

Liberty University School of Divinity

**Ministry Partners: Ten Key Characteristics
of a Healthy Marriage in Ministry**

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty University School of Divinity
In Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

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April 2016

Liberty University School of Divinity

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ABSTRACT

MINISTRY PARTNERS: THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY MARRIAGE IN MINISTRY

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Liberty University School of Divinity, 2016

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In the beginning, God created a partner for man to have as they live their lives together. This partnership was created so they could work together for the kingdom God created. There has been literature written about the unhealthiness of some marriages in ministry because the pastor has neglected his or her family for the cause of Christ. There are others who have advocated a partnership in marriage ministry where the husband and wife work together as a ministry team. This thesis project presents an understanding of the healthy characteristics couples portray as they partner together in the ministry in which God has placed them. The healthiness of the ministry marriage will be determined by the willingness of both the husband and wife to accept the call of ministry within a healthy marriage.

Word Count: 136

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to those who have meant so much to me as I have studied and worked on this project. First, I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has called me first as His child and then into His service as a servant. To my father, Preston Crain, stepfather, Paul Pfenninger, and mother Evelyn Pfenninger, who gave me life and the many opportunities to experience success in my journey of life. To my children, Jonathan, Abigail, Noah, and Jackson, who have shown unwavering encouragement through this process of higher education for me. I also want to dedicate this to my professor Dr. Charlie Davidson, whose expertise and encouragement have meant a great deal in this process. Finally, to my wife, my partner, my support system, Kelly Pfenninger. You have seen me for who I am and continued to encourage me through the thick and thin of everything. I thank God for your wisdom, your support, and your love. It is because of our life together in ministry that this project is a possibility.

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Chapter 1

Introduction The Background

Life in the pastoral ministry is difficult. The job of the pastor entails many demands on the person and on the pastor's family. Because of the many times the spouse and the children of the pastor have to make sacrifices for the sake of the ministry of the church, family life can be difficult as well. Although some children in the ministry family are too young to understand what a call to ministry is, the spouse of the pastor needs to understand what the call to ministry is and define the call to ministry in their own life.

There are many stories documented of pastors or missionaries who have sacrificed their families for the ministry of God. These laborers of God made their families suffer in their absence or if the family did go, the conditions made it extremely difficult to be a family. For the most part, these pastors loved their wives and their children; however, their devotion to and love of God was confused with their work. Many times, wives have been “expected to live a life of martyrdom – not to the enemies of the church but to her husband’s career”¹ in the ministry. This work of the pastorate in many lives took precedence over their family's life and security. In some cases, the spouse did have a sense of calling by God in the ministry and understood the nature of the call.

In other cases, the spouse did not experience the call to ministry and did not want to be a part of the ministry in which the husband or wife was engaged. These cases have been much like the businessperson who spends all his time at work and rarely is with his family. The prevailing excuse is he is doing it to provide for his family. In this case, however, the pastor’s reasoning is

¹ Paul Mickey and Ginny Ashmore, *Clergy Families: Is Normal Life Possible?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 17.

that he is doing it all for God. The pastor and his family's life is different than life in the secular business world. While any pastor is involved in what would be called the business of the church, their family has a direct impact on the life of the church as a whole. Where a man or woman engaged in running a business is a job, life in ministry is a way of life.

With this in mind, many pastors do look at the running of the church as one like a business. Much of the church business is based on factors similar to a business. These factors include the number of customers that are coming to worship each week and the amount of money that is given each week by people who are attending worship services. While these are important, these are not the only factors that should be driving the church. For example, a small, local congregation can have an even greater impact on its surrounding community than the mega church can have. Within the business model of the church, pastors will need to understand the "family function and learn to modify how they function within that structure"² in order to be effective in their ministry. It is an impossibility for the pastor to "honor God in ministry and dishonor Him in the home"³ as the business of the church is carried out according to God's directive.

History shows the minds of some pastors and missionaries did not take into account the needs and the call of their spouses. They spend a great deal of time away from home because of the work they are doing for the Lord. Their desire to spread the gospel far outweighed their family's needs. Their devotion to the Lord, which was a priority for them, was confused with the job they were doing. Many of them either left their families or just moved them to another

² Ronald Richardson, *Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor's Own Family* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 6.

³ Don Sisk, *Ten Principles for Biblical Living: Foundational Truths that Have Guided My Life and Ministry* (Lancaster, CA: Striving Together Publications, 2006), 24.

location without the input from their spouse in what they were about to engage in. Many couples “believe and live as if ministry and marriage do not fit together”⁴ In fact, some “issues on marriage receive very little attention in the professions. It is viewed as private and personal.”⁵ They feel that “the two are in conflict and one should be insubordinate.”⁶ In order to understand this conflict, one must further understand the call of God in one’s life.

The call of God is given to all who are His children, but the call of God is unique for different people. The idea of a unique call to different people should be considered in the marriages of pastors. Spouses may not have the same sense of call on their lives that the pastors are having on theirs; therefore, it seems plausible that spouses should have some call on their lives to be in ministry. This call may not be the same call as the pastor, but it is a call to be in ministry and be able to work successfully through the extra stresses that are a part of life in the ministry.

Historically, missionaries like William Carey, whose wife Dorothy and family went with him to India, experienced great difficulties after she expressed a desire not to go there. She obviously was not called to be a missionary to India with him. Carey is known and was instrumental in doing a great deal of work for the Lord in India, which is documented in many books. Unfortunately, the conditions were so bad that his family became ill. Some of their children died in India. Dorothy's "mental health deteriorated"⁷ and never recovered. They did not

⁴ Diane Langberg, *Counsel for Pastor's Wives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 15.

⁵ John Wall, *Marriage, Health, and the Professions: If Marriage is Good for You, What Does This Mean for Law, Medicine, Ministry, Therapy, and Business* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 2.

⁶ Langberg, *Counsel for Pastor's Wives*, 15.

⁷ Doreen Moore, *Good Christians Good Husbands: Leaving a Legacy in Marriage and Ministry* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004) 10.

have a “happy marriage and a nurturing home for their children while they served.”⁸ All this happened because it was William Carey's belief that "the cause of Christ took precedence over his family."⁹ Similar stories can be gleaned from C.T. Studd and David Livingstone as they left their families to do the work of the Lord.

Missionary stories are not the only ministry families who suffered for the cause of Christ. Many famous pastors have found it necessary to do their work for the Lord as their families suffered in their absence. John Wesley, who was a very influential force for Christianity, had a disastrous marriage. Wesley did believe in the responsibilities husbands should feel toward their wives and children; however, he felt that his marriage was subordinate to his work in the ministry. He wrote to his wife, "Everything which is in my power I do and will do to oblige you everything you desire, unless I judge it would hurt my own soul, or yours, or the cause of God."¹⁰ Wesley's wife did not have the commitment to ministry as he did. In Wesley's defense, he was engaged to a woman earlier in life that was called to ministry. However, for various reasons, his brother Charles broke up the relationship, and John seemed to have married his wife, Molly on the rebound thus marrying someone who was not called to support a pastor's ministry.

In contrast, George Whitfield was very busy as an itinerant preacher. He married someone who he thought would be his helpmate. His wife was Elizabeth James who accepted who she was marrying and to the call that it entailed. Though circumstances were difficult, “their marriage proved to be acceptable to both of them.”¹¹ Still, Whitfield held the same ideals of

⁸ Ronald Kotesky, *Missionary Marriage Issues: Marriage or Ministry?*, accessed July 6, 2015, www.missionarycare.com/ebooks/Missionary_Book.pdf.

⁹ Moore, *Good Christians Good Husbands*, 10.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 65.

ministry verses marriage as Wesley did. He believed in a strong marriage and that one should not neglect his family; however, this did not always reflect in the amount of time he spent with his family. Still, Elizabeth Whitfield was involved in George's ministry, and she understood that call to ministry, working to that end for the cause of Christ.

One could argue these preachers and missionaries were from a different time and that marriages were different than they are now. Many believe that society has changed and evolved and so has the work place including life in the ministry. Further study shows this not to be the case. Although the divorce rate is not as bad as much of society, a recent study showed "thirty-eight percent of pastors being divorced or in the process of divorce."¹² The reason for the divorces in ministry families can be attributed to the calling of the spouse in ministry. The spouse of a pastor can have a direct impact on ministry, "one who fully shares his or her spiritual aspirations and is willing to make the necessary sacrifices."¹³ The difficulty arises when the pastor has a calling by God in ministry, and the spouse does not feel that same call. Many pastors have found the "subject of marriage and ministry one that has never been addressed"¹⁴ in the partnership between a husband and wife.

Pastoral families face all the common issues of the normal everyday family. The work of the pastor is never ending, and the stresses of the church become part of the family atmosphere as well. The calling of the pastor is an important one, and the calling of his or her spouse is as important and should be considered for the health of the family as well as the health of the ministry itself.

¹² Dr. Richard J. Krecir, *Statistics on Pastors*, accessed July 7, 2015, www.intothyword.com, 2007.

¹³ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980), 57.

¹⁴ Bob Burns, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 3160, Kindle.

Biblically, God joined man and woman to be partners by saying they would be joined together by becoming “one flesh.”¹⁵ Genesis points out that the wife is to be a helper and, in this case, a helper in ministry. Aquila and Pricilla were always mentioned together in the Bible when ministry was spoken of them. The Bible says, “they made their living together”¹⁶ Not every husband and wife can work together as Pricilla and Aquila did, yet there is a need for pastors and their spouses to be able to work together to a certain extent in the kingdom work. Someone who is not ministry minded and is married to someone who is a pastor will make life difficult, to some extent, in dealing with ministry.

Paul, in some of his letters, writes about the relationship of a husband and wife in ministry. The spouse of an elder in biblical times, was his wife. In today’s society, a spouse of a pastor can be a husband or wife. However, Paul’s suggestions to husbands and wives still apply. When writing to Timothy, Paul explained that an "overseer must manage his own household well."¹⁷ He knew the importance of the family of the pastor on the church itself as they minister together. The difficulties of an unmanaged house coupled with the difficulties in ministry can make relationships strained in the house and will often spill over to the relationships in the church. If a strained relationship exists in the family of a pastor, it will become difficult for the pastor to minister. If the pastor does not have the spousal support necessary, it will be difficult to minister effectively to a congregation.

¹⁵ Genesis 2:24; unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are from The English Standard Version of the Bible, 2001.

¹⁶ Acts 18:3.

¹⁷ I Timothy 3:5.

Statement of the Problem

Ministry in the church takes a great deal of time and effort. Unfortunately, the time taken in ministry for the pastor also takes time from the spouse and family. Many pastors mistake the belief that there will be a time when ministry will become easier by the season or by hiring extra staff. They also make the mistake of believing their job will not affect their family. Loyalties to the family and church unfortunately, become conflicted between husband and spouse. As with many in the world, pastors sometimes forsake time with the family for the sake of the gospel. The family suffers, not for the sake of God as the pastor believes, but for the sake of his or her job. In these marriages, the spouse may not be called like the pastor to be in ministry. The spouse may see this as a job and not a ministry.

Much of the dilemma described is dependent on the call to the Gospel ministry. First, it is important for the pastor to feel the call of God on his life for the work of vocational ministry. If the pastor does not feel this call, he has no business being in ministry. Ministry without the call of God on one's life can be disastrous. In fact, Paul Tripp states, "If the pastor's heart is not in the right place, all the knowledge and skill can make him dangerous."¹⁸ Without the call into ministry, the ministry can also have the dangerous result through the spouse. The spouse who is not supportive or does not want to be a part of ministry can hamper the work of the pastor as well as hamper the work of the church itself. Without God, ministry is godless and will not be dependent on God's direction. God calls His children to do certain things in certain places. No matter where the pastor is moved to, the family will go as well; therefore, the call of God should extend to both pastor and spouse in ministry.

¹⁸ Paul D. Tripp, *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 62.

Since the family of the pastor is involved in the church where the pastor is shepherding, there should be a call on the spouse as well. Unfortunately, children typically are not old enough to understand a call to ministry and are thrust into the environment of ministry. The spouse, however, should understand what the call of God is and the impact it will have on the relationship between husband and wife. Sometimes the spouse does not feel the call to ministry like the vocational pastor does. This can and will affect the health of the marriage and the health of the church. The church is dependent on its pastor for many things. The church also depends on the spouse of the pastor for a certain amount of stability.

Paul, writing to Timothy states, “Wives should be dignified, not slanderers, sober minded, faithful in all things”¹⁹ describing the actions of the ministry spouse. Paul is drawing a correlation between a strong family life and the ability to minister to the local church. Paul can only see the elder who “manages his own household well”²⁰ as one who can effectively lead the church. Thus, it is imperative to see the importance of the spousal call to ministry as it relates to serving the church as well.

Since the pastor’s family is an integral part of the church, there needs to be the presence of a partnership between the pastor and spouse in ministry. The pastor and the spouse must work together in and through the ministry. Although the spouse has a different role and calling than the pastor, these roles and calling are a partnership in their ministry together. Even so, a “calling bears sacramental imprint”²¹ which should affect how one sees himself or herself in God's plan. The call of God on the spouse as it relates to the pastor’s call is a needed discussion. This call

¹⁹ 1 Timothy 3:11.

²⁰ 1 Timothy 3:4.

²¹ Stefan Ulstein, *Pastors Off the Record: Straight Talk About Life in the Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 226.

from God is a “test of emotional and spiritual security.”²² Through understanding this call, ministry marriages will be better equipped to navigate through the difficulties that come with being in the ministry.

The church should also be aware of the difficulties associated with ministry. Many times, the ministry family is put in a “fish bowl” for all to see. This can make the church have a negative impact on the family. The freedom to be themselves in Christ and not the perceived nature of what the church thinks the pastor’s family should be like is essential. There should be a certain respect of the family’s needs. The spouse should be aware and willing to be a part of the ministry life: the good and the bad.

