

# THE JOURNAL

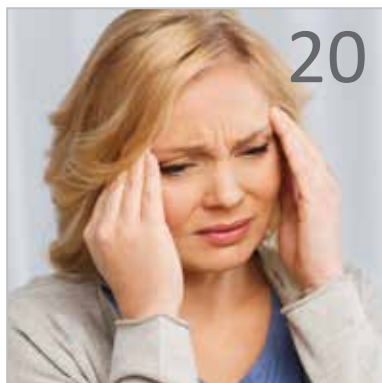
A RESOURCE FOR MINISTRY SPOUSES

Vol. 36 | Issue One 2019



## Family Matters





## ON THE COVER

To most Adventists, family ranks highest on the priority scale next to God—and it shows! But even when we do “all the right things,” sometimes experiences with our children can go terribly wrong. Thankfully, with God, there is always hope! In this issue you’ll read stories that will inspire, encourage, and instruct you in your journey with your children and draw you closer to God.

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# PARENTING IS EXHAUSTING!

## SO HOW CAN I FIND TIME FOR JESUS?



STAY-AT-HOME MOMS—or dads—as well as those with a job in the workplace, share the same challenge: finding personal time with Jesus.

I had just opened my Bible when my 3-year-old son asked, “Mommy, will you play with me?” It was Sabbath afternoon. Frustrated, I thought, *How can I ever get to know God better if I don’t study my Bible?* Discouragement and guilt were part of my every day. I loved my son! I wanted to be a mom filled with Jesus’ love. But I also needed some alone time with Jesus.

I realized I needed to get up in the mornings before my little one so I could spend time with God, but I usually slept too late. When our second son was 2 years old and I was in my 30s, I found it even harder to get up early. I then had this sudden realization that life was flying by very quickly, and if I truly wanted a closer and deeper relationship with Jesus, I had to start now!

I remembered a Bible teacher in high school who had taught me to pray a Bible text for God to wake me up. In desperation, I put my finger on Isaiah 50:4—“He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed” (NIV)—and I begged God to wake me up and kick me out of bed. He did!

The next challenge was the alone part. No matter how quiet I was in the morning, my younger son would hear me and want me to play with him. One morning I asked him, “Do you

like Mommy to be happy and nice?” He nodded. “Then you need to let Mommy spend time with Jesus.” He snuggled up beside me and went back to sleep.

I did not always faithfully get up when God awakened me, so on those days I spent time with Him in His Word later in the day—although it was more challenging because of the noise and distractions. I would explain to my children, however, that I was spending time with God, and they would usually play by themselves while I did that.

I learned the importance of carving out daily quality time with the Lord, and I also discovered some innovative ways to do that, such as listening to an audio-Bible or a spiritual book while feeding infants, talking to Jesus and meditating on a Bible verse while caring for my children, or posting Bible verses on slips of paper over the kitchen sink to read while working.

If you’re a parent who works outside the home, commuting to work can be an opportunity for worship as well. You can listen to recordings of the Bible, meditate on a Bible verse, sing, listen to scripture songs, or pray. God’s grace and power are poured out when we do this.

Instead of spending so much time on social media, parents can spend those moments with God. Your hunger and love for Bible study and prayer will grow, and you will hear God’s voice speaking to you even more clearly. And remember that your children are

*“Seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”*

*Jeremiah 29:13, NKJV*

watching you and that you are setting an example for them. My sons, now grown with families of their own, also make it a priority to spend daily time with God.

Family worships—where you simply read a Bible story to your children and then pray with them—can unleash God’s blessings for all of you. Also pray Bible promises every day, asking for you and your children to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is life changing! Consider such texts as Luke 11:13; John 7:38, 39; Ephesians 5:18; and Isaiah 44:3.

So, if you have young children, I understand your exhaustion and the challenge to spend quiet time with God. God understands as well. Just rest in Jesus, and He will help you. Talk to Him as you go about your work. He will bless you!

Enjoy your children—they grow up so fast—but as you learn to rest and abide in Jesus even in small ways throughout each day, God will give you joy and peace. 1

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

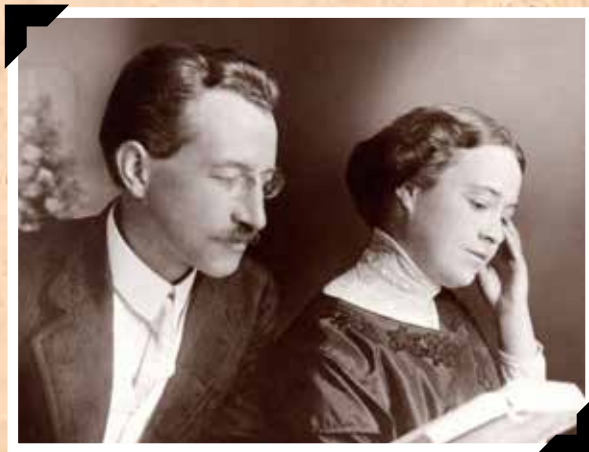




# FAMILY MINISTRIES CENTENNIAL HISTORY

FAMILY MINISTRIES  
HAS BEEN strengthening  
families in and out of the  
Seventh-day Adventist  
Church around the world  
for 100 years.

Meet the creative men  
and women who have  
led this ministry during  
the past century:



**ARTHUR AND MAUD SPALDING (1919-1941)**

In 1919 the General Conference Committee created the Home Commission, which started operating in 1922 with Arthur Spalding as director. He and his wife, Maud, created a series of leaflets dealing with various aspects of home life entitled *The Christian Home Series*. Arthur Spalding wrote the lessons, while Maud Spalding graded them.



**FLORENCE KNEELAND REBOK (1941-1947)**

In 1941 the Home Commission became part of the Department of Education, and for the next three decades, Adventist marriage and family life programs were promoted by Parent and Home Education secretaries. Former missionary Florence Rebok joined the Education Department in 1941 and worked faithfully to support Adventist families throughout the world.

# Family Ministries Centennial History



**ARABELLA MOORE WILLIAMS**  
(1947-1954)

Arabella Williams served as an academy teacher, missionary, and college teacher before becoming Parent and Home Education secretary at the General Conference. After retirement she appeared in *Ripley's Believe It or Not* for being the oldest female water-skier at age 95.



**ARCHA O. DART**  
(1954-1970)

Archa Dart authored books and articles, edited journals, and devoted 47 years to the educational work of the Adventist Church. As Parent and Home Education secretary, he was always in demand as a storyteller and speaker at camp meetings and other events.

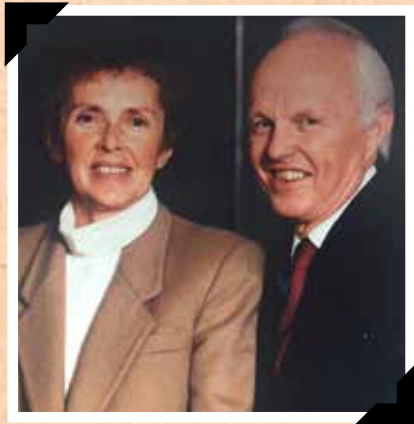


**W. JOHN CANNON (1970-1975)**

W. John Cannon served as a pastor-evangelist in Great Britain and the United States before earning a doctorate and becoming a professor at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland. In 1970 he joined the Education Department as Parent and Home Education secretary.



# Family Ministries Centennial History



## **DELMER AND BETTY HOLBROOK (1975-1988)**


In 1975 the Home and Family Service (HFS) came into existence, with Delmer and Betty Holbrook as leaders. The Holbrooks organized and conducted training seminars for administrators, pastors, and laity in every division of the world. They also created a marriage and family series for radio and produced pre-marriage education videos for college students.

