE COME FROM FAR AWAY.

YEARS AGO MY HUSBAND and I cleared out closets, held yard sales, and packed eight suitcases for our move to the Middle East.

The horns and sirens that awaken us each morning now could be in any city, anywhere. Yet every day, on my way down the hill that overlooks dense concrete and smog, I stop and visit with Ahmed, the campus gateman, who drills me on the throat-clearing art of Arabic. A nearby minaret holds up the amplifier that calls the faithful to prayer five times a day. I'm constantly reminded that we're in a world that sees, feels, and expresses life differently than I do.

Not everyone has my advantage. Connecting with "different" can be even more challenging when you're surrounded by the familiar, you're in a place you call home, you feel comfortable with your people, and the "different" world has come to your doorstep.

Waves of refugees out of the Middle East and North Africa are flowing into a surprised and unprepared world. They line the borders, fill the boats, wait at the airports. They are not all the same in religion or race, but they all want a chance at safety—or just survival. Some have moved next door to you.

The world's reaction can range—and change—from empathy to apathy, from charity to hostility. Real dilemmas stare everyone in the face. But if we know anything about God's heart for all His children, we know that the opportunities are unprecedented.

A mission has come to your doorstep. Without leaving your hometown or stepping onto a plane, you're met with an unfamiliar culture, a different view of life, a belief system stronger than just another religion. How are you to relate to these new neighbors? What is God asking you to do?

The strongest bridge to anyone is your personal interest.

1. KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE TO SHARE.

Nothing is more important than for you to know what you have to share. Is your life grounded in Jesus Christ? Is your heart enriched by God's Word? Do you know the leadership of the Holy Spirit? Have you been gripped by the meaning of God's last appeal for our frightened world? Can you speak passionately for Him—with and without words? Are you willing to live compassionately, beyond opinions, convenience, or political correctness?

His presence in your life and His freedom to use you is the best you can offer others, no matter how different their world.

2. BE INFORMED.

Whether you are relating to someone from a Christian or non-Christian heritage, your influence will be more meaningful if you have some understanding of their world and the basis of their faith.

Look beyond the media for your information. Read the history of the land that your new neighbors left behind. Learn about their culture, their language. Find a simple, factual outline of their faith practices and beliefs. If the non-Christian world is unfamiliar to you, the Arab and African world may be as well, even when expressed within Christianity.

Stop yourself before you stereotype, though. Each person has a unique story, and you can be sure God has been in it. Listen for what He is doing.

A person's religious beliefs carry a view of the world that shapes how they see life's hardships and blessings, their personal rights, others' role, and more. Someone who has grown up with a different worldview than you will probably look at time, space, relationships, gender, authority, future, God—everything—differently than you do.

Look for what you share in common, though. Be sensitive to the likelihood that in your new neighbor's world, women relate to women, and men to men, unless they are relatives. Family, health, and daily life are usually comfortable common ground. But so is shared grief, a love of nature, even laughter. Reach out, trusting that the Holy Spirit is leading you.

Sharing your faith meaningfully also includes understanding your differences, especially in spiritual matters. Your new neighbor may use the same words you do but with different meanings. The stories in their holy book may sound similar to yours, but the details may change the message. Their religious activities may appear comparable and even more devout than your own. Rituals can play a hidden role in their belief systems, and they may have very different reasons than you do for living healthfully, praying, or worshiping. Learn in order to share what their hearts need most.

3. RELATE TO THE PERSON.

The differences you see may tempt you to challenge what they believe, but your mission is not to dismantle a belief system. It is to love a person for God.

Relationship is one of the highest values in Middle Eastern cultures. Social interaction carries deep meaning. Listen to their need for respect and meaningful identity. Be sensitive to what brings dishonor and shame. Be a genuine friend—loyal and long-term.

You probably won't know your new neighbor's language, nor will they know yours well. But eye contact, broken English, and sign language say a lot. An online translation site can help. Learn greetings and exchanges; the heart language is always healing to the ears. Kindness speaks every language.

Consider the limits on everyone's emotional resources. Grief is a major component in the refugee's life. Some are resilient; some are in shock. But life doesn't simply "move on, so get over it." Feed your heart with how God relates to our human needs. Draw boundaries with compassion. Give to empower. Emotional well-being and spiritual growth are closely related.

4. ASK QUESTIONS.

The strongest bridge to anyone is your personal interest. Ask your new neighbors about their family, and ask often. Ask about their home country, childhood, faith. You will see more clearly where God is moving in their life and where He has opened windows for you to share Him.

Ask if you can pray for them. Many, even of a faith where prayer is a ritual more than a conversation with God, will be touched. Even those who are reticent will usually appreciate the expression of your personal care.



5. LET GO OF DEBATE.

Very few people are persuaded by an argument. Theoretical discussions rarely touch the heart. An argument won is often a witness lost. Like Christ did, let a thoughtful question or a reflective response redirect a potential confrontation.

But honest questions need clear, simple answers. Ask the Holy Spirit to keep you sensitive to the seeker. Pray for helpful, redemptive responses that lead a person directly to God. Ask God to teach you the personal meaning of His truth. The Holy Spirit, then, has access to your real-life evidence. Throughout salvation history, the living witness is God's chosen method for revealing Himself to us.

6. SHARE NATURALLY.

Many of your new neighbors come from a strong oral tradition, where conversation remains the best communication. Passages are recited rather than read. Stories captivate. Word pictures express more than logical arguments or information.

How easily can you tell stories about God? How naturally can you share pictures of what He's like? How much of Scripture is woven into your casual conversation? What can you actually say about Him in one thoughtful sentence over a cup of tea?