There are many books that have been published on the role of the wife in the ministry of the church. These books are mainly written from the aspect of the wife's role and duty in the confines of their ministry and the support of her husband and not as much as a partnership in ministry. Today, there are numerous husbands who are spouses of pastors. Their role in the ministry is just as important as a female spouse’s is. Understanding the nature of this partnership will bring about an understanding of the health of a ministry marriage as it relates to the health of the church itself.

This project will examine the need for the partnership between the pastor and spouse as they minister in the local congregation. The question will be answered, “What does the healthy marriage look like in the context of the vocational ministry family?” The answer given will attempt to give suggestions for the pastor and spouse to use to develop a strong ministry marriage.

²² Mickey and Ashmore, *Clergy Families*), 33.

Statement of Limitations

In evaluating the necessary elements for a pastor and spouse partnership in ministry, the author cannot address every aspect of ministry. This thesis will investigate key elements necessary for pastors and spouses to become a partnership in their ministry together. The discussion will center on the importance of the husband/wife relationship as they minister to the local congregation. There will also be five key limitations addressed during this project.

The first limitation is the inability to create a how-to manual for all pastors and spouses. God has created people uniquely different. The degree of use for couples will need to be determined by each couple. However, it is important to define a pastor's spouse as it is used in this project. In history and in certain denominations, the office of pastor has mainly been male with the spouse being female, today's society has seen changing roles. For the purposes of this project, a pastor can be male or female while the spouse can be male or female as well. Furthermore, when referring to pastor or pastor's spouse, these titles can include the senior pastor and spouse or anyone who has a vocational position of leadership in a church and his or her corresponding spouse.

Second, this project is not bound by denominational rules and regulations. The research is taken from a cross section of denominations, thereby affording differing ideas about the nature of a pastor/spouse partnership. Because of the nature of differing denominations involved in the project, great care will be taken for guidelines to be biblically based.

Third, the author is only addressing the historical implications from how the pastor/spouse partnership has worked in the past. The subject of this project is how the effective pastor/spouse partnership works. The project will show through the research what this effective partnership looks like and how it helps the health of the congregation.

Fourth, this project will not guarantee a healthy church atmosphere. There are many other factors pertaining to the health of a church. While the pastor/spouse relationship does have a strong effect, this subject is not the only effect on church health. Further, the opposite is true as well. A healthy church does not always imply a healthy pastor/spouse relationship.

Fifth, this project defines a biblical marriage as being between husband and wife. Due to the nature of society, marriage has become same-sex, in some instances. In some cases, some in ministry can be defined as same-sex. However, this project will only deal only with male/female relationships which is the biblical model of marriage. The only difference in role will be if the pastor in the relationship is male or female.

Theoretical Basis

The book of Acts is known as the beginning of the church age. This church age was instituted as Christ told his followers, "you will be my witnesses"²³ throughout the world. As the church began to grow, it became much like an atmosphere of a family. In Acts 2:42-47, Luke explains how close this community of believers were and how they came to depend on each other and add to their numbers.

As with any family, in order for it to function properly, there needs to be someone who is at the head of the family. Jesus Christ should be the head. The under shepherd leader who is appointed by the church also leads the church family as the Holy Spirit leads. At the beginning of the church age, this function was filled by the apostles. They were responsible for teaching and being role models for the church. This family atmosphere was very important for the church as it continued to grow. Many roles were assigned for males and females as they taught their children

²³ Acts 1:8.

and younger adults. Those who were new Christians needed to be discipled, so they could grow in their faith and become more like Jesus. Even though people took on roles of teaching and discipling, it still needed that under shepherd to guide and lead them. Some of these leaders such as Aquila and Priscilla or Peter were married. Some felt no need to marry.

This project focuses on the role pastors and their spouses have ministering together as they work within the local church. The focus is the partnership of the two as they work for a healthy marriage and how this healthy marriage works within the call of each person in the work of the local church body. The reason it is assumed both pastor and spouse are needed is for the very same reason it is essential for the individual family to have the influence of both the mother and father. In ancient times, “most Christian writers assumed that really serious Christians were single.”²⁴ Christian writers assumed the only way the clear devotion to God could happen was by being single. One might ask, “Can the church function with the influence of just the pastor?” While the answer to that question might be obvious, it is important to understand the influence and benefit of the healthy marriage and partnership of the pastor and spouse on the church. There is danger in this endeavor. Both pastor and spouse can “become so deeply involved in the life of the church,”²⁵ that the church can take away from the relationship in the marriage. Originally intended, the marriage is for “two fallen people who are reaching out to Christ together”²⁶ as they seek His will for their lives.

²⁴ Gary L. Thomas, *Sacred Marriage: What if God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 249.

²⁵ Donna Sinclair, *The Pastor's Wife Today* (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1981), 29.

²⁶ Aida Spencer, *Marriage at the Crossroads: Couples in Conversation About Discipleship, Gender Roles, Decision Making and Intimacy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 18.

This investigation benefits both the local church and missionaries as they experience the call of God on their lives to serve in their respective places. Because of the essence of ministry work, the individual call of both people is important to consider. The church needs and wants to see both the pastor and spouse have a presence in the church. This arrangement will look different according to the individual gifts of each person, but the importance will be seen. Still, there is a need for “good dynamics within the pastor’s family”²⁷ because “long and healthy pastorates are often made possible”²⁸ by it. The struggles in the pastor’s home can have a direct effect on the church’s atmosphere and the way the church ministers to its community.

Statement of Methodology

This thesis project is approached through research. The type of research used will include resources such as books, journals, articles, and the conducting of surveys to pastors and spouses. There is some historical data documenting the role of women in the church as well as the role of her spouse in the church. Exploration of this topic will help the pastor and spouse understand the role as a couple in the function and health of the church body. Both the pastor and spouse will have information to help create the bond necessary to serve the church more effectively.

This project will use biblical perspectives to understand the power of the family on a group of people. This project will also answer the following questions: What is the ministry partnership between pastor and spouse? What is the call of the spouse in ministry? How involved should the spouse be in determining the call to a new place of service? How involved should the

²⁷ David Keck, *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors: Covenant Expectations for Thriving Together* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 149.

²⁸ Ibid.

spouse be to the interview process? How involved does the spouse need to be in the church ministry?

A survey was sent to pastors and their spouses to discover the impact they can have partnering together in the local church. A separate survey for each pastor and spouse was conducted. The survey crossed denominations in that there is not a specific Christian denomination that has been targeted for review. The survey sought to find a need for a partnership in ministry between a husband and wife whether the role of pastor was fulfilled by the husband or wife. Within the confines of the surveys, there is no distinction between male and female. The only distinction made is between pastor and spouse. Much of the discussion will come from the observations from the survey.

This survey was designed to provide information and thoughts from those who are in actual ministry situations. The questions were designed to make the participants think about their roles in the family and in the church as a pastors and as the pastors' spouses. Some questions were designed so the pastors could reflect on their perceived as well as actual roles. Spouses were given that same opportunity as well. Pastors and their spouses each answered separate questions. Questions asked are provided in Appendix A.

This thesis will suggest fundamental characteristics present in a healthy ministry marriage as the partnership serves the local church. The proposed design for the project is laid out in chapter one, the introduction, three chapters as the body, and chapter five, the conclusion. The introduction seeks to highlight the urgency of discussing the need for ministry partnership between pastor and spouse as they serve the local church. This overview will examine the relevance of the pastor position as it is intended for more than a job, but a ministry. Why this subject is a problem in ministry marriages and how this affects the local church will be included.

Chapter two will examine the characteristics of a call to ministry. The definitions of the call to ministry as it pertains to the pastor and the spouse will be explored. Perspectives, which are geared toward providing answers and solutions for those who are having difficulties in this area, will be discussed. This will encourage open dialog between pastor and spouse in their roles in the local church ministry. All people who call themselves Christians have a call on their lives. Some have the higher calling of vocational ministry on their lives. While the spouse may not have this call of vocational ministry, there is still a special calling as a spouse. Among the exploration in this chapter will be the idea of the call of God upon one's life to be able to partner with the spouse who has been called to vocational ministry. This call will be discussed in the pastor's life as well as the spouse's life and how these calls by God can fit and work together.

Chapter three will analyze the data collected for a clear understanding of the relationship between pastors and their spouses. The data will help to develop a baseline for pastors and their spouses so they can see what is necessary for them to have a healthy ministry marriage as it pertains to leading a healthy congregation. The data is actual data collected from those who are in actual ministry. This is real world data, which compares what is thought to be the need for ministry partnership and what actually is ministry partnership. The analysis will include a perceived look at ministry in marriage from the standpoint of the pastor and the actual role of marriage in ministry from the standpoint of the spouse.

Chapter four will offer guidelines for the pastor and spouse to consider when contemplating a healthy relationship in ministry. These guidelines will be based on the data collected through books, journal articles, and data gained through the survey of pastors and spouses. This is a chapter of awareness, which offers tips and guides to follow. This is not a

“how-to” project, but it answers the question of what a partnership between pastor and spouse looks like. The theological perspective of the pastor and spouse will be discussed as well.

The fifth chapter serves as the conclusion and provides the implications for ministry families when guidelines are put into practice. Putting these guidelines into effect in the ministry family may change lives. The call to ministry may be different in the life of the pastor and spouse, and, therefore, attitude and focus may need to change for both persons involved. Deep soul searching may need to happen in both the pastor and spouse in the process of decisions made so the relationship between pastor and spouse can be stronger thereby being more effective in the ministry in which God has called them both to be a part. This conclusion chapter also addresses the implications of the pastor/spouse relationship in the church and how that relationship encourages and models a healthy church family model. The church in itself is a family, and the need for a model of a strong family is paramount. The decisions and implications of a life in ministry is one that should carefully be considered. In most cases, the pastor is the one who is called to the vocational ministry; however, as will be shown, this has definite implications for the family and especially the spouse of the pastor. The pastor’s spouse should be thought of as “helpmate, associate, co-pastor, or lifetime vocational associate”²⁹ in order for the life of the ministry family to be effective leading the local church. Therefore, the call of the spouse will also need to be considered as part of the process of any decision.

Review of Literature

A brief review of literature will demonstrate the importance of giving attention to the ministry partnership between a pastor and his or her spouse. The literature review will show a

²⁹ Sinclair, *The Pastor's Wife Today*, 27.

need for the definition of the pastor and spouse as they minister together in a healthy relationship and healthy church.

Books

An interesting book about the subject of ministry in the family is *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Striving*,³⁰ by Bob Burns, Tarsha Chapman, and Donald Guthrie. This book provides insight into the needs of pastors as they struggle with being in the ministry. In this book, the authors identify stressors with which a ministry family struggles. These struggles are common in the ministry family because they deal with the normal stressors of any household as well as ministry stressors. The book identifies these stressors as important in the lives of pastors and their families because they must be dealt with in the healthy family. Suggestions are given so that pastors and their families can begin to survive and thrive in their environment.

Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry,³¹ by Paul Tripp, examines the unhealthy culture that surrounds church leaders, which affects their well-being and effectiveness as they serve God in the church. The book examines the dangers of forgetting who God is and who the pastor is. The pastor who reads this book will be forced to rethink his calling and how it affects those who are around. It will further allow pastors to regroup and put emphasis where emphasis should be put when it comes to ministry.

³⁰ Bob Burns, *Resilient Ministry*.

³¹ Paul D. Tripp, *Dangerous Calling*.

Hearing God's Call: Ways of Discernment for Laity and Clergy,³² by Ben Johnson, helps the reader determine if a calling, is truly from God. Through the stories in this book, Johnson explores various aspects of what the call of God is so that believers may respond appropriately. The book seeks to give spiritual insight and advice when one is attempting to understand what God calls His people to do.

The book *The Pastor's Family: Shepherding Your Family Through the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*³³ provides insight into authors Brian and Cara Croft's life in the ministry. While they do not claim to be experts in the field, they do provide helpful guidance and experience in ministry. The authors show how they have overcome the struggles of being a pastor, pastor's wife, and dealing with children while in the ministry.

An older book, *Priorities in Ministry*,³⁴ by Earnest Mosley, provides insight into the minister's priorities in life. These priorities help shape an understanding of what the life of the pastor should be like. Although written in 1976, the book contains principles to which every pastor or anyone in ministry should adhere. The author describes what each priority should be and deals with the management of these priorities. Ministry and ministry families have problems because they have not learned to prioritize their lives properly. Of most importance here is understanding the difference between making God first and not making your ministry position first.

³² Ben Johnson, *Hearing God's Call: Ways of Discernment for Laity and Clergy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002).

³³ Brian Croft and Cara Croft, *The Pastor's Family: Shepherding Your family through the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

³⁴ Earnest Mosley, *Priorities in Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1978).

The premise of the book *Boundaries*³⁵, by Henry Cloud and John Townsend, is the boundaries a person needs to set in one's life to define who they are and who they are not. Boundaries need to be set in all areas of life so one can prioritize one's life. Boundaries must be set in all areas of life such as spouses, family, friends, work, and the individual person.

Another book, similar to the above is *Margin*,³⁶ by Richard Swenson. Like the previous book, this book describes the space that exists between a person and the limits in his or her life. The author is a medical doctor who believes one must reevaluate life and determine the value one can have with simplicity and rest.

Michael Wilson and Brad Hoffman's book *Preventing Ministry Failure*³⁷ provides an insight into the problem and complications involved in the ministry. Family is the most important part of the life of any individual, especially for the pastor. With the rigors of ministry life, the pastor must learn to continue to have intimate times with his family and to set up boundaries so that the family can be protected against not setting the right priorities.