## **RON AND KAREN FLOWERS (1988-2010)**

Ron and Karen Flowers joined the Home and Family Service (HFS) staff in 1980 and became directors in 1988. For a time they served as associates within the Church Ministries Department, until that department was disbanded and they became co-directors of the new Department of Family Ministries. Together they presented seminars on marriage, parenting, and family living in some 85 countries, developed a Family Ministries training curriculum, and authored more than 35 books, manuals, and other resources.



## **WILLIE AND ELAINE OLIVER (2010-CURRENT)**

Willie and Elaine Oliver became directors of Family Ministries in 2010. They have conducted marriage conferences, retreats, and relationship seminars around the world. They are the founders of From This Day Forward and Journey Toward Intimacy marriage conferences; authors of many articles and book chapters; editors of the annual *Family Ministries Planbook*; columnists for *Message Magazine* and *Adventist World* online; authors of the 2019 world missionary book of the year, *Hope for Today's Families*; and hosts for *Real Family Talk*, a program on Hope Channel. 





# Who's the Pilot, Anyway?

LAST WEEK WAS DIFFICULT FOR ME. Not my-life-is-over difficult, but it was tough. I cried a lot, and I'm not much of a crier. I wasn't feeling well physically, I was hugely disappointed over a matter of prayer that I felt hadn't been answered in the way I was hoping, my 2-year-old was acting out more than usual (we're talking serious tantrums), and my home was in chaos (partly for reasons out of my control, and partly my own fault).

I'm feeling better now, but honestly, not too much has changed. I'm away from home, and vacation is definitely helping. But a mess is waiting for me, my prayer still hasn't been answered definitively, and we're not out of the woods yet tantrum-wise.

I'm not feeling perfect peace, but I'm getting closer to it. The more I've been able to let go of things and give them to God instead of hanging on and trying to fix everything myself, the better I've felt. When I loosen my grip on things I want to control and let God lead, things go a lot more smoothly.

## THE SONG THAT CHANGED MY APPROACH

When I was a kid in a one-room Christian school, we had worship every morning. We always sang, and one of our favorite songs was "Over the Sea." It included a special set of motions, and we loved it! I hadn't sung it in years until Baby A was just a few months old and crying inconsolably. Somehow that old song popped into my head. I held his hands to do the motions, and he stopped crying. I sang it to him again and again that afternoon, and I kept thinking about how the words had never made sense to me—not as a kid, and even less now.

"Over the sea, over the sea; Jesus, save your pilot, me!  
Over the sea, over the sea, over the jasper sea."

Yeah, it's a strange song.

But then I had an "aha!" moment (yes, in my mid-30s I finally figured it out), and I realized that all my life I'd been singing the song all wrong. I mean, the way I was singing it

sounded right, but it wasn't. The revelation came to me instantly as I sat there alone in a room with my baby, and I actually turned bright red and looked around as if someone might have witnessed my sudden internal awakening to the real lyrics.

"Over the sea, over the sea; Jesus, Savior, pilot me! Over the sea, over the sea, over the jasper sea!"

## WHO'S THE LEADER?


All my life I'd been thinking how weird it was that someone wrote a song about being Jesus' pilot, how crazy the syntax of the song was (it drove me a little nuts even as an elementary schooler), and how it was even weirder that my teachers and church leaders didn't think any of that was an issue (theologically or linguistically).

In reality, though, it was just I who was confused. And although I could have gotten away without anyone knowing about my made-up lyrics, here I am making a public admission of my ridiculous mistake because it exactly illustrates how I live my life sometimes (and you might do this too).

Sometimes I live like I'm the pilot and have control. I like control—until something goes wrong and I have to call in Jesus to save me. Then when He does, I go sailing on my merry way, never relinquishing the steering wheel, over the jasper sea.

Really, though, I need to be living life as if *Jesus* has saved me and *is* saving me by being my pilot. The steering wheel is not mine to touch!

## LET GOD LEAD

Of course, all that is easier said than done. However, I'm resolved to be more intentional about letting God lead and not trying to do things the other way around. If this is an issue for you too, join me in handing control back to the One to whom it belongs. 

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*Brianna Martin is the wife of a pastor, a stay-at-home mom to a preschooler and toddler, and a former teacher/school administrator. She writes about Christian parenting at [DiscipleMama.com](http://DiscipleMama.com).*



# Beneath the Shadows

EVEN WOMEN OF GOD FEEL sad and overwhelmed at times, especially when they have numerous daily tasks to complete, including playing a supporting role to their spouse in pastoral ministry and caring for little ones. So when circumstances seem insurmountable, whom do we trust for help and counsel? Sadly, after years of suppressing feelings of sadness and loneliness, many keep silent and fall into depression. We master hiding behind a mask so well that we become experts in pretending that everything is fine, even in the company of those who know and love us.

The symptoms of depression creep in, often unnoticed, because they are common feelings that any woman can relate to, and we shun the idea that a woman of God may actually be suffering from depression. David, a man after God's own heart, experienced his share of depressing moments. For years he was in exile hiding from Saul, who sought his life. Not knowing whom to trust

or when he would take his rightful place as king of Israel, David sought solace in writing psalms that described his feelings. The thought of being caught tormented him day and night, and in his moments of affliction he wrote psalms, such as Psalm 102:7, 11, where he describes himself as a "sparrow alone on the housetop" and his days "like a shadow that lengthens" (NKJV).

Because of the high demands of pastoral ministry, many wives may become depressed by the specific situations in their lives, and once these are resolved they begin to feel "normal" again. Unfortunately, others don't get over their traumatic events that easily. People in such situations need to seek help.

**Situational Depression** is a short-term form of depression resulting from a traumatic change in life. Such changes might involve moving to another parish, disappointment with expectations of pastoral ministry, spousal abuse or neglect, ongoing disagreement over a marital issue, loss of a loved one, unresolved childhood issues, or loss of a job. Any one of these could result in months and even years of sadness. The symptoms, or warning signs, of such depression can include:

- a. Feelings of hopelessness, despair, and unworthiness, despite praise from spouse, family, and friends
- b. Chronic fatigue, even if your schedule is not hectic
- c. Poor concentration, which affects your ability to work, study, eat, sleep, and enjoy life
- d. Lack of interest in sex
- e. Feelings of anger toward loved ones, especially spouse and children, behind closed doors





## HOPE AND HELP FOR HOPELESSNESS

Take comfort in the precious promises of hope, especially for us as women. Psalm 145:18, 19 assures us that “the Lord is near to all who call upon Him. . . . He also will hear their cry and save them” (NKJV). The Lord wants to save us and lift us from the dark shadows that surround our everyday lives. We are guaranteed that God will never leave us nor forsake us, and “when we pass through the floods and storms of life He will be with us, and, greatly to be praised, they will not sweep over us” (Isaiah 43:2, paraphrased).

For those dear sisters in Christ who are struggling with depression, the following suggestions might help you start on the road to wellness:

1. **Seek professional help.** The services of a Christian counselor can guide you on the road to healing and restoration. Don’t let pride hinder you from a better life.
2. **Find a prayer partner.** Prayer with a trustworthy friend at least one day per week will build your prayer life and provide much-needed support.
3. **Do journaling.** Writing daily entries—not only about sad moments but also about praises to God and victories won—is very therapeutic.
4. **Spend personal time alone with God.** God is omnipresent—which is great news!—so seek His face anytime, anywhere. Alone time with God is time never wasted. Our nature walks, closet prayers, and early morning devotionals will help greatly. Tell it all to Jesus; He is eager to hear the prayers of His saints.
5. **Get involved in diversional activities.** Daily meditate on God’s word, take that much-needed trip, or reward yourself for an accomplished goal. Take time to relax and enjoy a healthy hobby. Give motivational talks and provide spiritual mentorship to young pastoral wives.