A living witness can't stay hidden. God's presence in your life is a powerful influence long before anyone asks questions or shows spiritual interest. If you are fully available to Him, each person you relate to is directly available to Him. He is within their reach. Let Him fill your heart, and let your heart show.

The opportunity to witness may never happen if you're waiting to moderate 28 Bible studies. But you can speak often of a powerful, loving, approachable God. Every truth of God's Word, and everything you believe as a Seventh-day Adventist, follows that certainty. He promises to build on His love.

NO SURPRISE

In the long story of salvation, what your new neighbor needs is not new at all. The wave of refugees moving into your neighborhood may look like a recent phenomenon. Your ministry may be pressed to reach out in new ways. You may need more sensitive, patient methods. But nothing is new about God's longing for all His children to know who He is and what His love is doing for them. Nothing is new about God's ability to use you in the most adverse circumstances to reach as many as possible with His final invitation of hope. J

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TIPS TO ~~SURVIVE~~

THRIVE

REACH OUT!

When you feel lonely because it seems that no one reaches out to you, no one calls you, no one invites you to do anything, or no one appears to take an interest in you, maybe it's time for a paradigm shift. Maybe it's time to take initiative and begin reaching out to others.

It's rare for a friendship to just "happen" without your doing anything to initiate or foster it. So don't wait for friends to find you—start being a friend to others. Begin looking for people in your church, in your neighborhood, or at your child's school with whom you might connect.

Make it a point to say hello and interact with these people. As you feel comfortable, pursue conversation with them. Ask them about their interests and their lives. You will be surprised at how your efforts are appreciated and reciprocated.

Here are some practical ideas that might work for you in battling loneliness and developing friendships:

- Take time each week to text or call a few people with whom you're interested in becoming better friends. Friendship takes communication.
- Invite people to spend time with you, rather than waiting to be invited. Ask them out to lunch, over for dinner, to go shopping with you, etc.
- Attend and participate in as many church events and ministries as you can. There you will have the opportunity to get to know more people who share similar values and connect on various levels.
- Join a local moms group or Bible study. Seek out people who are in the same stage of life as you are. Your commonalities will help you connect.
- Share produce from your garden, homemade food, or gifts with people you want to become better friends with. This will help create a bond as people see that you really care about them.

As you intentionally seek to reach out, you will begin to meet people and form connections that could potentially grow into great friendships. Friendships take time and work, but don't be afraid to invest in relationships that you would like to see grow. You will be blessed.

Have a survival tip that someone shared with you once upon a time, or that you have learned along the way? Send it in to share here at: spouses@ministerialassociation.org

Special Quotes

"Rest yourself wholly in the hands of Jesus.

Contemplate His great love, and while you meditate upon His self-denial, His infinite sacrifice made in our behalf in order that we should believe in Him, your heart will be filled with holy joy, calm peace, and indescribable love. As we talk of Jesus, as we call upon Him in prayer, our confidence that He is our personal, loving Saviour will strengthen and His character will appear more and more lovely. . . . We may enjoy rich feasts of love, and as we fully believe that we are His by adoption, we may have a foretaste of heaven. Wait upon the Lord in faith. The Lord draws out the soul in prayer, and gives us to feel His precious love. We have a nearness to Him, and can hold sweet communion with Him. We obtain distinct views of His tenderness and compassion, and our hearts are broken and melted with contemplation of the love that is given to us. We feel indeed an abiding Christ in the soul. We abide in Him, and feel at home with Jesus. The promises flow into the soul. Our peace is like a river, wave after wave of glory rolls into the heart, and indeed we sup with Jesus and He with us. We have a realizing sense of the love of God, and we rest in His love."