William Harley's *His Needs, Her Needs*³⁸ describes how a couple can affair-proof their marriage. The husband and wife in any marriage have both physical and psychological needs that need to be met by the spouse. Understanding these needs and beginning to fulfill these needs will

³⁵ Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Boundaries: When to Say Yes and How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).

³⁶ Richard Swenson, *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2004).

³⁷ Michael Todd Wilson and Brad Hoffmann, *Preventing Ministry Failure* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007).

³⁸ Willard F Harley Jr., *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2011).

help marriage to become stronger and better equipped to be partners not only in life but also in ministry together.

An interesting perspective on marriage and ministry is in the book *Good Christians, Good Husbands*³⁹ by Doreen Moore. This book gives an account of three well-known Christian leaders: John Wesley, George Whitfield, and Jonathan Edwards. These three men were passionate about their work for the gospel. The focus of the book is whether they balanced or did not balance their whole lives. It is interesting to read how Wesley and Whitfield equated their commitment to Christ with their ministry and put their work before their families. Edwards found family to be an important aspect of his life. The author summarizes the book by expressing some lessons that can be learned by these three couples' lives.

*Marriage and Ministry: A Strong Marriage Nurtures Effective Ministry*⁴⁰ is a booklet the Christian Reformed Church authored as a strengthening tool for pastors and their spouses. Several pastors collaborated together to write this training tool for the denomination. Each chapter focuses on various issues a couple in ministry may have and possible solution they may have to deal with these issue. A helpful part of this manual is the addition of resources in each chapter and a bibliography at the end. Although the manual is denomination-specific, the appendix provides checklists for pastors and churches as they try to find answers to the problem of balance between church and family.

Couples, as a whole, experience tension and conflict in their relationships. Couples in ministry have the added tension of dealing with the church. *Covenant Marriage*,⁴¹ by Gary

³⁹ Moore, *Good Christians, Good Husbands*.

⁴⁰ Eugene Peterson, ed., *Marriage and Ministry: A Strong Marriage Nurtures Effective Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Reformed Church, 2008).

⁴¹ Gary Chapman, *Covenant Marriage: Building Communication and Intimacy* (Nashville, TN, B&H Publishing, 2003).

Chapman, shows couples how they can be successful in marriage with two important elements. Chapman regards communication and intimacy as the elements necessary for a couple to experience the oneness which only God can provide.

Os Guinness's book *The Call*⁴² further develops one's understanding of the call God places on one's life. The author deeply explores the call one has on his life and how, through the call that He places, one can find fulfillment. Pastors and spouses would benefit from this book as they seek to understand the call of each individual but also as a couple.

From a psychologist's perspective, Diane Langberg provides *Counsel for Pastor's Wives*.⁴³ This book offers answers to questions the author states are often asked. It can be used for any pastoral spouse as they deal with the rigors of pastoral ministry. The author tries to help those spouses who are hurting as they struggle in ministry with their spouses. The book is fashioned in a question-answer format, so readers can find the questions pertaining to them in particular.

In the book *Sacred Marriage: What If God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy*,⁴⁴ Gary Thomas believes marriage is a spiritual discipline, which allows followers to learn to be deeper in love with God. Through marriage, God will reveal His purpose in the lives of those who believe. Furthermore, through the marriage, couples can be the salt Jesus Christ told His followers they should become.

⁴²Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003).

⁴³ Langberg, *Counsel for Pastor's Wives*.

⁴⁴ Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*.

David Keck deals with the issue of a supportive congregation in his book *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors: Covenant Expectations for Thriving Together*⁴⁵. This book helps congregations and pastors communicate together as they strive to thrive together. Both the church and pastor must communicate expectations for one another, so they may support each other. Through this guide, the congregation can begin to understand the life of a pastor and his family, and pastors can better understand the congregation to which they are ministering.

Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites and Other Lies You've Been Told,⁴⁶ by Bradley Wright, dispels many of the statistics and news that has been heard in the media lately. The world has been seeing bad news about the fall of Christian leaders. Many of these leaders are from large churches and harm the witness of the Christian church as a whole. Thus, many statistics about Christians and Christian leaders are published as evidence of a problem. Although there are many difficulties in the Christian church today, the author finds many of these statistics to be wrong and that the news is better than is being portrayed.

Articles

*The Role of the Pastor's Wife: What Does the Bible Teach*⁴⁷, by Leschenne Rebuli and Kevin Smith, attempts to find a biblical basis for the pastor's wife. Although this is written in that from a wife's perspective, the subject matter can also be seen from any spouse's perspective. Interestingly, the Bible, in the author's view, has no prescription for the role of a spouse. The

⁴⁵ Keck, *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors*.

⁴⁶ Bradley Wright, *Christians are Hate-filled Hypocrites and Other Lies You've Been Told: A Sociologist Shatters Myths from the Secular and Christian Media* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2010).

⁴⁷ ⁴⁷ Leschenne Rebuli, *The Role of the Pastor's Wife: What Does the Bible Teach?* accessed July 6, 2015, www.sats.edu.za/userfiles/RubiSmith_PastorsWife.pdf.

spouse is just like any other person of God in the church. The spouse is to support the pastor in any way he or she can.

Thesis

Debra Benoit wrote a thesis entitled *The Changing Role of the Pastor's Wife in Today's Evangelical Church*.⁴⁸ In it the author explores the changing role of the pastor's wife in today's world. She develops an understanding of what the pastor's wife's role is within the family, church, and outside of the church. The author's writing helps the reader begin to understand the world of the pastor's wife.

Biblical Foundations

It is evident from the previous literature review that there is great importance for the pastor as well as the spouse in the call of the ministry family. The scriptures are not clear about the duties and call of the spouse in ministry; however, in this age, there is a certain amount of expectation for the spouse in ministry. Scripture is explicit in describing the relationships between husband and wife and their shared responsibility. How do these work in ministry, and how does the call of the pastor correlate with the call of the spouse?

The call of God is important to the believer. God first calls His people to have a relationship with Him. God also calls His people to special service into the ministry. In the Old Testament, Isaiah and Jeremiah received the call from God to serve. Although they had different experiences, they were called by God to preach and bring a word to the people of God. They were both called to warn the Israelites of what was to come as Israel continued to disobey the Lord.

⁴⁸Benoit, "The Changing Role of the Pastor's Wife in Today's Evangelical Church," DMin Project, Liberty University School of Divinity, 2010.

Jesus began calling those to follow Him in ministry in the Gospel of Luke. Peter and Andrew's encounter with Jesus in 5:10 serves as a calling to follow Him and join Him in ministry together. Women also experienced the call of God in their lives. Mary experienced this call when she was visited by an angel in the first chapter of Luke. This call was to carry and give birth to the Son of God. In Acts 1:8, Jesus further explains to His disciples the experience they will have when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. They will feel God's calling from the Holy Spirit to minister in many ways. This Spirit will help them establish the church age. This same Spirit speaks to those who believe even today.

Further the call is extended to the Great Commission in the Gospel of Matthew. This call is a call to action in 28:19-20 to make disciples, baptize, and teach. This call of God is a general call to the church so that people would be called to Him as their Savior. This call is for all people to share the Gospel.

This project is about the relationship of the call of God and the married couple who are or are not called to ministry. God has designed a relationship for male and female to become one in their relationship together. The first example of two people's relationship is found in Genesis 2. The woman came from man. The text explains that the two also became one flesh. They are as one. The concept of being one implies the need for the couple to understand the nature of being partners in their relationship. This partnership should be developed in all aspects of life.

Although there are not many examples of couples working in ministry together from the Bible, the Bible does give a couple of examples of the ministry of husbands and wives. Isaiah called his wife a prophetess in 8:3. It could be inferred that they were in ministry together since they both served. In the New Testament, Priscilla and Aquila worked in the ministry together. They served together as missionaries to several countries. They were a married couple moving

from Jewish to Roman to Greek to Asian cultures serving as needed with Paul (Acts 18, Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, 2 Timothy 4). Priscilla and Aquila are always mentioned together in scripture, and they worked together as partners in ministry.

There are passages dealing with the relationship between husband and wife. These deal with the hierarchy of the family structure. Ephesians 5:22-31, Colossians 3:18-21, and 1 Peter 3:1-7 detail how husbands, wives, and their families partner together not only in their church lives but also in their lives outside the church. These scriptures give the detail of God's design in the marriage, not as husband over the wife, but as a hierarchy so the partnership can work together as one (1Peter 5:3).

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he expressed the need to determine how church leaders were to act, but he goes further and explains how their spouses should act as well (1 Timothy 3:2-13). Titus 1:5-16 further explains Paul's qualifications for elders. Paul also expresses to Titus the need for women and men to train the younger men and women how to act (Titus 2).

The husband and wife should take heed to Paul's instruction in Roman 14:1-15:7 by not causing another to stumble as they minister together. The couple should lead in the example Christ gave them. Paul continues this idea in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Becoming a servant to all so that some may be won for Christ was important to Paul. By becoming all things to all people, Paul became an example to others so they might share in the blessings of Jesus Christ with Paul and other Christians.

Chapter 2

The Call of God A Biblical View of the Call

The early church had an advantage when determining the call of God. The apostles had spent time, knew, and received instruction directly from Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself was with this community at the beginning of its establishment. He promised them the Holy Spirit would come to guide them all, and they would “receive power from the Holy Spirit as well.”⁴⁹ One after another, members of this group were called upon to share in the ministry of Jesus.

Each of the apostles could tell stories of how they were called to serve Christ. Peter and Andrew, in the Gospel of Luke, were fishing when Jesus calls upon them to be “catching men.”⁵⁰ Peter had an encounter with Christ that day that made him change his vocation as a fisherman and become a minister. Paul had an extraordinary experience as his call. Paul at the time, hated Christians. In fact, he felt it necessary to get rid of the believers in Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts, Luke tells his readers that Paul was there when Stephen was stoned to death. But this hater of Christ became a lover of Christ and of Christians. He encountered Christ on the road to Damascus where he was converted and called to ministry. It was an encounter he would never forget. Paul’s experience is a little closer to today as people understand their call because his calling was confirmed by Ananias. Today, a way people confirm their call is through another person. Neither Peter nor Paul questioned the call of God in their lives. After they had encountered Christ, they knew what they needed to do for the Kingdom. The calls they received were to serve Jesus with all their hearts, souls, and minds. Ananias also answered the call of

⁴⁹ Acts 1:8.

⁵⁰ Luke 5:10.

Christ by ministering to Paul as Paul's sight returned. Ananias first refused because he knew who Paul was, but Christ assured him that Paul was a changed man.

It was not just men received a call from God. The Virgin Mary was not prepared for her encounter with Gabriel. She asked questions about her coming pregnancy which were answered to her satisfaction. She said, "I am the servant of the Lord."⁵¹ This invitation to service would have meant being put down and put out in that society. Being pregnant and unmarried would have not been popular in ancient Israel, yet she followed what God was asking her to do.

The New Testament does not contain the only examples of the call of God on one's life. God worked through His people in the Old Testament as well. There are several good examples of people who were called to do the work of God and accepted the call.

Moses was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. He did not want to do it because he did not feel he was able to. He used his stuttering as an excuse. Still, God knew He could use Moses. Moses was not perfect in his leadership. He made mistakes. He also had murdered someone. God continued to reassure him that he could lead the people of Israel. The Bible records all the things Moses did for the Lord in some of the most difficult times.

Isaiah experienced the calling of God as well. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah's experience is one that can only be described as awesome. His experience with God is one in which he was in the very presence of God. He "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up."⁵² This call is one of a volunteer call to ministry. When one is called by God, God reveals one's true nature. Isaiah did not feel worthy to be in the presence of God. However, one must remember there is grace and

⁵¹ Luke 1:38.

⁵² Isaiah 6:1.

forgiveness. Isaiah accepted the call and God used Isaiah because he was more than willing to be used.

Jeremiah's call was different from Isaiah's. Jeremiah offered excuse after excuse why he could not be a prophet. God brushed all those excuses aside and touched Jeremiah's heart. God had called him to preach, and he could not keep from doing it. In fact, after his first sermon, people tried to kill him. When his book was burned by the king of Judah, God told him to write it again. Jeremiah continued to be the prophet God called him to be despite the circumstances he was in.

The call of God is strong in His people when they accept His call. But the experience of the call of God is different for each person. In the examples above, God called each man in a different and very meaningful way. Neither man was perfect. They had difficulties in their lives, but they continued to preach, teach, and minister as God called them to do.

Just as God called those in the Old and New Testament to a relationship with Him and to serve Him, He is still calling people to Him who seek His face. This call of God, as has been seen, is a personal encounter. Each of the people mentioned above had an encounter with God where they needed to answer the call to serve Him without question. Their call depended on their personal relationship with God and Jesus Christ. In a call, a person needs to submit to a "received ministry"⁵³ where God is the One who receives the glory for everything that is done in the ministry. The ministry is the use of gifts God has given. The use of those gifts in ministry should not encourage the applause of other people. God should be the focus entirely and given the glory for anything accomplished.

⁵³ O.S Hawkins, *The Pastor's Guide to Leading and Living* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 4.

The call of God is also a public encounter. One who is called should consult others in the questioning of the call. The call one thinks God is leading them to must be understood so one is not blind to the difficulties that can occur in the life of ministry, which is why questions can be asked for clarification. Guidance can be found in those who can distinguish the will of God. If someone is struggling with the call of God, this call needs to be shared with others so the potential pastor may be able to clarify this as a call on one's life. Just as a person when making a major decision needs to counsel with someone, the contemplation of the call needs the counsel of wise and godly people.

When one is wondering about the call on his or her life, it is important to share, question, explore the Bible, and pray to make sure this is what God wants. When one is contemplating the call, it is necessary to be patient and wait on God to clarify and confirm the call. To jump into something that ultimately is not the call of God is dangerous for one's life, one's family, or anyone who may be affected by a ministry that might not be what God intended.