6. **Share your story.** Encouraging other women who are experiencing similar challenges will help to heal and rebuild our own lives.

7. **Provide yourself with good nutrition.** Healthful eating feeds the mind and improves brain function. God wants us to prosper and be in good health. Eating a balanced diet rich in seeds, grains, vegetables, legumes, fruits, and nuts will increase our energy level and help ease depression.

8. **Get adequate rest.** Proper and planned rest relaxes, repairs, and rejuvenates the mind and body and will help to restore balance to the mind. If possible, get between seven and eight hours of sleep a night.

9. **Get plenty of exercise.** Walk with friends at least 30 minutes a day or enjoy some outdoor activity, even if you do it alone. Exercise is very effective in improving our overall mental health and is proven to help reduce depression and anxiety.

God’s Word never fails. He publicly declares in Jeremiah 31:3 that He loves us “with an everlasting love” (NKJV). That means that each one of us is most precious in His sight, and that our lives are valuable to Him. So give Him your heart, and He will pour out His Spirit in you. ■

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*Stacy Harvey is an assistant lecturer in nursing at the University of the West Indies, Western Jamaica Campus. She is married to Christopher Harvey, youth ministries director for the West Jamaica Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. They have been married for 13 years and have two children, Jonathan and Kristashay.*



# FOR MY FRIENDS, PRAYER IS JUST ONE 'LIKE' AWAY

## HOW YOU CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT OTHERS THROUGH DIGITAL DISCIPLESHIP

I AM A VERY PRIVATE PERSON. I'm certainly not one of those people who constantly post "Jesus Loves You" memes or gospel songs on Facebook. Shouting out loud about my beliefs or life circumstances is really not my cup of tea. On the other hand, I am a devoted follower of Jesus and, thus, under the jurisdiction of His great commission. This inevitably leads to moments when these two aspects of my life clash.

Last September I could sense one of those clashes coming my way. For some time I had had it in my heart to offer to pray for my friends. Yet the introverted, private part of me thought that I should not rush it. Maybe the idea would leave if I remained quiet long enough.

But it did not leave. I had to pick up my courage and act.

It was a Friday afternoon. I was on a train heading from London to Newbold College in Bracknell—a trip that takes about an hour—when I finally decided

I could not ignore that little voice anymore. It somehow helped me that I was on vacation, away from my usual surroundings in Estonia, and away from the very people I was about to reach out to and whose criticism could intimidate or even hurt me.

So while sitting on the train I opened Facebook and wrote to all my Estonian friends. I told them I would take extra time for prayer the next day. If any of my friends wanted me to pray for them personally, they just needed to like my post. If they had any specific prayer requests, they could private message me. Then I switched off my phone.

I was a little scared, not knowing what to expect or how to feel about the whole thing. What happened next, I certainly did not anticipate.

Dozens and dozens of people liked and commented on my post, some of them sending me private messages and pouring their hearts out to me. And what a cross-section! Young and old, Christians and atheists, close friends and mere acquaintances, straight and gay, housewives and pastors—and from students to one of the most acclaimed concert pianists in the country.



They told me about their struggles. They shared health problems, the burden of singleness, worries about their loved ones, or the desire to serve God and His church yet not knowing how to do it.

I read those messages late at night until I cried. The next morning, I dutifully wrote down all 76 names and prayed for each one of them. I was lucky to have a free Sabbath—a luxury a minister rarely has these days—because my private prayer meeting lasted for half a day.

It was almost Sabbath evening by the time I was done. I was exhausted and was about to take down my post from the previous evening when I received the most touching message of all. It came from a childhood acquaintance whom I had not seen for some 20 years. She asked if there was still any room on my prayer list and told me she would appreciate my prayers for her 1-year-old son, who was waiting for open-heart surgery. She did not know how to pray, so she was wondering whether I could help her. “Yes, of course,” I said. “I will pray.”

*Phew!* It turned out to be one of the hardest prayer battles of my life. I prayed for weeks for this little fellow, who had to endure not one but two open-heart surgeries and who almost did not survive—but he did! To this day his mother sends me photos and videos of his recovery and the “careless joy” only little kids can have. I almost think of him as my own son now. While I have not yet been able to visit this family and have never seen this boy face to face, what a day it will be when I finally meet him!

This “prayer experiment,” which I have since repeated several times (with a lot less anxiety and much more confidence!) taught me some important lessons.


**First, it showed me the general longing in our hearts for someone to care enough to pray for us personally.** Both religious and nonreligious people have this longing, and we Christians would do well to remember that.

**It also taught me about the potential and power of social media.** Facebook makes it so easy. Can you imagine? A personal prayer is just one “like” away! There is no threshold lower than that! I know many of the people I’ve prayed for would not dare to set foot inside a church building, but a “like”? That’s easy. It’s doable.

**I also learned more about the power of prayer than maybe ever before.** In the weeks and months following my prayer adventure, I received many happy and reassuring messages or calls: “Yes, the diagnosis was better than feared.” “The situation was solved.” “The problem was taken care of.” “Thank you! Thank you!”

Of course, there are many people I have not heard from again. And they are probably the ones who taught me the most important lesson of all—about the need to be persistent in prayer, whether I see results and hear the happy reports or not. God is not so much into public spectacles but rather into quiet and invisible work in people’s hearts. **And when I do not hear from the people, it teaches me to be patient and to continue praying.**

I treasure the prayer lists I have from the past year. I love the stories I hear. I love the way I am much more engaged in my friends’ lives after praying for them. I care about them more now. I love going to a concert hall and listening to my favorite pianist with different ears (or, you could say, with a different heart) because I regularly lift him up in my prayers.

I have equally come to treasure these beautiful words written by Adventist Church co-founder Ellen White: “I saw that every prayer which is sent up in faith from an honest heart will be heard of God and answered, and the one that sent up the petition will have the blessing when he needs it most, and it will often exceed his expectations. Not a prayer of a true saint is lost if sent up in faith from an honest heart” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 121). 

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*Mervi Kalmus, a pastor in Estonia, opens her heart and steps out of her comfort zone to make a difference in the lives of her friends. This article appeared in Adventist Review, January 4, 2019, and on [sdadata.org](http://sdadata.org).*



# I Remember those Beans

## THE IMPACT OF HOSPITALITY

THE SLENDER, YOUTHFUL missionary's wife had prepared beans and vegetables for lunch that day. Deliciously simple, that one lunch and the happily hospitable family who served it have stuck in my memory. I had spent six months as a student missionary in the Marshall Islands, halfway around the world from my home country, and the kindness of these strangers ministered to me. The island of Pohnpei was a weekend stop on an island-hopping tour for me, and not only did someone from the local Adventist school staff pick us up, but they also invited us home for lunch.

Later that summer I was to fly to Hawaii for student-missionary orientation. Reluctant to bother people, I had decided to catch a bus from the airport and somehow find my way to the venue. I must have mentioned this to someone in passing, who told someone else, because the mission president himself was standing there smiling when I walked through the airport gate in Honolulu. He had come just for me. I was one of more than 100 student missionaries, yet he cared enough to show up and meet me. I was amazed.