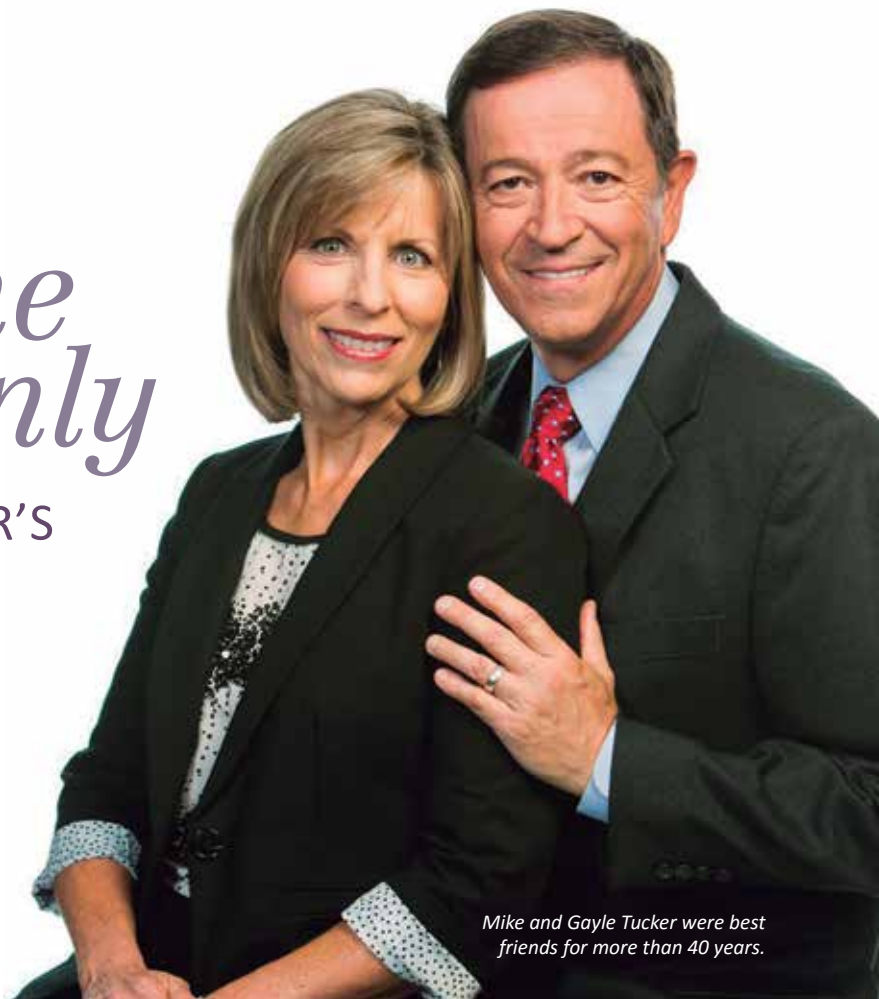
Prayer, p. 11

"If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him."

Christ's Object Lessons, pp. 129, 130

My One and Only

CAN THE PASTOR'S FAMILY HAVE FRIENDS IN CHURCH?



Mike and Gayle Tucker were best friends for more than 40 years.

PLEASE PERMIT A BIT OF ADVICE from an aging and grieving minister of the gospel. The work of a pastor is isolating by nature. For the most part, you pastor in an area you did not grow up in and therefore do not have close friends who live there or worship in your congregation.

To make matters worse, you move from time to time and start the process of making friends all over again. Add to that the inadvisability of having too many very close friends who are members of your congregation, and you truly become very isolated. (When I began pastoral ministry, they told me to never have a close friend in my congregation. That, I believe, was bad advice.)

Even when you make friends in the congregation, few, if any, of them have any clue what it is like to be a pastor, to be married to a pastor, or to have your parents be pastors. It is a unique position with unique challenges.

Often pastors work in an area where there are few, if any, other Adventist pastors. Again, you are isolated.

If you pastor a very large congregation, the problems and pressures are multiplied. Even if you have other pastors on staff, you are their supervisor, and that changes the relationship dramatically. While you may have at some time pastored a small congregation and perhaps even had a district, almost no one in a small congregation can understand the sort of pressures you live with every day as the senior pastor of a very large congregation.

Let me share one further complication. When you are the speaker/director of a media ministry, you hold a position that very few in the denomination have ever held. And although you do have colleagues whom you love and respect, your schedules are so busy that you may see them only a couple of times a year. While you have other people on your staff, they are rarely clergy and you are their supervisor—thus the relationship does not lend itself very well to close, supportive relationships.

JUST ONE FRIEND

For years my wife, Gayle, and I remarked that although we knew we had some wonderful friends whom we loved deeply, we almost never saw them because of our travel schedule. Gayle and I had

“Neither of us can afford to die!”

always been each other’s best friend, but at times it seemed we were each other’s only friend! While not true, it certainly felt true. I would joke, “Neither of us can afford to die since we would leave the other completely alone in the world!”

Well, that has happened. I have my family, and they are wonderful, but my children are not my best friends and should not be. I have few true colleagues, and those I do have are as insanely busy as I am and are therefore no real support. My close friends from academy, college, and ministry are far-flung, busy, and many years removed from close contact with me.

I do not share this for anyone to feel sorry for me. I will survive. God is my refuge and my strength. Do not pity me in any way. I made my choices, am responsible for them, and truly would not do things any differently—except in one area.

I would, if I could do it all over again, put more effort into remaining more closely connected to good friends and colleagues. There is a value in such relationships that can never be truly measured.

So here, now, is the unsolicited advice, especially for those of you who are younger than I am (which is most of you). In addition to making your spouse (if you have one) your best friend, seek out colleagues and friends and foster those relationships. You truly never know when you might need them. **7**

Pastor Mike Tucker is the speaker and director of Faith For Today television ministry, as well as a popular author, preacher, and counselor. His wife, Gayle, worked with him in ministry as associate speaker of Faith For Today, co-host of “Lifestyle Magazine,” and an author, pastor, and counselor. She died at the age of 60 on April 10, 2016, less than a month after learning that she had pancreatic cancer. They were married for 40 years.



Helping a Friend's Marriage

WHAT TO SAY AND DO WHEN YOUR FRIEND'S MARRIAGE IS HURTING.

HELEN WAS CLEARING the kitchen after dinner when Lucy called. "Helen, can we please meet up? I really need to talk."

"Hi, Lucy. Yes, of course! I can see you tomorrow evening for an hour. Is anything the matter?"

There was a long pause. "Yes . . . It's Mike and me. We're going through a tough time, and I don't know what to do."

"Well, I'm not a marriage counselor. I don't know if I can help. But I can listen and pray." Helen felt the anxiety prickles through her body.

If only she'd known before they went into ministry that people would come and talk to her about their problems. If only she'd taken that course in pastoral counseling when Steve was in seminary. If only she knew where to start and how to be more helpful.

WHEN YOUR FRIEND NEEDS TO TALK

It takes courage to admit that a marriage is hurting. If someone comes to you, it's probably because they know that you care, that you won't be judgmental, and that your marriage has inspired them in some way.



“We’re going through a tough time, and I don’t know what to do.”


Yet listening to other people’s challenges can be overwhelming, especially if you think it’s your responsibility to “fix” their life or their marriage. But that’s not your job.