The Call of God on One's Life

The call of God is a personal, humbling experience. The call itself is "instituted and initiated"⁵⁴ by God. People are called, chosen by God Himself, to carry out His work. When a person answers the call of God, he or she enters into an "unusual and divine relationship with the Lord."⁵⁵ Those who answer the call of God are now identified by God. Even though His children are identified with Him, they are also identified by His enemies. His children are called to go and continue His ministry faithfully even through the attacks that may come through the enemies of

⁵⁴ Tom Blackaby, *The Commands of Christ: What It Really Means to Follow Jesus* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2012), 113.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 114.

Christ. The relationship Christians have with God is unique and can only be sustained through Christ.

Ultimately, the call of God is determined by how one answers the call. When God calls on a life, the person “must turn around to see who it is and what He wants.”⁵⁶ God speaks to people in various ways, whether through music, a sermon, scripture, or any conversation with another person. This call must be answered carefully. A person who is contemplating the thought of vocational ministry can have this call presented and confirmed in various ways. Johnson lists many ways in which God calls His children:

- an idea that energizes a person
- another person
- text in scripture
- human pain or an accident
- stirrings of the soul
- restlessness
- engagement that seems natural
- invitation by another person⁵⁷

While the above list is not exhaustive, it still gives the person who is searching the idea of how God works in the lives of His people. A person may have an idea that energizes them or some stirring of the soul for ministry. This alone may not confirm the call; however, this with the confirmation of another person coupled with prayer can help the person see the direction in which God is leading him.

God will not call someone to ministry without first calling him to a relationship with Him. This first call on one’s life is the call to be a Christian and follow Jesus. Spiritual growth and discipling through Him must then occur. The disciples responded to Jesus and immediately

⁵⁶ James W. Bryant and Marc Brunson, *The New Guidebook for Pastors* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 2007), 15.

⁵⁷ Ben Johnson, *Hearing God’s Call*, 37-44.

began to follow Him. Jesus taught them and guided them. He did not send them out to do ministry until they were ready to do the ministry. The encounters the disciples had with Jesus changed their lives as they continued to grow to be more like Him which continued as the church age was established. Those encounters with their Savior helped prepare them for ministry. He also taught them to rely on Him and on the Holy Spirit who was to come.

It is the same today as with the beginning of the church age. It is only through the intimate relationship with Christ and by allowing Him to work in one's life that the church can be what it is intended to be. This relationship has to be established and grown so the person can be released to do the ministry he was called to do. Even as a person goes out to do the ministry, it is only through the direction of God that ministry can be accomplished. The call of God to become a Christian and the call to ministry are similar in that they are "datable experiences."⁵⁸ They are both experiences where the person knows the "what, where and under what circumstances"⁵⁹ they happened. The call, as much as the salvation experience, is vital to each person's identity.

People should continually seek the will of God in their work so it is Him that is directing the course of action. God should continue to receive the glory for everything because it must be understood that it cannot be accomplished without Him. It cannot be emphasized enough how important this relationship with Jesus is to the call to ministry. Without the call on one's life, one cannot effectively minister to those who do have a relationship with Christ. Without this relationship with Jesus, a person could not lead others to this relationship.

⁵⁸ Bryant and Brunson, *The New Guidebook for Pastors*, 10.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Today, just as in the past, God requires His people to listen and respond to Him. Jesus calls His people unto Him through the Holy Spirit to have a relationship with Him. When a person accepts that invitation of God to become a Christian through the blood of Jesus Christ, it is evident that the person will begin to experience a call on his life. That initial call in one's life is only the beginning of the Christian walk. The new Christian should begin to learn and grow spiritually, beginning to discover the plans God has for his life.

It is too bad many Christians stop the process at the point of accepting Him. Many Christians accept the call to become a Christian and never mature beyond this point. They may find it difficult due to their dependence on self or many other reasons. Still, this call of God should be one in which the "person gets out of the way and lets Him take over"⁶⁰ in his life. It is not always easy for someone to give up self for God, but this response to the call of God in one's life is only the beginning of a new life and relationship to God.

This is a relationship in which God leads in His wisdom and His will. It is a life of growth. The life of a Christian is not a stagnate life. The call is to continue to grow, learn, and become more like Him. The relationship is one that is growing, but it is also one that is service oriented as well. Jesus, in what is called the Great Commission, commanded believers what they needed to do. The command for all Christians is to "make disciples, baptizing and teaching them to observe all I have commanded."⁶¹ All Christians should experience the call to serve. This call to serve is the acting out of the Great Commandments to love God and love one another. Still, the call to serve is part of the call of God to be a part of His family. It is part of the discipleship

⁶⁰ Guinness, *The Call*, 25.

⁶¹ Matthew 28:19-20.

process. But some of God's children have a special calling. This calling is a setting apart or what is called vocational ministry.

The Vocational Call to Ministry

The definition of a vocational ministry is a fulltime or part-time career in ministry. It is that special call by God to serve others in a ministry setting. These pastors are supported by the church or organization in which they serve. Just as a business person in the secular world is supported by their employer, vocational ministers are paid, for the most part, for their work in the ministry. Pastors who have been called to vocational ministry by God are set apart in various facets of ministry. Pastors can preach, teach, lead music, and administrate. In fact, in smaller church settings, pastors may do all of this in all levels of development within the church.

Vocational ministers may be pastors, missionaries, directors of ministry organizations, and in many different places than in the church building where ministry can be a vocational career. God calls vocational ministers to perform all types of ministries in the kingdom, but there is no question that "just as God called Moses to lead, Jesus called the disciples to lead, and the early church separated Barnabas and Paul to special service, the Holy Spirit calls people from within the community, the church, to use their gifts in specialized leadership."⁶²

God's call on one's life can be a powerful experience for those who God touches in any of these ways. Although God's call can encompass some, one, or all of the suggestions above, one still needs to be careful how they discern the calling of God. Guinness defines the call of God as "the truth that God calls us to himself so decisively that everything we are, everything we do, and everything we have invested with a special devotion, dynamism, and direction lived out

⁶² Francis Martin, Alice Magill, and Earnest Mosley *Vocational Guidance in a Church* (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1975), 20.

as a response to his summons and service.”⁶³ Under this definition, all people who have given their lives to Christ live their lives as a response to the call of God. Simply put, the life of the Christian is a calling. Christians are called to live in a world that is seeking and searching for spiritual significance. The calling to vocational ministry on one’s life is one of surrender to the desires of God on one’s life to live and work in some form of ministry so that Christ can be shown to a world that needs Him, and this person can direct others to fulfill their calling to enable others to do the same through their own ministry. The job of the vocational pastor, in essence, is to help others fulfill their calling as Christ followers.

At this point, a person may question the difference between the Christian call of God and the call of vocational ministry to serve God. The problem is a “distortion that severs the secular from the spiritual”⁶⁴ reducing the term to a job. Christians in vocational ministry must understand the difference between their relationship to Jesus Christ and “special work.”⁶⁵ The calling of the Christian and vocational ministry are significant events but are not the same thing. The calling of a relationship with Christ and to discipleship is one that is the invitation to all people. While the vocational call to ministry may be because of the relationship one has with Christ, it is still a vocation and a job, albeit a special job. Thus it must be treated as such.

There are many who do not understand the difference. Priorities in life can be mixed up and confused with the call on one’s life. Earnest Mosley prioritizes the callings a person has in his life. Through a diagram much like a target, he lists the importance of the parts of one’s life. He does this in a target so he can show how the life of the Christian radiates out to the other parts

⁶³ Guinness, *The Call*, 29.

⁶⁴ Guinness, *The Call*, 39.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 42.

of a Christian's life. In this chart, the bull's-eye or the central Person in one's life is Christ. This is the calling of the person who is a Christian. However, the employed person (in this case, the pastor) is not listed until the fifth circle. Listed before the employed person (in order) are: Christian person, married person, parent person, and church member person are all listed before employment. This places an emphasis on the relationship with God first, then family starting with the spouse and then onward. The work of the pastor is unique in that he or she is doing the work of the Lord, but that does not mean the work for the Lord is equated with devotion to the Lord. The relationship to God and to one's family should never come before work. Proper perspective puts work in the right place. These priorities being in front of the work of the minister should not conflict with the work he or she is doing within the ministry context. In fact, they "build a broader base"⁶⁶ so that the pastor can be more effective in the type of ministry he or she is involved in.

The importance of priorities does not give license not to do one's work to the best of one's ability. The important aspect of one's life, is the priority one places on his or her parts of life as it pertains to ministry. One should not ignore his family for the sake of his vocational work because one feels this is the will for God in his life. God does not intend for people to ignore or abandon their families for the sake of work. In reality, it is all about balance in one's life. Finding balance comes from "God being central and then building out from there."⁶⁷ In the institution of marriage and family, God would never want one to ignore his family for the sake of his work. Devotion to God should have a priority above family. Devotion to work should not have the same priority. The church should be aware of this tendency for some pastors to confuse

⁶⁶ Mosley, *Priorities in Ministry*, 96.

⁶⁷ Swenson, *Margin*, 188.

their devotion to God and their work because it “provides a solid platform on which to build job descriptions, work relationships, goals, and evaluations.”⁶⁸ Both the congregation and the pastor need to understand the difference between devotion to God and vocational ministry job and work together accordingly. If they work together, less burnout and drop out will occur with the pastoral leadership in the church.

The Spouse’s Call

The call to vocational ministry is crucial to the pastor. Serving in vocational ministry in the church is difficult. Without the call of God and the commitment to that in a pastor’s life, ministry can be even more difficult and ineffective. If a pastor is married, it is important for the spouse to understand the call on the pastor’s life and the call of God that will be on the spouse’s life. Not everyone is called into marriage, and the ministry is not dependent on marriage. The family structure changes over time for the husband and wife as the marriage changes and matures since they first got married. If the married couple has children, the children grow and eventually move out and have families of their own. Marriage is something that is special and must be of God. Pastors who are not married are able to have fruitful and effective ministries. For the purposes of this study, the element of marriage and the effectiveness of a partnership in the ministry is important. Many believe that “a sense of both a pastor and pastor’s spouse provides a powerful resource”⁶⁹ in the ministry and in the family.

There are numerous examples of church families who were not equal in the call to ministry. Through the course of many years of ministry, observation can reveal the difficulties

⁶⁸ Mosley, *Priorities in Ministry*, 95.

⁶⁹ Blake Neff, *A Pastor’s Guide to Personal Communication: The Other Six Days* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2006), 211.

involved with spouses who did not both receive a call to support their spouse in ministry. For example, observation has been made of ministers whose wives made it difficult to serve in the local church because they did not want to support the ministry their husband or be a part of it. If a pastor feels the need to continue with his calling without the call of his wife, it can become a difficult situation often resulting in dismissal because of the lack of commitment to the job and, therefore, the ministry. Many examples exist of pastors' wives who were involved very little or not involved at all in the ministry to which their husbands were called. This results in the congregation questioning the spouse's involvement and commitment to the ministry situation. It must be understood the spouse is not required to spend every free minute at church doing something. Unless the spouse is hired to do something at the church, he or she is not a church employee. However, in the absence of the spouse, there is a perceived or even real lack of support which can affect the congregational family.

An element missing here has been a discussion of the possibility of the call of the spouse in ministry. The man or woman who has been called to vocational ministry has been called out specifically to use the gifts and talents God has given them. The spouse of a pastor is called to the work of Christ as well for the "agreement of a husband and wife's response to God's call is powerful"⁷⁰ because both husband and wife stand side by side to serve the Lord in a vocational sense. The spouse should be at least called to a relationship with Jesus Christ. The call of God must be affirmed by especially the spouse and in some sense, the family because they will be involved in the ministry. The family does not have a choice where they go to church. The family will be asked to help where help is needed. This should not and does not mean the spouse of the pastor should serve wherever the church thinks she should serve. For example, pastors' wives are

⁷⁰ Bryant and Brunson, *New Guidebook for Pastors*, 15.

not always great piano players or called to help in children's ministry. The pastor's family should serve where their gifts allows them to serve. Serving otherwise might have results that are not desirable.

Understanding how the church has traditionally worked, the spouse has "distinct occupational value,"⁷¹ because traditionally, the wife of the pastor has been expected to volunteer her time to the ministry. Much of the expectations from the spouse of the pastor are unrealistic. Sometimes congregations can hold the pastor and his family to a standard that is unreasonable. In fact, the "fishbowl effect"⁷² has become common since the pastor and his family are sometimes put on the pedestal above everyone else just waiting to be toppled over. The disappointment of the toppled pedestal will happen. The pastor and his family are "human beings and have human problems"⁷³ which affect their daily lives. No one is perfect and, therefore, can be subject to error at times. The problem exists in this rising up when the pastor and wife "feel bad about who they are but good about who they appear to be."⁷⁴ How many times have the pastor's kids been considered the most difficult children to work with? Where does it say the pastoral family should be perfect in how they act? Yes, they should act like Christians, but they are not perfect. Is the reason for this a misinterpretation of the call of the family in the church a pastor is serving?

⁷¹ Paula Nesbitt, "Marriage, Parenthood, and the Ministry: Differential Effects of Marriage and Family on Male and Female Clergy Careers." *Sociology of Religion* 56 no. 4 (1995): 399.

⁷² Keck, *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors*, 150.

⁷³ Denise George, *What Pastors Wish Church Member Knew: Helping People Understand and Appreciate Their Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 3.

⁷⁴ Bruce Hartung, "Identity, the Pastor, and the Pastor's Spouse," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 3, No. 5 (1976), 308.