### SIMPLE HOSPITALITY

One evening my husband and I had the privilege of receiving an invitation to supper at the home of a very special Adventist woman—the well-known author of *Creative Hospitality* and other books, Nancy Van Pelt. We lived in the same town as she did, and while doing evangelistic work I had met a neighbor of hers, and she invited us all to dinner. The details of the menu have long since escaped me, but I do remember that evening well. This lovely lady had obviously prepared by setting a

beautiful and bountiful table. The food was tasty and the conversation engaging. As was her custom, she took a picture of us all, making us feel that we were important to her.

Another shining example of heartfelt hospitality is an Old Testament woman who surfaces above others of her time, and evidently her hospitality was consistent. “So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food” (2 Kings 4:8). The Shunammite woman and her husband had invited Elisha so many times that they were able to see what he needed. Their creative juices started flowing: they would build an extra upper room just for Elisha. If you or your spouse travels a lot, you can well imagine how restful such a place would be to Elisha, especially in the days before cars or bicycles.

Today, people still do things like this. A young pastoral couple wanted a place for guests (particularly young church workers) to stay, so they upgraded to a two-bedroom apartment. They took the extra rent out of their offering fund.

In her childhood, famous Christian writer and missionary Elizabeth Elliot saw that her family often entertained visiting foreign missionaries. Seeing these spiritual giants and hearing their stories inspired her to go as a missionary herself, first as a single woman, and then with her husband, Jim Elliot, who was later martyred in Ecuador. This habitual hospitality had eternal results.

The simply furnished sanctuary in Shunem, with a bed, table, stool, and lamp, meant a lot to the man



of God. “To this retreat Elisha often came, thankful for its quiet peace” (Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 237). Amazingly, this woman’s spirit of hospitality returned to bless her. Elisha promised that she would have a son.

### SHOWING APPRECIATION

It’s hard to imagine Elisha being anything other than a model guest—tidy and thoughtful. “Elisha was a man of mild and kindly spirit” (White, p. 235). In our home, we have appreciated all our guests, but some stand out. Two young girls, at different times, were impeccably neat and tidy. Others took time to make friends with our children. Some willingly helped more than expected with the housework. We’ve never forgotten them.

### UNEXPECTED REWARDS

Later in the Shunammite woman’s life, hospitality paid off again. When her son died unexpectedly of sunstroke, she knew there was only one person to go to—Elisha. By faith, she mounted a donkey and headed straight for her prophet friend. *If God could create her boy, God could raise him*, she thought.

Elisha listened carefully when she arrived, for this was the woman who had shown such care for him. Her deep distress tumbled out when she saw him. She couldn’t help it. She grabbed his feet, and between her choked cries Elisha realized the problem. Shifting into high gear, he told his servant to go to the woman’s house, but the mother insisted that Elisha come too, so he did.

Alone in that upper room with the dead boy, he prayed fervently, lay down on the boy two times, and—what a miracle—the boy came back to life! Immediately our heroine fell down at Elisha’s feet in gratefulness. She was overwhelmed. Her small (to her) deed of hospitality had returned to bless her immensely. Kindness comes back. Her kindness came back a third time when, years later, because of her connection with Elisha, the king restored her land when it had been taken (see 2 Kings 8).

When I traveled in Europe, Asia, and Africa, people graciously gave me a place to sleep and many meals. I soaked up all their kindness. Now on the other end, I eagerly


make meals and beds for travelers—especially for young people—at our home. It’s my turn to pass on the kindness, my turn to pay it forward. We will always receive a blessing when we remember to entertain strangers (see Hebrews 13:2), even if we just serve beans. Simple hospitality makes life sweeter for others who need a lift, as well as for those who give it.

### ENTERTAINING DO’S

**1. Keep it simple.** You can entertain even on a shoestring. Elisha’s room was far from grand but very appreciated. Have a potluck at your house or a waffle breakfast where guests bring their waffle irons and toppings. Or just offer popcorn and fruit for supper.

**2. Fellowship is more important than furniture.** Many people don’t care how your house looks; rather, they care that you cared enough to invite them. This is especially true when you invite those who can’t invite you back, as recommended in Luke 14:14. Even if the furniture is outdated, people will enjoy being there if you keep it neat and clean and reach out to them in love. I still remember the names of the couple who invited us to lunch the very first Sabbath we visited the church that we have now attended for 20 years. Their simple hospitality encouraged us to make that our church home.

**3. You have options.** You may not want to be seen as playing favorites by inviting some and not others since you are the ministerial couple, but you still have options for hospitality. Why not extend an open invitation for anyone to come to your house for a Saturday night supper or weekly Bible study that includes food? Or try inviting smaller groups. The president’s wife at a small Adventist college invited students in small groups every Sabbath until everyone in the college had visited their home each year. If you live far from the church, ask another family to help you by bringing food to the church so you can invite the visitors and singles to eat with you after church. Most of all, ask God to impress you with whom He wants you to invite, whether preplanned or spontaneous.

**4. Do something.** Do what is manageable for you. While at public university, some other young women and I rented a house just two doors from an Adventist church. Surprisingly, no one from that church invited me to Sabbath lunch during the entire year. I therefore decided that I would cook, and I invited other single friends to eat with me so I would not eat alone on Sabbath. Now I have happy memories of those times. When you see someone who is lonely or in need or whom you feel impressed to befriend, don’t hesitate. Do something! Even small investments yield rich rewards. 

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*Heather Krick, originally from South Africa, is married to Bill, who directs literature ministries in the Pacific Union. She enjoys cooking and practicing the art of hospitality along with her two teenage daughters.*

# Drawing Close to God

IN A RECENT DEVOTIONAL READING I came across a statement that Ellen White made several times in her writings (paraphrased): God's workers are the special object of Satan's attacks, and also the recipients of God's special protection and care (see *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, vol. 5, Jan. 31, 1893, p. 67, par. 1).

Recently I pondered the question, "As pastoral spouses, do we need to care for the spiritual aspect of our lives differently from the way others do?" If so, why? Is it possible that the devil knows that when he can cause harm to a pastor or the spouse, he can "multiply" the damage throughout the congregation or the community they serve? Are we more at risk because others sometimes look to us as role models, and because we live in an "aquarium" where church demands and accompanying criticism are the price we pay for living in the limelight?

Regardless of the "why" answer, I am so thankful that we *are* the object of God's special love and protection, but obviously we are not immune to disappointment and despair—amplified by the "target" Lucifer has put on our backs! God's wonderful provisions notwithstanding, I do believe that pastoral spouses need to be that much more intentional in partnering with God in order to more readily welcome His presence in our lives.

Yet, let's be honest. Do our devotions sometimes get stale? Does our walk with the Lord at times seem to be at arm's length? At times does it feel that our prayers go unheard? Can we find ourselves going hours, if not days, with little if any time spent in communion with Christ?

How do we keep our relationship with God fresh, real, and alive? Here are some ideas from my experience and from others:

First, *ask* Jesus to grow your relationship with Him. I KNOW that He delights to give good gifts to His children—especially gifts of character and relationship. This leads into my next thought of CLAIMING His promises. There is so much power in His Word, and we can literally pray Bible promises boldly.

Another beautiful way to grow is to find other women who want encouragement in the Word and in prayer and GROW together with them. More than likely they will bless you abundantly with their thoughts, insights, and prayers. Maybe you could buy a new book that will give fresh perspective and help in your Bible study. Here are a few great resources:

- *Daughters of God*, by Ellen G. White (Review and Herald Publishing, 2007).
- *Women's Study Bible* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2014). Available at the ABC.
- *Women Living Well*, by Courtney Joseph (Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2013). Available on Amazon.