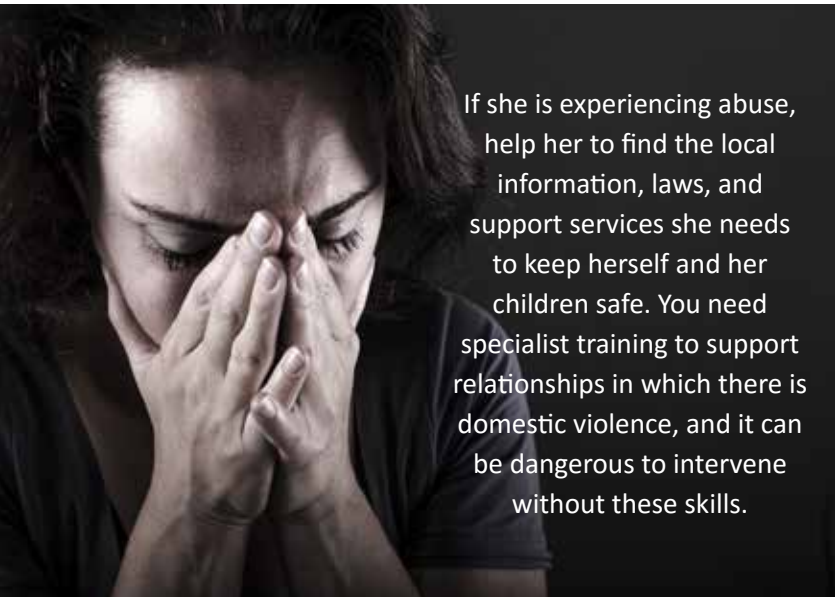
Here are a few ideas that may help you have those difficult conversations:

- Agree on the best time to talk, and limit the conversation to an hour so that you don’t get too tired and overwhelmed.
- Before you meet, pray that the Holy Spirit will open your friend’s eyes to the grains of hope in her marriage. Pray that the Holy Spirit will use your conversation to bless her, inspire her, and guide her.
- Keep the conversation confidential—unless she tells you that anyone, including herself, may be at risk. If she shares this information, you may have a responsibility to inform the relevant authorities in order to keep people safe. It’s important to talk with her about the best way to do this.
- Give full eye contact when you are listening, and reflect back what she tells you by summarizing what she has said. This shows that you have been listening carefully, and your summaries can help her to untangle her complicated thoughts.
- Comfort her sadness and hurts by saying such things as, “I am so sorry that you are experiencing this.”
- Start by asking about her *hopes* for the marriage. If you ask, “What are your problems?” you can both end up feeling discouraged and overwhelmed. Asking about her hopes will help to clarify her goals for the marriage.
- Ask what she would like to take away from your conversation together so you understand her goals for your discussion.
- Stay neutral, don’t take sides, don’t agree with her negative comments about her husband, and don’t blame him. This isn’t always easy to do, but if she goes home and tells her husband what you said about him, then you may do more harm to the relationship, and he will lose trust in you.
- Help her to identify the roadblocks preventing them from achieving their hopes for the marriage.
- Identify which roadblocks are long-term fixtures that may need to be accepted and which ones may need some creative solutions.
- Help her identify her healthy relational needs, as well as the needs of her spouse. These are things such as heartfelt appreciation, uncritical acceptance, quality attention, being valued, warm affection, comfort, encouragement, respect, feeling safe and secure, and being supported. Ask her which three she would most like and what her husband could do to meet these needs. Wonder about his needs too. Meeting each other’s needs helps to strengthen hurting relationships.
- Ask about a time when things have gone well, and look for strengths and possibilities in these moments: the “discussion” that didn’t end in a door-slaming argument, the time they were tender together, a moment when her husband put her needs first, etc. What did each of them do differently to help that moment be more loving?
- Ask her to notice the tiny things in the relationship that are working well and to list three positive signs in a notebook every evening, however small they are. This will help her to refocus on the healthy aspects of the relationship rather than on the difficulties.

Helping a Friend's Marriage

It takes courage to admit that a marriage is hurting.

- Be curious about her husband. Ask: "What do you think your husband is experiencing at the moment? What are his challenges, hurts, and expectations? What do you think he would want to say and do if he heard our conversation today?"
- Avoid giving advice and instructions. Help her to make a list of possible solutions to her problems and to make her own choice about which ones might work best.
- Help her to turn her complaints against her husband into polite and loving requests for his help and affection: "Please, can you help me by ____?"
- Another useful question for your friend to consider: "When I do or say this, will it bring me closer to my husband or push us further apart?" If she wants a closer relationship with her partner, she needs to make choices that help to strengthen the relationship.
- Ask for her specific prayer requests, and pray with her.
- If she wants to talk longer than an hour, agree to meet again at another time.
- Offer to help with a possible solution that she has identified: babysitting, sponsoring their place on a marriage retreat, befriending them, mentoring them as a couple,* etc.
- Suggest a book such as *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* by John Gottman, or *The Divorce Remedy* by Michele Weiner Davis.
- Take care of yourself. If the conversation has left you feeling drained or distressed, make sure that you can speak confidentially to someone about your experience, preferably a professional person who is skilled in counseling supervision or health psychology. Or invite someone to pray for you. You are important too.
- Keep working on your own marriage. This is one of the best things you can do as a ministry couple. It strengthens you and gives you lots of ideas and experiences that you can use to bless the many hurting people and marriages around you. 



If she is experiencing abuse, help her to find the local information, laws, and support services she needs to keep herself and her children safe. You need specialist training to support relationships in which there is domestic violence, and it can be dangerous to intervene without these skills.