Because of the atmosphere the ministerial family has to endure, it seems at the very least, the spouse should have a call to Christian vocation along with her husband. This call is not the same unless they are on the staff of the church, and, although they may work on staff, they should not be required to unless they feel called to. Nonetheless, the spouse of any pastor has a direct effect on the ministry of the church. The treatment of the calling of God in which pastors and spouses serve in the church should be considered carefully since the calling of both pastor has an effect on the church.

The call of the spouse should be to “consider his or her role as a helpmate”⁷⁵ at home and in the ministry. When a man or woman “marries a minister, he or she is not only choosing a life partner but a lifetime career”⁷⁶ in that ministry. Still, the spouse may have difficulty with the call of God on his or her spouse’s life. The call of God on the pastor may be an immediate yes answer but upon the spouse, it may not be so immediate, especially if they know the type of life that is involved with someone who is in the ministry. They may have not recall saying, “I do to this”⁷⁷ in their wedding vows. When the pastor surrenders to the ministry, the job involves the whole family. Some pastors’ spouses understand early enough in the relationship, the call as a pastor’s spouse. Some pastors are second-career pastors, and the dynamic of the marriage is changed as the pastor receives the call and must give careful consideration to his family.

There are four types of calls to which most pastor’s spouses identify. Lovingood and Landrith identify these with women who are married to pastors; however, any spouse who is married to a pastor whether male or female can identify with these calls:

⁷⁵ Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 725, Kindle.

⁷⁶ Dorothy Harrison Pentecost, *The Pastor's Wife and the Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1964), 18.

⁷⁷ Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 687, Kindle.

- *Specific calling* – These women or men are those who have a clear-cut call of their own to ministry. They believe that God has called them to fulfill the role of pastor's wife. Because of this calling, they have prepared themselves for this role. They are very involved together in ministry as a couple.
- *General calling* – These women or men are those who believe God has called them to ministry but do not know in what specific area. Like the specific call, they are confident in themselves and how they are to minister. They have prepared themselves for ministry but not necessarily as the spouse of a pastor. They are open to whatever area God calls them to.
- *Unexpected calling* – These are men or women who were married to someone in a different profession and then he or she felt called to the ministry. They feel called to the spouse. Because of the change in career, these spouses sometimes feel unsure about their place in ministry and feel inadequate to fill the role. Most have not been prepared for this role but most step into the role believing that if God called their spouse to ministry, then he or she has also called him or her.
- *Impersonal calling* – These are spouses who do not feel called to ministry and they see the pastorate as their spouse's job and not their own which can cause problems not only in ministry but also in their marriage. Many of these wives or husbands have no desire to work in ministry along with their spouse and many times they resist from becoming involved in the ministry. They are usually just a support system for their spouse, but there are some who do not like the fact that their spouse is a pastor.⁷⁸

No matter which role they fill, the readiness of both husband and wife to minister is important as they embark on the work God has put before them. "A joint sense of call"⁷⁹ should be received by both the pastor and spouse in total agreement. A marriage embarking in the life of ministry without the call of both pastor and spouse can be disastrous for both the marriage and the church in which they serve. When deciding on the course of ministry "the couple should proceed as a team and develop or recognize the call together."⁸⁰ Without thinking as a team in ministry, strain and conflict will occur, and thus it will be difficult for the pastor to serve the

⁷⁸ Rachel Lovingood and Jennifer Landrith, *In Our Shoes: Real Life Issues for Minister's Wives* by *Minister's Wives* (Nashville, TN: Lifeway, 2008) 13.

⁷⁹ Mickey and Ashmore, *Clergy Families*, 72.

⁸⁰ Neff, *A Pastor's Guide to Interpersonal Communication*, 211.

church effectively. Consequently, there will be tensions between the spouses in the ministry family and tensions between the family and the church.

The Call of the Family

While the husband and wife are adults when the decision to be in ministry is made, children do not always have a choice when they are born into a ministry family. The call to the children of a ministry family is a general call. Children, especially younger children, do not understand what the vocational call is nor should they. As they get older, they will begin to understand the call as it pertains to their lives. Ministry children are like any other child in that they may or may not accept Jesus Christ as their Lord when they are in full understanding. Also, as they grow older, children can “develop a sense of call”⁸¹ through the example of the parents. Mickey and Ashmore believe the more clearly the call is discerned by the pastor and the thoroughness of the decision, the higher the level of support”⁸² from the family. The general call to be a Christian, as they grow old enough to understand and accept the general call of God should be all that is required of children in the ministry home along with being involved in the ministry which the family is serving faithfully.

The key is for the children to have normal lives even as they live their lives looked upon by many people. The congregation should understand that a pastor’s children are not any different than any other children who are part of that particular ministry. Pressure is sometimes put upon the children of the pastor to perform because they are indeed the pastor’s children. However, this can cause resentment and thus falling away from their Christian beliefs because

⁸¹ Neff, *A Pastor’s Guide to Interpersonal Communication*, 211.

⁸² Mickey and Ashmore, *Clergy Families*, 72.

they do not want any part of what they have seen in the church or from their parents' pressure to act a certain way. The key to children in ministry life is balance.

This does not mean children should not be involved in decisions pertaining to a particular ministry or call to a ministry. Bryant and Brunson counsel their readers to "make sure they are involved."⁸³ Family decisions as they pertain to ministry should involve the children such as moves and other decisions affecting the family. However, the children do not have the understanding for a vocational call at a young age.

Because of this, the pastor's duty to his or her family is to be present. The pastor must be a father or mother and must understand involvement in their children's lives is of the utmost importance. It must be clearly understood that God should be important in anyone's life as well as the family's life. The call of the family is to be a family in Christ and to put Him at the head of the family and direct it as any normal family would be directed by Christ. Being involved is shepherding the children as he or she pastors the church. A plan should be developed for "effective and deliberate discipleship structures in the home"⁸⁴ for the pastor's family.

As children grow and a need for understanding grows in ministry, children's appreciation for ministry must be fostered. Brian and Cara Croft offer some suggestions for fostering this appreciation for their parents' work. Help them understand "the work is important to God."⁸⁵ God has chosen them to do an important work and involving the children in the work when appropriate is important as well. Let the children know the "joys of serving in the church and

⁸³ Bryant, and Brunson, *New Guidebook for Pastors*, 15.

⁸⁴ Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 1253, Kindle.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1319, Kindle.

how people are changed through His Word.”⁸⁶ Help them understand “the church loves and cares for them.”⁸⁷ They need to understand and see that the work of the church is not a burden. It is a work of honor and joy that can be shared by the family together.

Accepting the Call

The call of God into vocational ministry is a decision that must be met with careful consideration. The first consideration is the spouse. If one’s spouse does not have that calling, it is important to adjust. Ministry as a job is not as important as one’s relationship with their spouse or children. The pastor must consider the fact that one “must be willing to sacrifice the ambition to succeed in God’s service” for the sake of the family.”⁸⁸ Because of the priority of the marriage in the couple’s life, the one person who is feeling the call may have to wait until the spouse is ready. He or she might find other ways to work in their calling but not in a way that is vocational.

Being married helps couples remember some very important aspects of life. Marriage “calls us put of ourselves to show us our is not the only vision in the world.”⁸⁹ The perspective of the pastor who is feeling the call is not the only perspective one must look at to determine how to act on the call of God. One must rely on others to see clearly the feasibility of the call without disregarding one’s family.

⁸⁶ Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 1345, Kindle.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 1373, Kindle.

⁸⁸ Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, 250.

⁸⁹ Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, 241.

One must also be sure of his calling. One can be “easily derailed with a less than genuine calling”⁹⁰ and become frustrated and quit the ministry. A personal invitation from God will be needed for “sustained ministry effectiveness and perseverance.”⁹¹ Still, one will never be at peace without pursuing anything other than what God has called him or her to do. One may have to decide how that calling is going to be carried out, but if the call is true, God will continue to call until the call is answered. The issue is that “one does not choose ministry. The pastor is chosen by God for His purposes.”⁹² He is completely in control and will act in His time and in His place.

The call confirmation comes from both internal and external suggestions. It must be confirmed by both. Still, the call of God is not one of simply having a job. The job is the means by which the pastor serves. The pastor who is considering a call to ministry should be passionate about the calling he is receiving but is not driven by a self-serving desire. The desire is to serve God and others. Finally, the person who is considering a call to ministry must not be happy doing anything else but ministry. Those who God calls learn to depend on God for everything. Without Him, proper ministry cannot be done. Without Him, ministry cannot be accomplished from the heart.

⁹⁰ Wilson, *Preventing Ministry Failure*, 66.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Blackaby and Brandt, *The Power of the Call*, 26.

Chapter 3

The Ministry Partnership The Calling to Ministry

Husbands and wives have different perspectives on the role each other has in the life of ministry. The difficulties between spouses, no matter the role they play, whether pastor or spouse, can lead to stress in the marriage if they are not in agreement in that role. The role can be confusing in this day of political correctness and the changing roles of women in the church. As previously noted, life in the ministry is a job and should not be confused with the obedience toward the ministry they do because of their relationship with Jesus Christ. Still, life in ministry is different than many occupations in that the pastor's family is usually involved in the ministry work. The family might not be directly involved in the particular ministry the pastor might be working in, but they are involved in the overall ministry of the church in some capacity. They may be involved in a small group or music ministry, but they still should be a part of the community of the congregation. The gifts God has given the family should be used for Jesus Christ as the church continues its ministry.

The call of both pastor and spouse have different dynamics involved in the process. One aspect of the ministry family dynamic is whether the couple were called to ministry before or after the two got married. Marriage is an important step in one's life and "it is to resemble our relationship or our commitment to God."⁹³ The pastor and spouse may have gotten married after school or seminary; however, there are a great number of pastors who are called to ministry after having a career in a different field. In this case, the spouse may have no idea what it means to be a pastor's spouse. Going to church and volunteering for ministries in the church are a completely

⁹³ Lisa N Alexander, *Marriage and Ministry: Successfully Working Marriage, Family and Ministry Together* (Cypress, TX: Ellis Valin Communications, 2009), 91, Kindle.

different matter than the vocational ministry couple. The volunteer can go home without the thought of church because it may not be the matter that consumes her life. However, this is different for those in vocational ministry. They live it. Alexander insists the “marriage should be healthy and strong”⁹⁴ before being in ministry together. Therefore, the possibility of a ministry couple should not be ascertained unless the marriage is one that is healthy.

In this study, the majority of pastors were married before they became a pastor. Seventy-three percent of pastors surveyed were married when they became a pastor. Only twenty-seven percent of pastors were married after they became a pastor. No distinction was made whether the pastor had been in seminary or not when they got married. The same question was asked in the survey of spouses. The spouse’s statics were very similar to those the pastors answered. Getting married after one is a pastor allows one to choose a mate who may be more inclined to be a partner in ministry; however, this is not always the case. If one is contemplating ministry when dating, this is a subject that must be discussed.

Because the whole family is involved in the work in which the pastor is involved in, it is understandable when a church asks questions of one’s family during the process of interviewing. Family members may have various feelings that other people in other families may not have like “conflicted issues because of frequent transitions, limited finances, and a narrower band of available relationships.”⁹⁵ However, it must be understood that when a pastor is hired, the church is hiring the pastor and not his family. Respect must be given here for the family dynamic in the pastor’s home because in many cases “church has had a negative impact on the home”⁹⁶ of the

⁹⁴ Lisa N Alexander, *Marriage and Ministry*, 148 Kindle.

⁹⁵ Leslie A. Andrews, "Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction among Missionaries." *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 27, no. 2 (Summer, 1999): 107, accessed July 24, 2015, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/223682532?accountid=12085>.

⁹⁶ Keck, *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors*, 152.

pastor. The problems come from unrealistic expectations from the church or from the pastor being overzealous with his work. The problem may stem from pastors who are workaholics and have a difficult time differentiating between their love of God and their work which happens to be in a church. Either one or both together could be to blame but both take away from time the pastor should be spending with their spouse and or family. Further, the church should “respect the needs of the family”⁹⁷ as much as the pastor and his or her family should respect the needs of the church.

The spouse can help determine whether the move to a new place of ministry or even the discussion of being in ministry is viable. Being called to a particular church is not always felt by both pastor and spouse. Pastors may feel the call of God on their lives for a particular church, but the spouse may not feel that call. A survey of pastors and their spouses bring light to this dynamic of the call to ministry or the place of service. Pastors and their spouses were asked about their calling to the particular church at which they are currently serving. Ninety-five percent of pastors felt overwhelmingly called to the position whereas only fifty-five percent of spouses felt the calling to that particular ministry. Furthermore, only thirty-three percent felt somewhat called to that particular ministry. Evidently, the strong calling the pastor felt was the determining factor in those cases, but the question still arises about the amount of input the spouse has on the decision to change places of service.

Most pastors and spouses are in agreement in their calling to a particular church; however, some are not so sure about that calling. Eleven percent did not feel called at all or called to that ministry. Where the spouse and the pastor disagree on the calling to a particular church can have difficult side effects for the family as well as the church. The calling of both

⁹⁷ Keck, *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors*, 156.

pastor and spouse to ministry becomes important so there is understanding on the part of the spouse when church issues arise. The call to ministry for the spouse often includes “watching their partners suffer from the criticism, crises, and conflicts”⁹⁸ that come with the job or the difficulties of establishing new friendships are just a few friends. Since it is sometimes difficult to cultivate close friendships within the church, the “marriage relationship between a husband and wife takes on a special significance.”⁹⁹ This relationship is especially important when discussions about church matters come into the conversation.

Many pastors rely on their spouses to fulfill many aspects in ministry. The call to that particular ministry is essential. One would not want to put his spouse in a position she has no interest or ability in. There is however a segment of spouses who do not have a choice in the ministry where they serve. These are churches where the appointment is made to the pastor without any type of interview process. In fact, in many cases, the pastor does not have a choice where they serve. In these denominations, a person within the denomination level make the determination of where the pastor will serve. Therefore, in these cases, the call is to ministry in general and not to a particular place of service.