# Special Quotes

- *Pressing Into His Presence*, by Shelly Quinn (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010). Available at the ABC.
- *She Reads Truth*, plus a Bible and devotional app. Available in app store.
- *IVP Bible Background Commentary, The Old Testament* and *IVP Bible Background Commentary, The New Testament*, by Craig S. Keener (Intervarsity Press, February 3, 2014). Available on Amazon.

Or ask the Lord if He wants you to be part of a small-group Bible study. There are likely many group Bible-study options in your church.

- *Journaling with Jesus: How to Revolutionize Your Devotional Life Through the Discipline of Journaling*, by Laurie Denski-Snyman (ebook). Laurie Snyman, LMSW, September 2014. Available on Amazon. She states, “It wasn’t until I started journaling that I started to grow and think about God throughout my day.”
- *Women in the Bible and Me*, (Review and Herald Publishing, 2009). Available at the ABC.
- *Amazing Grace: A Bible Study Course* and *Surprised by Love*, both by Elizabeth Talbot (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2013). Available at the ABC.

I challenge each of you to draw close to God, and He will draw close to you. It’s a promise that I am claiming for each one of you. ■

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**Malinda Haley** is a pastor’s wife, the mother of three grown children, a maternal/infant care nurse, and—above all—His humble servant. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband, Steve, who is president of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference.

Parents, give your children love: love in babyhood, love in childhood, love in youth. Do not give them frowns, but ever keep a sunshiny countenance.

—*The Adventist Home*, p. 196

The minister’s duties lie around him, nigh and afar off; but his first duty is to his children. He should not become so engrossed with his outside duties as to neglect the instruction which his children need. He may look upon his home duties as of lesser importance; but in reality they lie at the very foundation of the well-being of individuals and of society. To a large degree the happiness of men and women and the success of the church depend upon home influence. Eternal interests are involved in the proper discharge of the every-day duties of life. The world is not so much in need of great minds, as of good men, who are a blessing in their homes.

—*Gospel Workers*, p. 204

Let the husband aid his wife by his sympathy and unfailing affection. If he wishes to keep her fresh and gladsome, so that she will be as sunshine in the home, let him help her bear her burdens. His kindness and loving courtesy will be to her a precious encouragement, and the happiness he imparts will bring joy and peace to his own heart.

—*The Adventist Home*, p. 218

One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached. Such a family gives evidence that the parents have been successful in following God’s directions, and that their children will serve Him in the church.

—*The Adventist Home*, p. 32



# WHY YOUR FAMILY MATTERS MORE THAN YOU THINK

2019 is the centenary of family ministries in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

DAVID LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW and blinked away his tears. “I’ve listened to my old ministerial colleagues. I’ve seen the pain our wives went through. I know why our children don’t come to church. We thought we were doing the right thing when we made ministry our priority, but we made a serious mistake. We neglected our important responsibility to our families.”

His fingers ruffled through the worn pages of his Bible. “Paul says when you choose a leader, ‘he must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?’” (1 Timothy 3:4, 5, NIV).

“If I could live my life over again, I would make sure my wife and children felt loved, happy, and supported,” David says. “I can see the pain I caused by my upside-down priorities. My wife left after 20 years. I rarely see my children and grandchildren. If I’d been

a better husband and father, I would have been a better pastor to my churches, and we might still be a family.”

He sighed. “Ellen White reminded us not to neglect our families. She said, ‘He who is engaged in the work of the gospel ministry must be faithful in his family life. . . . He who fails to be a faithful, discerning shepherd in the home will surely fail of being a faithful shepherd of the flock of God in the church’” (*Pastoral Ministry*, pp. 88, 89).

## **GOD FIRST . . .**

Our relationship with God is our number-one priority. “We love because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). The more we immerse ourselves in God’s love and grow our relationship with Him, the more He will inspire

and empower us to have healthy relationships with our families. Taking time to pray and experience God's love for you and others through His Word is foundational to all healthy relationships.

### ... THEN HEALTHY FAMILIES

God created humans to live together in marriages, families, and spiritual communities so they would learn how to be patient, kind, generous, and forgiving, and grow closer to His concept of unselfish love. When a pastor is intentional about nurturing loving relationships and is actively learning how to be the best spouse, parent, or friend, he or she will also be developing vital pastoral care skills. When pastors' marriages are healthy, the pastors are better able to help troubled couples. But when the pastor's family is unhappy, it is much harder to minister to struggling families. Pastors whose families are hurting are less likely to preach about the importance of healthy relationships and to organize seminars to support and enrich families. Without guidance and support, members may struggle to manage the challenges of family life, leading to broken relationships and a cycle of pain that spirals to the next generation.

Current research suggests that troubled family relationships, conflicts within the church, and a sense of not feeling cared for by the church community are the main causes of people leaving our church. Ellen White shares this insight into the important role of family relationships in creating loving churches: "The angels of God . . . will help you to make your family a model of the heavenly family. Let there be peace in the home, and there will be peace in the church. This precious experience brought into the church will be the means of creating a kindly affection one for another" (*Child Guidance*, p. 549).



### SETTING AN EXAMPLE

It's easy to put family relationships at the bottom of our to-do list. We try to reassure ourselves that everyone will be OK because we're doing God's work and He'll take care of our family. But we have an important responsibility. "Let not the heart of one connected with you starve for the want of kindness and sympathy," wrote Ellen White (*The Adventist Home*, p. 107). If aloneness wasn't good in a perfect world (Genesis 2:18), then it's much more painful in our world today. Loneliness, even in marriages, families, and churches, is a cause of physical, emotional, and spiritual pain that can be as bad for a person's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

When the pastor's family creates wise and loving boundaries around itself, it sets a positive example for other families. Organize church meetings so families can spend quality time together. Run marriage and parenting seminars during Pathfinders and other children's events to reduce the need for babysitters. Avoid meetings on Sundays and use video-conferencing to minimize time away from home.

"When I heard about the value of prioritizing my family's needs I was skeptical," said James. "So, I tried an experiment. I spent one-on-one time with each of my two kids and my wife every day for a couple of weeks. I thought it would be time-consuming and add to my stress. But it didn't. I was happier; they were happier; we had fewer arguments and better worship times. I felt more energized after I had focused on their needs for a while, and I returned to my ministry stronger and refreshed."

### TIPS FOR STRENGTHENING YOUR FAMILY

- Spend time with God, focusing on His love for you and your family. Ask Him to show you and your spouse His vision for your family.
- Talk with your family about your family strengths, as well as the areas where you could do more growing. Listen to everyone's ideas and work to implement them.



## Why Your Family Matters More Than You Think



- Be intentional about learning how to have a strong, Christ-centered marriage and how to parent your children with love. Be there for your family at the important events in their lives and at times of stress, sadness, and illness.
  - Aim for several warm connections with each person in your family every day. Make a list of the ways you could connect with each person. Plan regular dates with your spouse and children. It doesn't cost anything to take a picnic lunch and walk in a beautiful place, but it can refresh your relationships.
  - Do chores together and make them fun, so everyone feels connected and supported. Offer to help each other for 10-15 minutes a day.
  - Family mealtimes are a good way to connect with each other, share your faith journeys, and talk about important values. Download and print colorful placemats with family worship suggestions (go to [www.ted.adventist.org/family-ministries/resources](http://www.ted.adventist.org/family-ministries/resources), and scroll down the page). Have four or five meals together as a family each week. Or use video calls to join them at the table.
  - Ask yourself, "Does my wife/husband/child/parent/friend/family member feel less alone or more alone in our relationship than they did last year? What can I do to reduce their sense of aloneness? How can I be a channel of God's amazing love into their life?" J
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**Karen Holford** is director of Family Ministries for the Trans-European Division.