- Help her to identify suitable marriage counselors. Marriage counselors are much cheaper than divorce lawyers.
- Some marriages can be transformed when one person does one loving, kind, and helpful thing every day for the other person, whether they feel like it or not and whether the other person notices or not. Encourage her to try this experiment for a month and see what happens.

* If you would like to learn more about the ministry of mentoring marriages as a couple, read *Mentoring Marriages: Use Your Experience of the Ups and Downs of Married Life to Support Other Couples* by Harry Benson, 2005.

Karen Holford has been married to Bernie Holford for more than 33 years. He is a pastor in the South England Conference. Karen is a qualified couple and family therapist and the family ministries director for the Trans-European Division.

Just Good Friends

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS to share God's love is to be a great friend. Whenever we're kind to our friends, we're giving them a little taste of God's love, like a spoonful of the sweetest honey!



OUR BEST FRIEND EVER

If you want to know how to be a really good friend, find Psalm 103 with your family and read about God's amazing friendship with us.

Make a list of all the wonderful things God does to be our best friend. Start with the ideas you can find in this psalm, and then add any other things He does to make us feel happy, loved, and special.

Or write "GOD" in a heart in the middle of a large piece of paper. Around the edges write everything you can think of that describes God's friendship with us.

POSTCARD PRAYERS

Pray for your friends:

Find some blank postcards, or cut cardstock into rectangles.

Draw a picture of your friend on one side of the card. Decorate it with stickers too, if you like.

On the back of the card write a prayer for your friend, or write a list of things that you are praying about for that friend.

You could even ask your friend, "Is there anything special you'd like me to pray about for you, or is there anything that is worrying you?"

Pray for one of your friends every day, and write more prayer requests and answers to prayer on that friend's card.



LEARN A VERSE

Read Proverbs 17:17.

Draw a clock face on a paper plate. Write the numbers around the edge, and draw the hands at 9:15.

Write Proverbs 17:17 on the center of the plate.

Put your clock where it will remind you to be a good friend and to help your family members when they are going through a tough time.

FRIEND SKILLS

Cut out some paper people. Use a gingerbread cookie cutter, or find a pattern on the Internet.

Read Romans 12:9-21 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 to discover some of the things that help people to be good friends.

Write one idea on the front of each paper person, such as being patient, being kind, or comforting people who are sad.

On the back of each person write an example of how you could show patience, or be kind, or whatever you have written on the front. Ask your family to help you think of ideas too.

Which of these friend skills are you good at, and which ones do you find more difficult? What can you do to practice being an even better friend?



BIBLE FRIENDS

If you could be friends with anyone in the Bible (other than God and Jesus), whom would you choose?

Imagine you are writing a short letter to this Bible character. Tell them:

- How they have inspired you.
- Why you want to be their friend.
- One thing you would like to do with them if you could spend a day together.

Maybe you will meet them in heaven and you can be friends there!

POSTER PALS

Design a poster encouraging people to make new friends as a way of showing God's love to the world.





BETTER TOGETHER

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

Make a list of things that are much better to do with a friend than on your own.

Here are some ideas:

- Play hide-and-go-seek.
- Ride a teeter-totter (seesaw).
- Tell a joke!
- Play ball.

- Have a birthday party.
- Run a three-legged race.

Think about some people in the Bible who were friends: Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, Daniel and his friends, Jesus and His disciples, Paul and Silas, etc. Find their stories in the Bible and see if you can guess what they liked doing together.

LOVE THE LONELY

Read the first part of Genesis 2:18. Even in the Garden of Eden it wasn't good for people to be alone.

Do you know someone who is lonely? Maybe it's the new girl in your class or the senior citizen who lives next door. Whenever you are having fun, look out for other children who might be lonely. Do whatever you can to include them or to make them feel happier. You never know—that lonely person may become the best friend you ever had!

Make a list of things you could do to help someone in your class feel less lonely:

- Smile.
- Say hello.
- Be kind and helpful.
- Offer to show them around if they are new and help them find things.
- Ask them about their hobbies or their favorite class in school.
- Play a game with them.
- Share your snacks with them.
- Invite them to your party.
- Ask them to come and play at your home.
- Invite them to something fun at your church or to go for a walk with your family on Sabbath afternoon.



JUST SAY IT

Find a good time to tell one of your friends, "I'm really happy you're my friend because _____." Or send them a card, text message, or email to let them know they are special to you.

RUTH AND NAOMI



The book of Ruth isn't very long, and it is a great story of two very different women who became best friends. Read it with your family. Then talk about these questions:

- What's your favorite part of this story?
- What's the most important message in this story for you?
- What does this story tell you about God's love?



TALK ABOUT FRIENDS

Read the different situations below and talk with your friends or family about what you could do to be a really good friend.

- Your friend is sad because his parents are separating and his dad is going to live a long way away. What could you do to be a good friend?
- A new girl in your church is sitting by herself. What could you do to be a good friend?
- You are having a birthday party. You could invite your special friends, but you want to be like Jesus and include some lonely children. What could you do to make them feel happy and included?
- One of your friends has started being unkind to another child in your class. It really bothers you. What can you do to help them stop their unkind behavior and be a good friend instead?
- Your family wants to make a difference and do a project for a group of lonely or sad children in your town. Find out about the children in your area who might be lonely (refugees, children with disabilities, children in the hospital, nearby children from other ministry families, children who are homeless, etc.) and think what you could do to make them feel happy and special.



FRIENDS SHOW GOD'S LOVE

Try this experiment every day for a month. Ask your family:

- Who was a kind friend and showed you God's love today?
- What did they do?
- How did it make you feel?
- How were you a kind friend today?
- What did you do to show God's love, and what difference did it make to you and the other person?