One of the important aspects of the call of both pastor and spouse in ministry is the concept of the ministry team of a husband and wife. Team ministry or a partnership is a means where the husband and wife are both called to work in a particular ministry, and they complement each other in the ministry. The pastor is still the pastor in the church, but the spouse

⁹⁸ Bob Burns, “Is Ministry Killing Your Marriage,” Christianity Today (April 2013), accessed July 21, 2015, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2013/april-online-only/is-ministry-killing-yourmarriage.html?start=1>.

⁹⁹ Mark McMinn, “Care for Pastors: Learning from Clergy and Their Spouses,” *Pastoral Psychology* 53, No. 6 (2005): 578.

adds a dynamic to the ministry that allows the pastor to minister in ways he or she would not otherwise be able.

When pastors and spouses were asked if they felt that they and their spouses were a ministry team, both responded in a similar manner. Ninety percent in both cases indicated they worked in a ministry partnership with their spouse by either answering yes or somewhat when asked. A small percentage of pastors and spouses feel they do not work as a team. Five percent of pastors felt this way as well as ten percent of spouses. Five percent of pastors did not know whether they and their spouses were ministry partners. Since an overwhelming majority do feel they work as partners, this indicates a need for the pastor and spouse to feel they work together.

The indication is not everyone who serves in the church is in ministry partnership with his or her spouse. However, all respondents wanted, either yes or somewhat, to be considered as a ministry team. The options within the question were either “yes,” “no,” or “somewhat.” The fact that there are about forty-four percent who do responded “somewhat” could be an indication that a ministry partnership is misunderstood therefore many respondents may not understand what a marriage and ministry partnership is and looks like. The call is still a strong indicator here in that “the stronger one’s sense of being sustained by the call, the higher one’s satisfaction in family”¹⁰⁰ and ministry life. That is, the higher the “satisfaction with a spouse, the higher the satisfaction with other domains”¹⁰¹ in life as in work or ministry. Still, there was no respondent that indicated he or she did not want to be considered part of a ministry in marriage. The thought of partnership intrigues even the person who somewhat wants a partnership. People want to be a

¹⁰⁰ Andrews, "Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction among Missionaries," 115.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 116.

part of a team atmosphere, and, in some cases, in order to be a part of the pastor's life, the spouse must be a part of the pastor's work.

The Interview Process

For the family to get to this point in a ministry setting, there is typically an interview process with the church or organization in which the pastor will have an affiliation. This interview is somewhat like any interview process for a job. Sometimes this involves the spouse, sometimes it does not. Depending on the denominational tendency, spouses do not have a choice in the placement of their spouse pastor. For example, Baptists and Presbyterians often have to go through the process of interviewing with a search committee, and then they are voted on by the congregation or by a committee in which the congregation designates. Episcopalian and United Methodist pastors have a bishop in the church area who oversee and moves their pastors around from time to time. In fact, the average placement for a Methodist pastor is typically five years, and the pastor is moved to another parish. In these cases, the spouse has absolutely no input into the appointment.

When asked whether the spouse was part of the interview process, thirty-three percent of respondents answered no, whereas eleven percent answered not applicable. The problem when interpreting these numbers is determining if the no answers are from a tradition of an appointment by a denominational official. More than fifty-five percent indicated the spouse was involved in the interview process. This indicated the valuable insight a spouse can have in the interviewing process, and knowing the pastor's spouse is important.

A much more telling response was when asked if the spouse should be involved in the interview process, eighty-eight percent felt it was important. This further indicates a need for the spouse to have input into the ministry direction a family might be involved in because of the

pastor's career. Many times the spouse can have a different and balanced point of view that the pastor may not have because of excitement or experience. If the spouse sees something in the church or community that cannot be worked through very easily, a pastoral yes and spousal no may make home life difficult thus affecting the ministry relationship. Spouses must carefully talk together throughout the interview process and accept each other's input in the situation.

As one is considering his call to a place of service, it becomes evident the importance of discussing this possible change with one's spouse. This is important even if the pastor's spouse is appointed and not hired. While this may be obvious to many who are married, it is interesting to note when pastors were asked if they consulted with their spouses before considering a move to a new place of ministry, ten percent either said no or that it was inapplicable. Ninety percent responded yes to the question which bears in mind the deeper issue of communication between two people who are married. Gary Chapman expresses in his book *Covenant Marriage* five levels of communication and suggests "healthy patterns of talking and listen to your spouse"¹⁰² in all aspects of life which includes the calling of God and how it affects the family.

It is difficult to be a ministry partner with one's spouse when one does not know or have a choice in where they are serving. The call of God is always important in the lives of people in the ministry. God does give the ability to people to think and consult Him in these issues, including the spouse. These types of statistics bear in mind the question asked at the beginning of this project. The question of how the team partnership aspect of a husband and wife in the ministry and how that works in ministry and marriage bears studying. It stands to reason if a pastor is married, as with any major decision which would be made, consultation should happen between the two.

¹⁰² Chapman, *Covenant Marriage*, 50.

Involvement in Ministry

When a pastor moves his family to a new place of ministry, there are certain expectations which the church may have and expectations which the pastor and his or her family will have. Some of these expectations deal with the involvement of the family in the ministry. Some difficulties come when a pastor receives the call to ministry later in life, after he or she has a family and has been working regular office hours in the secular world. Many things can be expected of the pastor and his or her family. In smaller churches, staffing often becomes a problem whereby the “family may serve as uncompensated staff”¹⁰³ where members of the church do not fill the need for that particular function, or there are not the funds to hire someone to guide and lead in a particular ministry. Therefore, the pastor’s family begins to minister where others will not take the time to help.

When pastors were asked if it were important for their spouses to be involved in ministry, seventy-two percent found it “very important” and to a lesser degree twenty-two percent found it somewhat important. Interestingly, spouses found it more important to be involved in ministry, answering at a higher rate than pastors did. Eighty-nine percent of spouses found it important to be involved in ministry whereas ten percent found it “somewhat” important. All spouses felt that at some level, they needed to be involved in ministry whether to fulfill what they need to do in ministry or to support their pastor spouse. How much involvement a spouse has in the ministry can be debated, and churches should not assume the amount of work the ministry family will fulfill at the church. It is a difficult balance for pastors and their families. The pastor is the one who is hired by the church. Unless the spouse is hired to do something on staff, he or she has no obligation in that respect to the church. However, the family of the pastor does have an

¹⁰³ Keck, *Healthy Churches, Faithful Pastors*, 151.

obligation to be involved as members of the church in church activities. Jesus requires it of His children out of obligation. Most of the time, it is expected of the family to be involved.

It is important to understand not all pastors feel their spouses need to be involved in the church they are serving. An interesting statistic is four percent of pastors surveyed did not feel it was necessary for the spouse to be involved in the church's ministry in which they serve. Unfortunately, those types of pastors continue on in their careers "expecting virtually nothing from their spouse."¹⁰⁴ Not only does the pastor miss out, but the church misses out when the attitude is strictly toward the pastor and his job. Sixty-six percent of spouses are involved a great deal in church functions whereas thirty-four percent say they try not to do too much. A definition of too much may be needed at this point. Still, this definition is going to be different for different people. Too much may be dependent on family circumstances and ages of children.

Many factors can determine the question of too much. Factors may include their own work schedule, the age of children, or desire to be in ministry. Too much, not enough, or just right has to be determined by the couple. The couple must decide what is right for them. Much of the world of ministry is the pastor's, but there needs to be communication between the two because "communication forces us to enter into another's world."¹⁰⁵ That world needs to be somewhat understood by the spouse. More than any other profession, the family has a presence in the ministry workplace. At the same time, it is important for pastors to be diligent in "faithfulness in caring for their families."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Magnus Malm, "When a Ministry Threatens a Marriage." *Transformation* 5, No. 3 (1988):16, accessed July 27, 2015, www.jstor.org/stable/43052229.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, 216 Kindle.

¹⁰⁶ Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 1744 Kindle.

One of the challenges pastors and their spouses have within the church context is the ability to work together. The pastors and spouses who responded to questions asked in the survey were generally comfortable working together. Seventy-one percent answered they were definitely comfortable working together in ministry. Others answered somewhat comfortable working together. These statistics may or may not include the pastor and spouse actually working together in the same ministry or job. The majority who were surveyed did not work in the church where their spouse was pastor; however, there was a small group of twenty-two percent who worked at the church on a part-time basis. In other words, the spouse was employed by the church directing some sort of ministry or working as an assistant on a part-time basis. No one indicated they were working full time. There are pastors and spouses who do work full time in the same place of ministry. In some instances, pastors and their spouses pastor the church together.

Priorities in Ministry

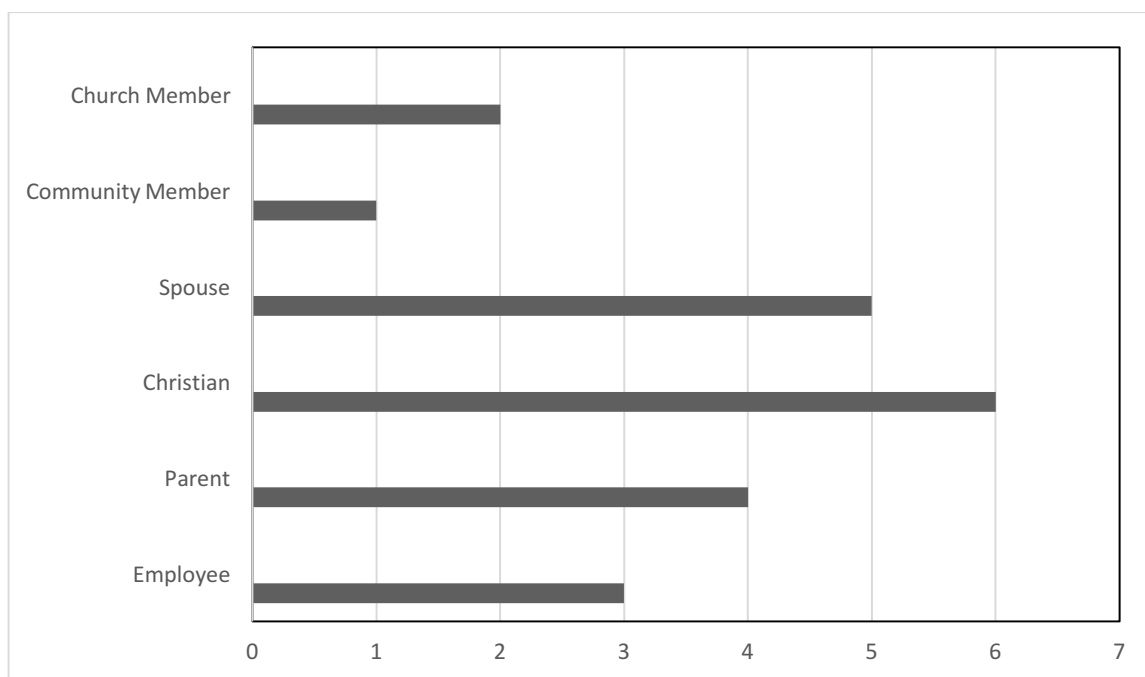
A very important aspect of the ministry family is the health of the family and essentially the marriage. While the pastor is the person who is hired by the church, the family, more than any other profession, is part of the work of the pastor. The degree of involvement by the family may be different depending on the family; however, the frustrations and difficulties that come with ministry can have an effect on the family itself.

In his book *Priorities in Ministry*, Ernest Mosley defines the objective of the priorities a pastor or someone in ministry might have in his or her life. He believes priorities in one's life brings "greater satisfaction in a minister's life."¹⁰⁷ This satisfaction comes from a sense of order

¹⁰⁷ Mosley, *Priorities in Ministry*, 16.

in one's life causing him or her to understand the importance of prioritizing certain aspects of one's life. Mosley lists the priorities in order of importance. This list includes "Christian person, married person, parent person, church member person, employed person, and community person."¹⁰⁸ Both pastors and their spouse were asked to rank each of these titles in the order of importance as they see them. The results are as follows:

Table 3.1 Pastor Ranking of Personal Roles



As seen here, the pastors in this survey put priorities in their proper perspective. Six is the highest ranking and one is the lowest ranking. It must be noted these results were not one hundred percent among pastors' answers. About ten percent of pastors indicated their spousal devotion was above their Christian devotion. Another interesting result of the survey is the fact five percent of pastors put their role as a parent over their role as a spouse. Other variations in the

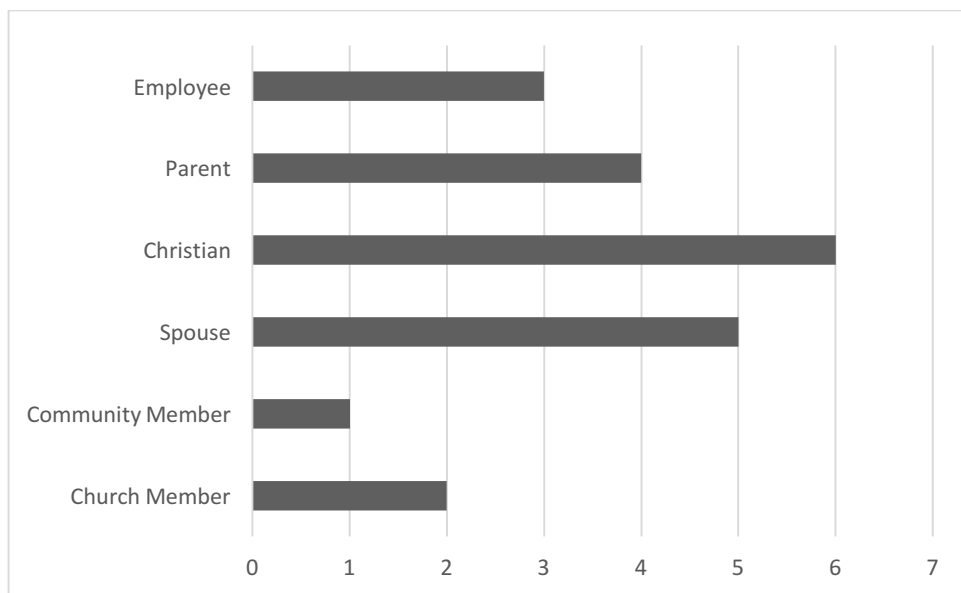
¹⁰⁸ Mosley, *Priorities in Ministry*, 12.

results did happen in the raw data. However, the overall majority would seem to prioritize their lives correctly according to Mosley’s priorities.