## Resources to Enrich Your Family

**Toucan Together**—This app is a free marriage seminar in your pocket! Explore bite-sized quizzes and videos and then share your ideas with each other.

**Couple Checkup**—Take a Couple Checkup online to assess your relationship and get great ideas for making it even better! Go to [www.couplecheckup.com](http://www.couplecheckup.com).

**Spiritual Parent Coaching**—This app, created by Pastor Daron Pratt, a family and children's ministries leader in Australia, is designed to help you grow your child's faith and strengthen your whole family. It's filled with ideas for parents, couples, and churches.

Igniter Media has created a short and powerful video to highlight the importance of church leaders caring for their family relationships. You can find it at [www.ignitermedia.com/products/7320-change-the-world](http://www.ignitermedia.com/products/7320-change-the-world).

The North American Division has produced some excellent materials to support pastoral families through their different life experiences and challenges. You can find these at the following websites:

- <http://www.nadministerial.com/2q15>
- <http://www.nadministerial.com/videos-2/>
- <http://www.nadministerial.com/spouses-resources/>

# TIPS TO SURVIVE THRIVE



## WHEN CAN WE GO TO SEE GRANDMA AND GRANDPA?

It's wonderful to have fun with your grandchildren and delight them with special gifts. Can you also draw them to you with the love of Jesus? Can they sense the Holy Spirit living in you?

### A few suggestions for grandparents:

- When your grandchildren are babies, rock them on your lap and sing happy "Jesus songs" to them. Even infant minds soak up a great deal.
- As they get older, read the Bible to them. As you read, stop and ask if they understand. If they say they don't, explain things simply, perhaps by drawing a picture or helping them act out the story.
- Pile them into bed with you and tell them character-building stories. Plan what character lessons you want to bring out and tell stories accordingly. When you can't think of a story to fit the lesson, make one up, naming the characters "A," "B," etc. (Let them know you made up these stories; they will love them!) You can teach them many things by having A do this and B do that. Don't just *tell* the stories; let them tell you what A or B did right or should have done. They are smart; they know! By making them think, the lesson is "brought home" more forcefully.
- Tell them stories of your life and perhaps of other relatives.
- Put sleeping bags on the floor by your bed after storytime for a special treat, because children like to sleep near Grandma and Grandpa.
- Let them help you make cookies, even if they do make a mess. They can also learn to help clean up afterward. Then help them deliver the cookies to people who are ill or confined to their homes. Or take the children to visit friendly elderly people so your grandchildren can learn to relate to and appreciate the elderly.
- Unless it interferes with your convictions, try to uphold your children's parenting standards for your grandchildren. Sometimes grandparents will say, "Now, don't tell your parents about this, but I'm going to let you do such and such." Doing this will encourage children to become "sneaky" and not be honest with their parents about other things. That not only undermines the parents' authority but also instills into children's minds that their parents' wisdom is faulty. And if the parents find out, they may want to restrict the time the grandchildren spend with you.
- When your grandchildren get older, help them learn to cook—boys and girls both. Teach them your recipes and help them collect other recipes.
- When they go off to academy or college, be sure to keep the lines of communication open. Besides calling, texting, and e-mailing, send them greetings/postcards and share encouraging Bible verses.
- When all the cousins get together, have them share fun and funny times of the past. Keep the memories alive!

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**Evelyn Griffin**, mother of four children and 14 grandchildren, was born in Lima, Peru, where her parents were missionaries at the time. Her educational pursuits include a BS in nursing, and an MA in religious education. She served as bible worker along with her pastor husband and was director of Family Life and Children's Ministries in the Southeast Asia Union Mission based in Singapore. She served for 20 years on the General Conference Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly Evaluation Committee and presently answers BibleInfo.com questions in Spanish. She enjoys African violets, china painting, and gardening as her hobbies.



# WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO REMEMBER?

MOST OF US, at one time or another, struggle with memory loss while trying to recall someone's name, a phone number, or where we put the car keys. Besides being annoying and inconvenient, such instances add to a pervasive fear that we may be losing mental capacity. This fear is further heightened as we become aware of the increasing occurrence of dementia and Alzheimer's disease within our close community of neighbors, friends, and family.

So exactly what is this mysterious phenomenon called "memory"? How does it work? What hinders good memory function, and can we do anything to strengthen it?

## MAKE A MEMORY

Memory making is a complex process made up of acquiring, storing, and recalling information. We are able to remember an amazing amount of information, some of which can stay in the brain's storage system all our lives. Our memories help define who we are: our priorities, our emotional make-up, our morals, our culture, our beliefs, and our abilities.



We have two different types of memory: *procedural memory* describes the way the brain remembers not

only how to do things such as playing the piano but also the memories and emotions associated with playing the piano. This is different from *declarative memory*, which is the conscious and detailed recall of specific incidents, such as what you bought while shopping last evening or what happened during a recent visit with a friend.

Different parts of the brain—including the hippocampus, where memories are stored; neurons, which send messages to each other across narrow gaps called synapses; and specialized chemicals called neurotransmitters, which facilitate the sending and receiving of messages between neurons—all work together when building and maintaining memory.



*“Your memory is the glue that binds your life together; everything you are today is because of your amazing memory. You are a data collecting being, and your memory is where your life is lived.”*

*—Kevin Horsley*

## YOUR SENSES PLAY AN IMPORTANT PART



What you see, hear, smell, taste, and feel—all contribute to the brain’s interpretation

and impression of memory. Some memories stand out more vividly than others, depending on the senses involved and the degree of emotional impact. Initially, the brain consciously registers the memory, and this is called encoding. This is not a flawless process. Sometimes we don’t feed the correct information into the brain because of a lack of concentration or emotional misinterpretation of detail. Most of the detailed data fed into our brains as we go through the day is not of major importance, and specifics can soon fade from short-term memory. We can remember that we ate breakfast yesterday but may have trouble remembering what we ate. However, we can strengthen a memory by recalling the same information again and again, such as rehearsing a Bible text or practicing a skill that involves muscular and thought coordination.

## MEMORIES CAN CHANGE

Specific details in memories of long ago can change and lose their clarity as time goes by. This is a normal part of the brain’s aging process. However, some potentially detrimental factors can affect memory function at any time:

1. Trauma to the brain from a blow to the head or the effect of a stroke.

2. Prescription and over-the-counter medications that interfere with clarity of the thought process.
3. Decreased oxygen supply to the brain during illness, while dehydrated, when exposed to poor air quality, and from shallow breathing due to a sedentary lifestyle.
4. Poor quality and quantity of sleep.



**5. Overloading the senses in a highly demanding, ultra-busy lifestyle and neglecting adequate relaxation and recuperation.**

6. Depression and debilitating stress.
7. Lack of good nutrition.

## GIVE YOUR BRAIN A BREAK

It’s normal to have moments of forgetfulness from time to time, especially when life gets complicated and busy. We can also expect some decline in memory quality as we age. Sadly, genetics and the effects of some diseases have the potential to harm or destroy memory function and ability.

But there’s good news! Research shows that healthful lifestyle habits such as those listed below are big players in the promotion of brain health and memory function. So let’s get busy:

1. **Eat less sugar.** Too much sugar in the diet can lead to many health problems, including cognitive decline and poor memory retention.