At the end of the experiment ask yourselves:
"What have we learned this month about being good friends?"
and "How am I a kinder and more caring friend than I was a month ago?"

MAKE IT

Find some of your favorite craft materials. Use them to make two reminders:

SOMETHING
THAT REMINDS
YOU HOW MUCH
GOD LOVES YOU

SOMETHING THAT
REMINDS YOU TO
BE REALLY GOOD
FRIENDS WITH
OTHER CHILDREN

Karen Holford is
really glad that a
girl she hardly knew
came and said,
"I want to be your
friend!" They are still
best friends today,
30 years later!



Send Me a Song

DISCOVER THE POWER OF POSITIVE MUSIC



IT WAS EARLY—about 30 minutes before school was scheduled to start. Some of my students had already arrived and were outside kicking a ball around the playground.

Suddenly Jimmy* burst into the classroom, a typical arrival habit of his. Only this time, instead of dropping his books off at his desk and dashing outside, he paused by my desk.

"Teacher, could we please sing for worship that song about the bird—you know, the one that fell?"

"Oh," I replied, "you mean the song 'He Loves Me Too,' about how God loves and cares about even little sparrows?"

"Yes," he replied. "That's the one. My parrot died last night."

My heart is touched even now years later when I think of Jimmy, a 10-year-old Swedish boy who joined our church-school classroom of multigrade missionary children in India. He was such a bright, outgoing student and easily made friends with all of us while quickly becoming fluent in English, a new language for him.

He came from a nonreligious environment but really seemed to enjoy our morning worship programs of songs and Bible stories. We all knew by Jimmy's daily reports how much that parrot had meant to him. That he asked for this particular song was evidence of his hurting heart and how he looked forward to comfort in the simple words and melody.

WE ARE WIRED FOR MUSIC

Scientists are discovering more and more how interrelated the role of music is to our health, functionality, and happiness. Music has a definite effect on our brains. Listening to music can heighten positive emotions, resulting in hits of dopamine and the release of endorphins within the brain, which makes us feel good. It has been found to be effective as a treatment in health care or as an aid in boosting the immune system. It has great potential as a cheap, natural medicine without the potential side effects of many pharmaceutical products.

Music can impact our health and well-being in the following ways:

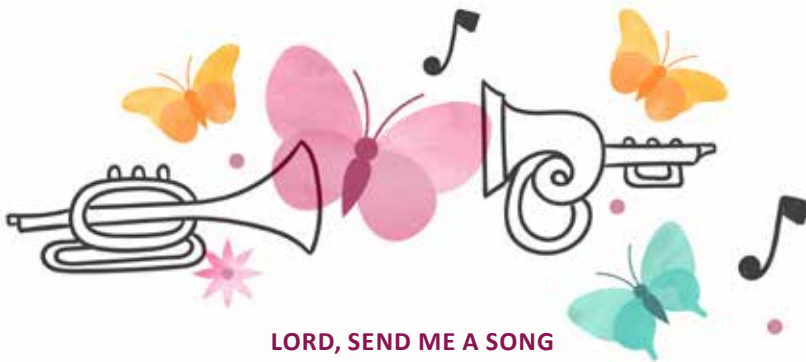
1. Music provides comfort.

"Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness," said Maya Angelou, an American poet and civil rights activist. There is encouragement and healing for the mind and soul in inspirational music. Jimmy, in his sadness over the loss of his pet, was drawn to a song of comfort. King Saul was calmed and soothed by the sweet music of David's harp.

Yet not just any style of music works in this way. Studies have shown that meditative and classical music can elevate the mood, whereas techno and heavy metal music can cause agitation and depression.

2. Music makes you smarter.

Research shows that taking music lessons contributes to better academic performance, even raising a student's IQ. Children and adults (especially senior adults) all benefit with better memory retention and improved intelligence through the study of music.



LORD, SEND ME A SONG

When life's journey brings pain and sorrow,
With no hope for a better tomorrow,
When the nights are dark and long,
Lord, send me a song.

Some days can be sunny and right,
With everything promising and bright.
Even when moments slip pleasantly along,
Lord, send me a song.

Your songs, dear Lord, bring healing and love.
You draw my heart and thoughts to things
above.
Your calming assurance makes my faith
strong.
So Lord, please send me a song.

—Rae Lee Cooper

3. Music improves verbal skills.

Researchers found that after only one month of music study, children between the ages of 4 and 6 showed a remarkable increase in verbal intelligence. It is thought that music training has a transfer effect, which aids in the ability to understand words and their meaning better.

4. Music helps you sleep.

Just as singing a lullaby to an infant helps relax and lull the baby to sleep, so studies indicate that only 45 minutes of relaxing music before bedtime can contribute to a restful night's sleep by reducing sympathetic nervous system activity, as well as decreasing anxiety, blood pressure, and heart and respiratory rates.

5. Music improves your exercise routine.

Listening to inspiring music while running, walking, or otherwise engaging in an exercise routine can reduce the feeling of fatigue, improve motor coordination, and promote a physiological relaxation response. Best of all, music can help make exercise feel more like fun and less like work.

6. Music helps you eat less.

We tend to eat more when "on the run" or grabbing a snack here and there. We hardly have time to taste what we are eating. With this habit, food is not chewed adequately, making extra work and stress for the digestive track. Taking the time to sit down to a planned, nutritious meal in a pleasant atmosphere with relaxing music playing will result in a person's consuming fewer calories with increased enjoyment.