The results of ranking between the employee person and church member person in this survey were close. This indicates there may be a difficulty for pastors in separating the difference between being a church employee and being a church member. The difficulty is seen as pastors devote so much time to the ministry, there is virtually no time left for his or her family. Making this more difficult to understand is the fact that in most churches in order for the pastor to work there, the pastor and his family are required to become members of the church. While this policy is appropriate, separating the two aspects of the life of the pastor can be difficult.

The second table below shows the results entered by the spouses of pastors. These are the results of the average of the group from the raw data. While these results do show an average, individual results raise some interesting questions pertaining to the results.

Table 3.2 Spousal Ranking of Personal Roles



The results in figure 3.2 for the spousal survey are similar to the pastor survey results. Like the pastors' answers, the spouses' answers were not unanimous. For example, there were some who believe being a parent was more important than being a married person. Other anomalies existed; however, the averages were consistent with Mosley's findings except for the difference between being a church member and being an employee.

Mosley's graph suggested church should come before being an employee. While this may be the case, many spouses in the sample may not work in a ministry; therefore, they may see their employment outside of the church as being more important than the church as an institution in which they serve. The difference is whether the spouse is employed by the church or not by the church. Also, the emphasis on work may be due to the need to support the family financially thus seeing themselves helping in that way. Those employed by the church should be careful to learn to separate being a member and being employed by the church. The confusion can be both by the pastor and spouse and the congregation. For instance, in some churches' constitutions, the pastor needs to be a member of the church, but in meetings, he or she has no voting rights. When the distinction between employee and member of the church is made properly, the employee will be able to participate as a member when needed.

Family in Ministry

There are many aspects of the family in ministry which make it unique from any other workplace. The difficulties of working for God but having to work with difficult people at times makes the reality of the career in ministry extremely challenging. One such aspect is the discussion of church matters with the pastor's spouse or even involving the children in such a discussion. All surveyed pastors indicated they talked with their spouses about church matters at least sometimes. Ninety percent of pastors said they talked to their spouse about church matters.

Forty-one percent indicated they spoke very much about church matters where fifty-one percent indicated they spoke some.

Spouses were asked how much their pastor spouse talked to them about church matters. All indicated at least some communication about church with their spouses. Fifty-six percent indicated they talked a lot about church matters. Spouses may talk about church matters to some degree, but they are also willing to talk about church matters. Seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated they were willing; however, twenty-two percent were willing sometimes. Therefore, spouses are willing to communicate about church matters. Still, the statistics of actually communicating about church matters is slightly less as indicated above. In the partnership of the couple in ministry, communication becomes increasingly important to the pastor and spouse. Each person should be free to give each other input into certain aspects of ministry.

Spouses taking the time to talk to each other helps the “need for domestic support”¹⁰⁹ providing for a way for expression of frustrations and difficulties afforded by life in ministry work. Whether or not a pastor speaks with his spouse about church matters may be because of subject matter. Some subjects a pastor deals with are sensitive, and he may not feel he can speak with his spouse on certain topics. However, when asked if talking to their spouse about church is beneficial, ninety-five percent found talking to their spouse about church matters beneficial. There is five percent of the sample who do not find this to be beneficial. This may indicate other communication difficulties in the marriage that need to be addressed. This type of communication is valuable as it gives the pastor and spouse someone to talk through issues happening at church.

¹⁰⁹ Harley, *His Needs, Her Needs*, 145 Kindle.

When asked if pastors keep talk to a minimum at home, the majority, which was sixty-seven percent, responded yes. The term “minimum” can be debated by the circumstance and the actual amount of time spent. There is still a significant sampling of pastors who responded with a no to this question. Ministry is a life that is not a nine to five office job. It is one where “work and the family system plug into each other and significant changes in either can unbalance the other.”¹¹⁰ As a result, there needs to be a point where a pastor can be free from the rigors of ministry. He should be able to be free in his home. Therefore, it is necessary for them to be able to take time off during the week and vacations with the family as much uninterrupted as possible.

The couple must be careful when discussing difficulties at church when children are present. Talking about the difficulties of church work can be inappropriate when discussed around children at inappropriate times. Sometimes frustration sets in, and children do not always understand what may or may not be happening around them, especially when church is the subject matter. At times, they may feel they are the problem when it comes to church matters. While at times there may be stressors where children are involved, it is important that children understand ministry problems are not their fault. Pastors who responded to the survey do assure their children that ministry problems are not their fault. Although sixty-seven percent answered yes, thirty-three percent answered that it depended on whether they were involved or not. This is a reasonable answer since issues in the children’s ministry and youth ministry can indeed involve a pastor’s children. Appropriateness has to be determined by the ministry family here. The situation will be unique for different families as the situation provides the appropriateness of the conversation.

¹¹⁰ Patrick Ducklow, "Dear Church! We Quit! Marriage and Ministry Depression." *Crux* 31, no. 2 (June 1995): 31-41.

Within the family, multiple stress points are evident in the family life. These are normal occurrences. There is a “crucial role the family exerts in a pastor’s vocational effectiveness”¹¹¹ in the church. The health of the family is important to the pastor and his or her work. Part of problem is the need to protect the family from the problems of ministry. Sometimes people within the church do not understand the difficulties of ministry when dealing with people. When asked about protection of the family, almost all pastors agreed to protecting their family from the problems of ministry, especially the most controversial parts of ministry. A small four percent of pastors believed children should be exposed to everything, so they can make up their own mind to ministry issues. Families have to make their own rules for this type of engagement. Some may find appropriateness in some conflicts and others may not.

The pastor, in the context of work, can potentially work a large amount of hours during the week. This can take the pastor away from his or her family time. It is important to be able to take time and recharge so the pastor can be effective. Many believe they are not effective if do not continually work or feel they are working. Recharging or self-care is important in anyone’s life. It “is not selfish, it is necessary for being fruitful.”¹¹² When pastors were asked how many hours per week they work in ministry, forty-five percent stated they worked forty to fifty hours per week. Forty-one percent worked even more hours. Interestingly, spouses who were asked the same question answered forty to fifty hours at a rate of eighty-nine percent. Eleven percent stated more than fifty hours.

Pastors were also asked if they ever really felt “off the clock” in their lives. Forty-five percent of the pastors who were surveyed never feel like they are away from work, and another

¹¹¹ Andrews, "Spiritual, Family, and Ministry Satisfaction among Missionaries," 107.

¹¹² Burns, *Resilient Ministry*, 1846 Kindle.

thirty-two percent only feel away from work when they are on vacation. Other smaller samples stated that they feel away from work when they are at home and when they are asleep. This indicates the degree pastors feel they need to work and how overworked pastors feel they are. When spouses were asked whether their pastor spouse took time off during the week, all of them indicated at least one day was taken off. However, thirty percent indicated that it depended on the week. This indication in work load is dependent on the weekly activity of the church, which pastors felt their presence was needed. Pastors were asked the same question about how many days they took off. Thirty-six percent indicated it depended on the week, but the rest of the sample indicated at least one day a week was taken off with eighteen percent taking two days off.

As part of the dynamic of the time off of work, pastors were asked if their allegiance to the church was more important than family. Eighty-six percent indicated no to the question. Fourteen percent indicated somewhat to this question. They were then asked if their work habits reflect the answer to the previous question. Sixty-seven percent indicated their work habits did reflect their answer; however, thirty-three percent indicated that their work habits somewhat reflect the answer to the previous question indicating the belief is not always the practice.

Family Practice

One of the ministries of the church is ministry to families. As pastors preach and teach about the importance of family and family Christian life, pastors should be willing to model the need to minister to family. Work habits do not always translate into family habits.

There is a drive to develop mission statements in corporate, church, and personal lives. Mission statements do many things. One thing they do is focus on the “future and direction”¹¹³ of

¹¹³ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A Twenty-First Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 105-106.

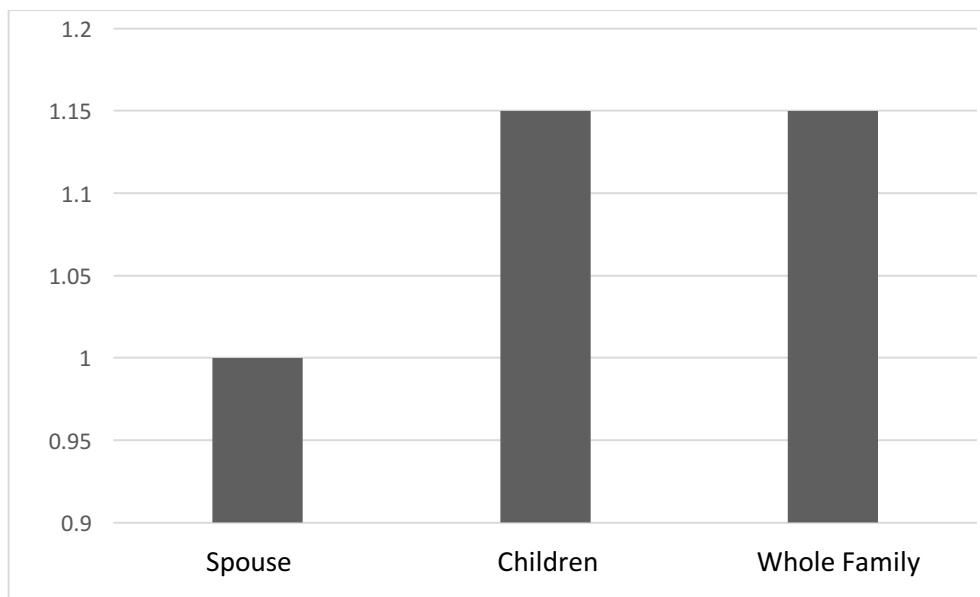
the family. Even though developing a mission statement has been used by churches for some time, some churches have not developed mission statements. The concept of developing a mission statement for the family is even used less. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed stated they had not developed a mission statement for their family. Because mission statements give the organization meaning, purpose, and direction, a family mission statement, especially in the ministry home, may help bring focus and direction for the family. The pastor who is busy with ministry, when following the family mission statement, may find it easier to interact and find time with his family. Developing the mission statement can be in itself time spent with the family.

Another question posed to pastors was if their families had a time of family devotions. This is a point that many evangelical pastors deem important and even preach on the importance of family devotions to their congregations. Only twenty-seven percent of pastors reported they had a time of family devotions daily. Eighteen percent reported having family devotions two to three times a week, but forty-one percent only occasionally have family devotions. Fourteen percent of respondents never have family devotions.

In order to build relationships, time must be spent with each other. This is true for family relationships. The amount of time taken was asked of pastors. Table 3.3 shows those results.

As can be seen in the figure, pastors spend some time each week with their children and whole family. However, the pastor's spouses seem to miss out on a weekly basis even though the relationship the pastor has with his spouse could be argued as more important than the children. The time the whole family spends together takes away from the time the pastor and his or her spouse spend alone.

Table 3.3 Amount of Time in Hours Pastors Spend with Their Family



The fundamental issue with married couples is the relationship between husband and wife. This marriage relationship is “more fundamental than the parent-child relationship.”¹¹⁴ Children eventually leave the home to be independent. If the marriage is not nurtured, when the house is empty, the couple will seem like strangers to each other. Furthermore, the couple spending time with each other in their relationship is a good example to their children as they grow and become involved in relationships of their own.

Another aspect of this figure that is very important to note is that pastors are spending a little over an hour with their family per week. That is not very much in the scope of the numerous hours in a week. If one would add all the individual times together, pastors would have given their families an average of three hours a week. Still, three hours total for a week is not

¹¹⁴ Chapman, *Covenant Marriage*, 91.