## What Was I Supposed to Remember?



### **2. Maintain normal body weight.**

A healthy body weight contributes significantly to better physical and mental function.

3. **Get your rest.** It's during sleep that the brain consolidates, strengthens, and stores memories. Adults need 7-9 hours of sleep per night for adequate overall benefit. We also need Sabbath, that one day in seven provided by our Creator, to come apart from daily activities and find peace and rest for body, mind, and spirit through worship and fellowship.
4. **Check your vitamin D level.** A low blood level of vitamin D has been associated with a number of health risks, including decreased memory function and dementia. Lack of adequate sunshine and aging can both contribute to low levels of this important vitamin. Your doctor can order a simple blood test to determine if you need a vitamin D supplement.
5. **Keep moving.** Exercise has been shown to benefit the whole body, including the brain. Even moderate exercise for shorter periods of time—especially when done outside in the fresh air—has positive health benefits across all ages.



### **6. Don't forget those fruits and veggies.**

Consuming a wide variety of healthful foods, especially fruits (particularly berries) and

vegetables, provides

the body with nutrients and vitamins that promote overall healthful benefits. And don't neglect breakfast, which is considered an important component in enhancing cognitive function right from the start of the day.

### **7. Give your brain a workout.**

Your brain can atrophy just like a muscle does when not used enough. Keep your brain functioning well by learning a new hobby or skill, reading, participating in word games, doing crossword puzzles, memorizing Scripture, joining a discussion or Bible study group, visiting a museum, studying a new language, traveling, learning a musical instrument, volunteering, and so on.

## **CONCLUSION**

So much more could be said about brain function and the memory process. It's a fascinating and inexhaustible study topic. How amazing it is that when it comes to any part of the human body, the guidelines for optimum health and function consistently go back to basic lifestyle directives given to us by a loving Creator: good nutrition, adequate rest, daily exposure to sunshine and fresh air, exercise, water, temperance choices, and most important of all—trust in God.

One more thing: Philippians 4:8 instructs us to direct our minds toward that which is honorable, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. In other words, focus our lives on making beautiful memories. J

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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.*



# God Loves Families!



ADVENTIST FAMILY MINISTRIES started exactly 100 years ago in 1919! So 2019 is a special year for thinking about families. It's a year to help make our families the best they can be! What will you do this year to grow closer as a family, and what will you do to help other families? What's special about your family? What do you do well?

## OUR FAMILY IS ....!

Thank God for your family like this: Sit in a circle and take turns saying, "Thank You, God, for our family!"

We are [say something beginning with A] because [then describe why you chose that word]." So you might start with, "Thank You, God, for our family! We are amazing because You have made us!" "Thank You, God, for our family! We are blessed because You love us and because we love each other." Continue through the whole alphabet. Write down your ideas to keep as a special poster/poem/prayer describing your family.

## FAMILY PORTRAIT

Take a fun photo of your family and put it in a frame that you can decorate. Choose a biblical blessing together and write it on the frame. Or adapt a verse, such as Philippians 1:9, and write, "May our love increase!" Talk about the blessing you have chosen and what it means.







## FAMILY RULES!

Have you seen those signs that have a list of family rules? They say things such as, "In our family we help each other, we pray together, we laugh together, we say sorry, we forgive each other, and we never stop loving each other." Sit down with your family and decide on your top 10 family rules. Arrange them in the best order, and then make a poster out of them for your family room wall. Draw one yourself or use a computer to make a smart poster. Why not make extra copies and give them to other families you know?



## PICTURE PRAYERS

Sit in a circle as a family and draw a simple picture of the person on your left. Put the person's name on the picture. Give the picture to the person you drew. Ask them to write their prayer requests and things they are thankful for around their picture. Continue passing the pictures around the circle, and write a short sentence prayer on each picture, especially about the person's prayer requests. Put the pictures where you will be reminded to pray for each other every day.

## OUR NAME'S SPECIAL!

Many people in the Bible were given special names that meant something. Do you know what your family name (surname) means? Why not give your surname a new meaning? Take the letters of your name and make a sentence that praises God or that is a blessing on your family. Here's one for my family name (Holford): Honor Our Lord Forever, O Righteous Disciples!

## ACROSTIC PSALM

Search for Bible verses, especially in Psalms, that begin with each letter of your family name. Then see if you can arrange them to make a beautiful-sounding psalm. If that's too hard, make up your own praise psalm where each verse begins with a different letter of your name.



# FAMILIES JUST LIKE OURS ...

Find a family in the Bible that has something in common with your family. If you have moved lots of times, you might choose Abraham and Sarah's family. If you have lots of children in the family, you might choose Jacob's family. If you like animals or boats, you might choose Noah's family. Or if you have a grandparent living with you, you might choose Ruth and Boaz's family. Read a story about the family that's a bit like yours and respond to their story: create a play together, draw a picture, make a model, or even take some toy animals on a boat ride together!



JACOB'S FAMILY



## EDIBLE FAMILY PICTURE

Make a portrait of your family using food. Bake gingerbread people and decorate them to look like you. Or use gingerbread cutters to cut out people-shaped sandwiches or pizza dough, and decorate them to look like you. Take a picture of your foodie family portrait, and then have fun eating all the edible people.



## REACH IN

Invite another family from your church to share a simple meal in your home. Then have a happy and creative family worship together. Choose one of your favorite worship activities from these children's pages or from a previous issue of *The Journal*. Alternatively, choose a family worship activity that you could make into a mini-kit, complete with instructions and everything you need for the worship. Make these kits to give away to other families in your church or Sabbath School class. Encourage your church to start a family worship

library filled with ideas, worship kits to borrow, DVDs, Bible games, good Bible books for children, Bible character toys, and books about family worship.



## REACH OUT

Choose a practical project that you and your family could do to bless a family in need. Go to the store together and buy them some delicious food (hint: try to find out what they like best!). Buy new gifts for the children and wrap them up. Donate some of your old clothes that are too small for you but are still good. Take the family out for a treat to a place they could never afford to go, such as a zoo, ice cream parlor, or pizza restaurant. **7**



**Karen Holford** loves having real fun with her three young grandchildren.



## Dear Deborah,

*After completing seminary, my husband and I had high hopes and big dreams about what ministry would “look like” for our family. Many years later, I can say with great disappointment that it has not turned out as I had envisioned. And my husband agrees.*

*Most evenings revolve around me cooking, taking care of the kids, helping with homework, doing housecleaning, and so forth. And you can probably guess the rest: my pastor husband is away from home making visits, doing church errands, giving Bible studies, and much, much more. He immediately answers every phone call he receives, even if we are eating dinner. He gets up early and stays up late. And, honestly, I think his joy and passion have evaporated—as have mine.*

*I’m very concerned about him, us, our family, and the ministry. I really need direction and prayer.*

*Signed,  
Dashed Hopes*

## Dear Dashed Hopes,

One of the greatest pitfalls in ministry is the illusion of being able to solve everyone’s problems. Add to that the attempt to do “everything” regarding routine responsibilities while keeping up with pastoral duties, and daily life can become overwhelming. What usually follows is family neglect, resulting in strained relationships. This can create a recipe for disaster.

Talk to your spouse about trying these ideas to avoid burnout:

1. Spend more time in prayer and the Word.
2. Focus on the positive.
3. Express gratitude.
4. Get in better physical shape.
5. Don’t compare yourself with others.
6. Have fun.
7. Commit to having the spirit of a servant.\*

Also, implement the following practices for your family:

1. Eat together as a family.
2. Plan fun family nights.
3. Worship together as a family.
4. Go to church and on vacation together.