7. Music makes you a better driver.

Commuting to and from work in heavy traffic can take a toll on one's stress level. Heart rate and blood pressure can both become elevated. Anger and frustration can

lead to distraction and unsafe driving. Listening to calming music while driving can positively impact one's mood. Remember, good music affects the releasing of dopamine within the brain, which brings calmness, improved mood, and even safer driving.

8. Music helps with healing.

Some effective uses of music therapy in health care include:

- Stroke recovery patients who listen to music containing a combination of lyrics and music show improvement in both auditory and verbal memory.
- Relaxing music before surgery can decrease a patient's anxiety level, and in most cases is the treatment of choice as opposed to antianxiety medications with their potential negative side effects.
- Listening to soothing music helps most post-open-heart surgery patients relax, thus decreasing anxiety and stress while the heart and body are healing.

HE LOVES ME TOO

God sees the little sparrow fall,
It meets His tender view;
If God so loves the little birds,
I know He loves me too.

Chorus:

He loves me too,
He loves me too,
I know He loves me too.
Because He loves the little things,
I know He loves me too.

—Maria Straub



- Soothing music can be an effective means of lowering blood pressure.
- Music can help Alzheimer's patients remember. By listening to their favorite songs, patients can often experience an awakening of memory caused by the stimulation of neurological pathways that may still be functional.
- Music therapy has been used successfully to decrease fatigue and depression.
- Music can reduce pain in cancer patients, intensive care patients, geriatric care patients, and those suffering from migraine and chronic headaches. However, music was shown to be most effective if it was of a classical or meditative style.

9. Music brings people together.

Music is almost always a feature when people gather together—whether in celebration, in worship, in social settings, or in time of sorrow. It helps participants embrace the moment, confirm a connection, and bond together in affirmation, emotion, and friendship.

MUSIC CAN HELP OR HINDER

Not all types and styles of music are healing and uplifting. Music played at a high volume can be distracting and even damaging to the ears and the nervous system. It can cause a rise in blood pressure and heart rate. Discordant, highly syncopated rhythms do not match the body's natural rhythm and over time can negatively affect the normal functioning of the brain and nervous system. Generally, classical and meditative music have the most beneficial effects overall.

Music is an art, a pleasure, and a medicine for body and soul. As we have seen, its potential uses and benefits are many. We are wired for music by a loving Creator, who provides amazing gifts in this life to help us “prosper and be in health” (3 John 1:2). 7

*Name has been changed.

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Rae Lee Cooper is a registered nurse. She and her husband, Lowell, have two adult married children and three adorable grandchildren.

She spent most of her childhood in the Far East and then worked as a missionary with her husband in India for 16 years. She enjoys music, creative arts, cooking, and reading.

Dear Abigail,

The other day I made a checklist of things in ministry that I resent. It was not a long list, thankfully. However, at the top of my list of resentments was having to sit alone at church events while my husband, Jim, is busily taking care of assignments pertaining to the event.*

The last straw came at a recent meeting when my dear husband was “running around” taking care of this and that, while he missed the powerful messages given by the featured speaker. My heart hurt for Jim as I realized how much of the precious Word he was missing. Furthermore, I could not enjoy my husband’s company as the presenter was used by the Spirit.

I felt sorry for Jim and for me. In fact, resentment built up within me. “Why do the administrators lay so much responsibility on these young pastors?” I fumed to myself. “Do they not think that they too could benefit from the presentations? Looks like poor planning to me!”

After the service was over, I confronted the conference president and stated my grievance. I think it is a ministerial wife’s duty to defend/protect her husband. What do you think?

*Sincerely,
Hubby’s Advocate*

** Name has been changed.*



Dear Hubby's Advocate,

I feel your pain, and we all have our list of irritations. Many pastors' wives can identify with the resentment you have at the top of your list: not being able to sit with your spouse and be blessed by an event together. The reason? Because the young pastor-husband is running around attending to matters related to the meeting. Also, as we look around we see multiple couples enjoying the messages, as well as each other's company. Perhaps the speaker makes a solid point, and you think, *If only Jim were here . . .*

Here are some things you can think about:

1. Jim's skills are needed to help with the details of the event. It takes many hands to effect a successful event. Take notes so that you will be able to discuss some points from the presentation with Jim.
2. One day Jim will be a senior pastor; he may even be the conference president, and he will be able to sit beside you while a younger pastor takes care of details.
3. Confronting your husband's boss on matters like this can make you appear unprofessional and may even escalate into disrespect. Your husband is capable of fighting his own battles. Do not embarrass him by "defending" him to his boss.
4. Pray that God will give you the ability to cope with this situation. There will be more "husbandless" events in the future, but God will see you through them.
5. Realize that you and Jim are both God's servants. "The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16, KJV). Perhaps you may want to consider helping Jim attend to some little details at the meetings.

Success to you!

Sincerely,
Abigail

East-Central Africa Division

The Shepherdesses on the East-Central Africa Division (ECD) compound are composed of Shepherdesses from ECD, Adventist University of Africa (AUA), and Maxwell Academy. They wanted to set an example at the division so that good things will happen in the unions.

In March, the division launched continuing education. In April, the Shepherdesses prepared a banquet for their husbands to express their full support in ministry. They spent time praying, singing, and encouraging one another in ministry. The pastors were extremely happy and asked when the event would happen again.



ECD Shepherdesses planned a banquet for their husbands in support of ministry.

In August, this same group of Shepherdesses did community outreach by visiting an orphanage run by an Adventist widow. The woman provides motherly love to the 64 orphans, from ages 2 to 16. The attachment she has with them can be seen, even though behind every child there is a sad story. The Shepherdesses worshiped with the children, as well as took clothing, food, and toiletries, and every child received a bag of gifts.