In addition, praying for and with your spouse will create a strong spiritual bond that cannot easily be broken. And remember that showing appreciation publicly and privately can be a real boost to a spouse.

The stark realities that exist in the life of a ministerial family must be acknowledged, but with proper planning and balance, ministry can be rewarding and fulfilling. It may be that your husband already senses a need for change in your family. If not, prayerfully ask if the two of you could talk with a counselor or pastoral mentor about practical solutions.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58, KJV).

Prayerfully,  
Deborah

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\* Tips adapted from research by Thom Rainer. See <https://www.leadershipresources.org/blog/christian-ministry-burnout-prevention-signs-statistics-recovery/>.



## A RESTLESS SOUL FINDS REST:

**WHEN MY HUSBAND ASKED ME TO PRAY, EVERYTHING CHANGED.**

“I NEED YOU TO PRAY!” my husband said to me one cold January evening after supper.

I could not have been more surprised by his urgent statement. I thought I was being a good and supportive Christian wife. After all, we were at Andrews University, far away from friends and family, to fulfill his dreams. Hadn't I followed him north and endured the bitter cold so he could achieve his goals? But his request made me realize I was missing something.

As pastors' spouses know, moving is a significant part of our lives. We have all moved, or will likely move, several times during the course of our ministry. Until my husband attended seminary, however, I had not experienced such difficulty adjusting to a move. I could not come to terms with why we were there. We had had to make the decision for me to work outside the home while he was at the seminary because of our

not-so-responsible past financial decisions. It was hard. I didn't like having to leave my two young children, even though they were being cared for by a person I trusted in our own home. I was resentful, depressed, and angry, in spite of realizing that God had provided me with a very flexible and well-paying job.

Thankfully, that first year went by quickly, and my husband started his second year as a full-time student. But I still felt as if we were missing something in our relationship, and that something was missing within me.

For some time, before my husband said, “I need you to pray,” I had been refusing to think and pray about some future decisions we needed to make. I did not want this kind of lifestyle—however short it might be. I did not want to be unified in the decisions we could have made together. I did not want to accept the life we had. I was kicking and screaming all the way through.

It was the night my husband asked me to pray that I realized what was missing. I was missing a closeness that comes from praying and trusting God in my life and in my marriage. My husband needed me to be his partner in prayer. He said, "I want us to be together not only physically and emotionally, but spiritually." I thought, *How could that not already be? I believe in the Bible and all the doctrines like he does!* But I was choosing not to trust our Maker. I was choosing to go my own way and to allow strife into our home.

I had to ask myself, *What needs to happen now?*

I came up with two possibilities, which I struggled with. Should I continue to damage my marriage by my resentfulness and have an unhappy home for as long as we both could stand it, or should I trust God, pray for His guidance, and ask Him to change me? It sounds like an easy choice, but for me it wasn't. I realized that I needed to surrender. I needed to let go and tell God, "Your will be done, not mine." Why is it so hard to surrender pride and stubbornness and release control of one's life?

I felt the tugging of the Holy Spirit calling me to surrender, to make peace with my Redeemer. Once I did, I was amazed at how carefree and less stressed I was about our future. All the doubts and barriers I had experienced vanished, and God provided for all our needs. I began to appreciate the value of living with less and being happy. I also learned to trust God to open and close doors as He saw fit while guiding our lives. I began to trust God with my kids and my marriage and my finances. And I discovered what it truly meant to depend on God to provide and not to use the credit card!

These lessons were meant to be learned at the seminary, and I'm grateful that I listened before it was too late. God puts people where they need to be in order to shape their character. Am I allowing Him to do that?

I still don't know what lies ahead for my family and me, but oh! what relief and joy it is to give my life to Him! How liberating it is! One of my favorite Bible passages is Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (NIV).

How can we, as pastors' spouses, forget that Jesus can carry our burdens? He wants us to be close to Him, to trust Him, because He is the only one who knows us better than we know ourselves. He wants to make our marriages whole. He longs to unify our families. Make no mistake, I believe learning to trust God is an ongoing, lifelong process. I've taken just my first step. But I praise God for never giving up on us, His daughters and sons who are all sinners. He loves you! Will you surrender to Him? May God bless you in your marriage, family, and ministry together. 7

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**Libna Arroyo** is a school counselor. She lives in Tampa, Florida, with her husband, Jonathan. They have two children, Nolan and Katherine. Libna is the daughter of missionaries and has lived in four countries. She enjoys traveling, reading, the outdoors, and spending time with family and friends.

## MARRIED TO A PASTOR?

Discover a safe place to fellowship, ask questions and learn from others on Facebook and Twitter!

Official groups for Ministry Spouses online:

[ministerialspouses](https://www.facebook.com/ministerialspouses)
 [@ministryspouses](https://twitter.com/ministryspouses)



### *East-Central Africa Division*

Pastors, spouses, and pastors' kids met in northeast Congo in September 2018 for a ministerial council. In the plenary sessions they discussed pastoral issues and prayed for the ministry and pastoral families. During workshops, the ministerial spouses did continuing education and prayed together for one another's needs.



*Pastors and spouses gather in northeast Congo.*

### *Inter-European Division*

Jerry and Janet Page taught about prayer and spiritual life. They emphasized how the salvation of pastoral families and the explosion of spiritual and numerical growth for the church depend on leaders being filled with the Holy Spirit daily and engaging in spiritual disciplines.



*Bulgarian pastors and spouses meet at a prayer conference in September 2018.*



## Southern Asia Division

Jerry and Janet Page held prayer conferences throughout India in October/November 2018. Leaders met to strengthen their continual connection to the Lord and to learn how to conduct more united prayer meetings in their areas. They also spent much time praying together. This was an opportunity to strengthen team ministry and prepare for the upcoming TMI focus throughout India and Nepal.



Leaders from Northern India Union and Northeast India Union meet in Calcutta.



Leaders from Southeast and Southwest India unions meet in Erode, India.



Leaders from South Central India Union meet in Bangalore, India.

## Southern Asia-Pacific Division

The first Shepherdess International Training was conducted in October 2018 in Udon Thani, Thailand, alongside the region's LAR annual training. This year five pastoral wives joined in the training. The following topics were covered:

1. Shepherdess as a Leader:
  - In her home
  - In the church
  - In her job
  - In the community
2. Church Policies
3. Family Relationships
4. Conflict Management in Marriage

This year we were blessed to have Mrs. Pavini and her husband, Pastor Suradej, from Udon as our guest speakers, as well as Pastor Rungsit, former Thailand Mission president.

We also started a support group via telephone. Yearly visits to different provinces will support pastoral spouses regarding Internet connection, education levels, language barriers, and other pertinent issues.



Leaders gather for training in Thailand.



Shepherdesses meet in Udon Thani, Thailand.

# HOPE FOR

## *Today's Families*

The ideas and solutions in this book come from ancient wisdom but are as relevant as today's news.

**W**e live in challenging times. Our lives are saturated by information, activities, and senseless expectations. The stresses of modern life make healthy relationships more difficult to achieve and sustain. Couples and children live under the same roof but communicate poorly at best. Many want a strong family life but don't know how to attain it.



**Willie and Elaine Oliver** are experienced family life counselors who travel around the world to show families and individuals that healthy relationships are possible through marriage conferences, retreats, and relationship seminars. They are founders of From This Day Forward marriage conferences, Journey Toward Intimacy marriage conferences, and host a weekly family program on Hope Channel called *Real Family Talk With Willie and Elaine Oliver*.

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