All of the children above age 12 are baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They were singing praises to God, memorizing Bible texts, and doing other church activities.



Orphaned children sang during worship in front of their home.

ECD pastors' spouses have found various ways to participate in Total Member Involvement. When you are ready, God directs you where to go, and there is joy in being involved for the Master.



The children expressed joy in their gifts from the ECD Shepherdesses.



Winfrida Mitekaro, ECD Shepherdess coordinator (left), is seated next to the widow who runs the orphanage.

Southern Asia Division

On May 14, 2016, Southern Asia Division (SUD) churches held special programs to celebrate and honor Shepherdesses. In some churches the pastors' wives were involved in a vespers, Sabbath School program, lesson study, worship service, and sundown worship. The Southern Asia churches prayed for the leadership and work of Shepherdesses around the world. Pastor Jerry and Mrs. Janet Page were especially remembered. Special prayers were also offered for those who have donated to income-generating assistance projects, pastors' children education aid, and the widows' fund. It was a great blessing.



Shepherdess Day at the Southern Asia Division office.



Sofia Wilson Measapogu spoke for meetings on Shepherdess Day.



The East-Central India Union women honored Shepherdess Day.



Shepherdess Day was celebrated in the Northeast India Union.



Shepherdesses from the Northern India Union gathered together.



Southwest India Union Shepherdesses participated in a program.



Western India Union Shepherdesses held a special program.

Southern Asia-Pacific Division

Helen Gulfan, Shepherdess coordinator for Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD), attended the North Philippine Union Advisory planned by Delba de Chavez.



North Philippine Union Shepherdess coordinators.



Many attended a praise and worship service during the advisory in North Philippines.

Bangladesh Union Mission (BAUM) Shepherdess coordinator, Mahuya Roy, organized a Shepherdess training seminar in the BAUM conference room for all Shepherdesses. She spoke about objectives of Shepherdess International and qualities of pastors' wives. With BAUM ministerial secretary, Pastor Daniel Baidya, and seven Shepherdess participants, the program was very fruitful for all attendees.



Mahuya Roy, BAUM Shepherdess director, and Pastor Daniel Baidya, BAUM ministerial secretary, met with Shepherdesses.



Shepherdesses enjoyed ice cream after the training.

West-Central Africa Division

Cameroon Union Mission shared at a West-Central Africa Division (WAD) advisory in Abidjan some things Shepherdesses have been doing in Cameroon.



In March, Shepherdess coordinators in Cameroon Union Mission held a prayer retreat at Ayos Center in South Conference.



The Shepherdess retreat in Bertoua, East Conference, was held July 20-24.



Sarah Opoku-Boateng, WAD Shepherdess coordinator, enjoyed the Western Nigeria Union Conference convention.



During the convention at Babcock University High School, free medical checkups were offered to the community.



Chapter coordinators met with division and union coordinators in WAD.

Western Nigeria Union Conference held a Shepherdess convention in August 2016 at Babcock University. The theme was "Empowered for Team Ministry," and more than 200 Shepherdesses attended. They made plans to host a PK congress, to begin training deacons and deaconesses in 2017, and to encourage every local conference to host a ministerial retreat every two years. Other plans for the future include sharing prayer and Bible promises through text messages, beginning prayer chains with coordinators, visiting the motherless and less privileged, and visiting retired Shepherdesses with a gift.



Officers of Western Nigeria Union met with coordinators of the fields.



WAD ministerial secretary and Shepherdess coordinator with the West Nigeria Union president and Shepherdess coordinator.

West-Central Africa Division held an advisory in August 2016 in Abidjan. Ministerial leaders from the General Conference held meetings for the attendees.



WAD ministerial and Shepherdess leaders met in Abidjan.



PRAYING FOR EACH OTHER

If you have a special prayer request, or you'd simply like some friends in ministry to pray for you, email spouses@ministerialassociation.org. If requested, the prayer needs you share will be kept confidential, but all heaven promises to get involved!

Our Facebook page (facebook.com/groups/ministerialspouses) has an active prayer session every Wednesday called "Wednesday's Prayer Circle."

THIS QUARTER WE WILL FOCUS on prayer for the millions of people living in the cities of the world. Here is an overview by division:

1. Pray for the 34 million people in the 10 least-reached cities of the East-Central Africa Division (ECD).
2. Pray for the 62 million people in the 28 least-reached cities of the Euro-Asia Division (ESD).
3. Pray for the 80 million people in the 31 least-reached cities of the Inter-European Division (EUD).
4. Pray for the 102 million people in the 35 least-reached cities of the Inter-American Division (IAD).
5. Pray for the 1 million people in the 2 least-reached cities of the Israel Field (IF).
6. Pray for the 148 million people in the 48 least-reached cities of the Middle East and North Africa Union (MENA).
7. Pray for the 199 million people in the 56 least-reached cities of the North American Division (NAD).
8. Pray for the 406 million people in the 105 least-reached cities of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD).
9. Pray for the 132 million people in the 34 least-reached cities of the South American Division (SAD).
10. Pray for the 33 million people in the 9 least-reached cities of the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID).
11. Pray for the 16 million people in the 6 least-reached cities of the South Pacific Division (SPD).
12. Pray for the 202 million people in the 41 least-reached cities of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD).
13. Pray for the 178 million people in the 52 least-reached cities of the Southern Asia Division (SUD).
14. Pray for the 49 million people in the 19 least-reached cities of the Trans-European Division (TED).
15. Pray for the 65 million people in the 26 least-reached cities of the West-Central Africa Division (WAD).



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