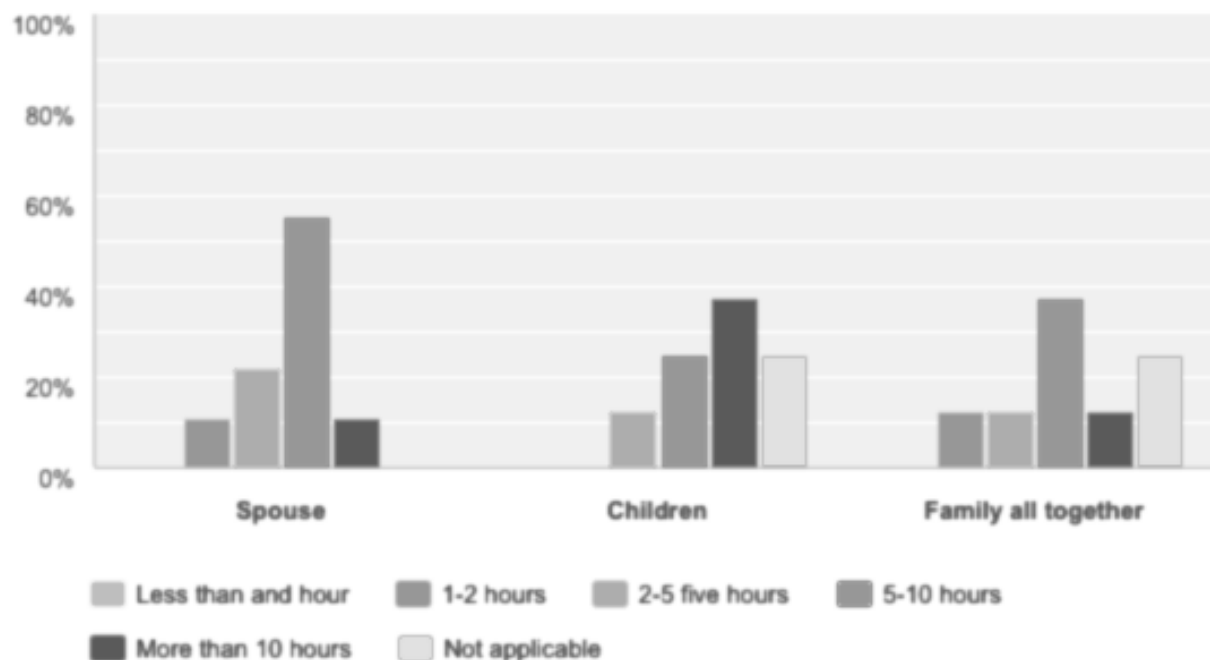
enough time to develop relationships within a family. By spending less time with the family, the time the pastor does not spend with his or her family can never be gained back and thereby developing a loss of relationship with the family as a whole.

This same question was asked of pastors' spouses. It is not known how many of these spouses were male or female. However, the statistics spouses gave were quite different than pastors as shown in Table 3.4. These figures do not take into account whether the spouse works outside the home, at the church, or does not work at all. The figures do show a drastic difference between pastors and their spouses and the perceived amount of time they spend with each other. The majority of spouses report five to ten hours per a week which is a much better figure than pastors reported.

The reason for the difference is unknown except that spouses may see the time spent with their husband or wife differently. Still, there is a large number of spouses who do not see their husband or wife very much or spend time with them. There could also be a difference in the definition of quality time between the two sample groups. Time spent together does not always mean quality time in relationship building.

It is interesting that this sample group of spouses spends more time with their husbands or wives than they do with their children per week. More time is spent with their spouses than the family all together. This is different than the report the pastors gave when answering questions. They reported spending more time with the family as a whole and the children than the time spent just with their spouses. Even though the statistics are better when spouses answer questions pertaining to time spent, it would seem there is not enough time spent relationship building between husbands and wives in ministry.

Table 3.4 Spousal Perception of Pastor Time with Family



Statistical Conclusions

Many of the conclusions drawn in the statistics show that husbands and wives lead busy lives in the ministry. Many couples view themselves as a ministry partners because they work together in the ministry in which God has placed them. There are still others who do not work as ministry partners and even some spouses who do not want to be in ministry at all. This type of situation makes it difficult for the spouse who is in ministry to lead the church effectively. When the vast majority of churches are small, there is leadership opportunity for both the pastor and the spouse in which the spouse needs to be ready and willing to participate. It is important for the church to see a united husband and wife in their ministry to the church. It is also important for the church to see the whole family involved in the ministries of the church family.

Still, the statistics show there is a blurred view of the relationship that goes on between the husband and wife in their relationship as it pertains to themselves and their family. Many pastors and pastors' spouses do not see their roles in the family and the church the same way. Many pastors see their situations one way, and their spouses see their situations another way.

The ministry family is looked upon as being leaders whether the members of the family want to be or not. However, the number of hours spent at the church are not a fair reflection of their relationship with Jesus Christ. As suggested by the survey and through reading of literature, pastors tend to spend a large amount of time with their church family and less with their family at home. Paul explained it best when he asked the question “for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?”¹¹⁵

Husbands and wives must spend time together with their family. It is important for the church family to see their pastor's family functioning well together. This does not mean that everything is perfect. Many times a pastor and his family get held up high above everybody else and because of this, problems can be created and the crash can be hard. Disappointments can prevail. The husband and wife as ministry partners can be viewed many different ways. However, there are characteristics found in couples who see themselves as healthy ministry partners which allow them to be more effective when serving in the church.

¹¹⁵ 1 Timothy 3:5.

Chapter 4

Characteristics of the Healthy Ministry Marriage

The couple who is in ministry together have certain qualities and characteristics that make them successful as a partnership in the ministry. It takes hard work to develop and grow any relationship. Characteristics which define healthy ministry marriages stems from the hard work involved when developing their relationship together. In essence, the couple who is effective in ministry “live a lively experience of God’s grace and growth in their Christianity”¹¹⁶ as they walk together serving the church. The couple intentionally does this walk together.

God

First in the Couple’s Life

If a pastor were asked, “Which comes first, marriage or ministry?” there may be many different answers. In fact, because of the demanding aspect of ministry, many answer this question wrong to the detriment of their marriage and their family. Still, the pastor and his or her spouse must understand what ministry is and the demands that go into ministry as a vocation. The vocation of ministry involves the whole family and, in particular, the spouse of the minister.

The Christian marriage between two people, no matter who they are or what their vocation is, must place God first in their lives. They must have a devotion to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior so that He receives all the glory for everything in their lives. Marriage is a gift from God. It should be “utterly selfless living that should please God.”¹¹⁷ God should get the attention that He deserves in the lives of His children.

¹¹⁶ Kevin Mannoia, and Larry Walkemeyer, *Fifteen characteristics of Effective Pastors: How to Strengthen Your Inner Core and Ministry Impact* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 7.

¹¹⁷ Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, 34.

The first four commandments of the Ten Commandments deal with man's relationship with God. The first commandment states, "You shall have no other gods before me."¹¹⁸ God was addressing the individual here, but it is important that the couple that is involved in ministry put God first in their marriage. Paul writes to the Corinthians what the order of the household should be by writing, "The head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."¹¹⁹ This statement is not a suggestion. The head of the household is or should be Jesus Christ. He should be the One who is looked to for the direction of the marriage and the family.

The institution of the family is dependent on putting Christ first in the marriage, allowing Him to lead in their lives. The couple who is in ministry should have this as a priority and model it to the church. A marriage that is not first and foremost ground with Jesus Christ leading the ministry family and does not have a relationship with Him will have a difficult time leading the church. God must be first in the individual lives of people, and He must be first in the life of the family. The individual is that "unique person God created for His pleasure and purpose."¹²⁰ Still, God created the couple as well because "it is not good for man to be alone."¹²¹ The woman was created for the very purpose of helping man because God knew that man could not do it alone.

Relationships are key to humankind. The relationship between the individual and God and relationships between each other is in the nature which God created. Making God first in the family includes many aspects and practices. Many of these are well known to the individual but should be practiced as a couple and as a family.

¹¹⁸ Exodus 20:3.

¹¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 11:3.

¹²⁰ Eugene Bianchi, *Marriage is Not for Wimps* (Bloomington, IL: Xlibris, 2009), 6.

¹²¹ Genesis 2:18.

Prayer

The second characteristic of the partnership couple is a couple grounded in prayer. Prayer should be a part of the individual and practiced as a couple. Christ, as the head of the family, should be communicated to through prayer. If He is truly the head of the family, He should be a part of the family. The couple should pray for their spouse, their marriage, and their family. Prayer marks the “constant awareness of God’s presence and submission to His will.”¹²²

Those who fail to pray will fail to grow in their relationship with Christ. A marriage will struggle in its growth without prayer. Peter establishes the importance of prayer in the life of marriage writing, “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”¹²³ Couples need to understand prayer will help strengthen one’s marriage, but Peter is telling his readers prayer in a strong marriage will also help one’s personal prayer life.

The Study of God’s Word

Making God first in the lives of a married couple who is in ministry is the need to spend time in God’s Word as a couple and as a family. God’s Word is especially important in the lives of His people, and couples should be seeking out God through the Bible on a regular basis. Like spending time in prayer, the study of God’s Word together provides the couple with a venue to discuss biblical topics having to do with their marriage or family. It also provides the couple an opportunity just to spend time together. Studying the Bible together will create a spiritual

¹²² Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, 71.

¹²³ 1Peter 3:7.

intimacy. As the couple shares together, “spiritual intimacy is deepened”¹²⁴ thereby deepening the relationship between the two people.

The Family Mission Statement

Some pastors and family counselors have proposed developing a family mission statement. What this does is “paint a clear vision of what the couple wants the relationship to become.”¹²⁵ The mission statement can be a great tool in any family, but in the ministry family, it helps put focus on a purpose for the couple. It allows them to see their purpose and to help them define their mission in the Kingdom of God. It also allows a couple to brain-storm ways to achieve specific goals in the family and in the ministry.

The couple who allows God to lead them in their marriage but also lead them in their ministry will have a strong marriage. When the couple allows God to lead their lives, they further their effectiveness in leading others in their lives in Christ. God will bless a marriage that seeks Him first. The healthy marriage is dependent on Him and His Word. God, in His Word, states what a healthy marriage is and how a couple can have a healthy marriage. He designed the marriage for the couple’s benefit so they can work together as one for the benefit of others as God is glorified in their lives. Unfortunately, if the couple does not work on their relationship with God and each other, “walls of protection around emotions”¹²⁶ will begin to form along with a certain amount of resentment and mistrust between each other. In some cases, one will not be aware of the other’s feelings thereby making the relationship more volatile. There must be an

¹²⁴ Chapman, *Covenant Marriage*, 206.

¹²⁵ Kerry Shook and Chris Shook, *Love at Last Sight: Thirty Days to Grow and Deepen Your Closest Relationship* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2010), 77.

¹²⁶ Mathew Woodley and Julie Woodley, “Till Ministry Do Us Part?: The Breaking and Healing of a Pastor’s Marriage,” *Leadership* 25, no. 2 (2004), 86.

investment made by both people in the relationship. If the relationship fails, the ministry of God to the church or the ministry being served will almost definitely fail.

Healthy Marriage

The ministry couple, to be effective in ministry, also needs to work toward a healthy marriage. Marriages by their nature are not perfect because those who are part of the marriage are human. Marriages require a great deal of work between both people in the marriage. After their devotion to God, the couple must then be devoted to each other.

Any meaningful type of relationship a human being may have requires work. One's relationship with Jesus Christ is one that takes work to develop and nurture. The marriage between a husband and wife is no different. It is the idea of "relationship which is important to God"¹²⁷ which allows two people to grow together in God. It is a "love-enabling reality"¹²⁸ enabling husbands and wives to love one another uniquely and unconditionally through Christ.

Submitting to Each Other

The Bible explains what a healthy marriage is. Paul lists the qualities of a healthy marriage in Ephesians:

"Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of

¹²⁷Bianchi, *Marriage is Not for Wimp*), 6.

¹²⁸ William May, *Marriage: The Rock on Which the Family is Built* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2009), 8.

his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”¹²⁹

God is serious when He speaks about the marriage between a man and woman. The amount of work involved in making a marriage successful is massive in any type of situation, but in a ministry context, it is to a greater extent. The marriage between two people in any situation should be of equal devotion in their religious conviction. In other words, a Christian man should seek out a Christian woman to marry. This is especially important in the ministry life of two people. It would be difficult for a pastor of the gospel to minister effectively if the spouse were of a different faith. The pastor and spouse couple not be a partner in ministry, and they would not be able to engage those with whom they would come into contact. A “godly spouse is a gift second only to the gift of salvation”¹³⁰ which allows the two to become good partners in life and in ministry.

This partnership includes submitting to one another as Paul writes in Ephesians 5:22-33. The biblical model of Jesus Christ as the head of the household must be followed. Submission here is applied to both men and women. A marriage will not work as God intended without submission just as a church whose members do not submit to each other will have a difficult time existing as a community.

Communication

Even a healthy marriage can experience conflict. Pastors are not immune to “self-image

¹²⁹ Ephesians 5:21-33.

¹³⁰ Wilson and Hoffman, *Preventing Ministry*, 48.

issues, conflict over time spent”¹³¹ with the spouse and family. In some cases, these are more pronounced in the pastor’s family; therefore, couples must know how to communicate, not just when conflict arises, but at all times. Communication involves two essential parts.

Communication involves “self-revelation on the part of one individual and listening on the other.”¹³² Through communication, couple share thoughts, feelings, and experiences in each other’s lives. Both husband and wife must be willing to take turns talking and listening. They must share in an open and honest way with each other. Good communication is what couples experience on the road to deeper intimacy.

Through communication, couples also experience intimacy. Intimacy is experienced in many different ways. From the beginning, intimacy with God is the priority for both husband and wife and then intimacy with each other. Intimacy with God teaches the married person to learn to love unconditionally. Christ loves His children unconditionally which teaches His children to love each other unconditionally. There are many types of intimacy expressed in the ministry couple. Spiritual intimacy should be practiced by the couple in their marriage. Prayer and Bible reading should be done individually and as a couple. By putting God at the head of the household, He will lead the couple in their ministry lives and in their private family lives.

Couples need to experience emotional intimacy as well. They need to be able to express the good and difficult things they are experiencing. Without being able to express these feelings, trust will not be built. They must also be able to experience vulnerability and be transparent with each other. This allows the couple to have intellectual intimacy where they can talk and discuss about their life together and their individual lives.

¹³¹John Charles Wynn, “Pastors Have Family Problems Too,” *Pastoral Psychology* 11, no. 106 (September 1960): 7-10.

¹³²Chapman, *Covenant Marriage*, 37.

Social intimacy involves spending time with other people and includes spending time with their church family. If the church is to be a family of God, the pastor and spouse are to lead the church in this respect. The church needs to see their staff members be a part of social gatherings. This does not mean the pastor and spouse have to be at every function of the church; however, it should be decided what functions are important for staff member to attend.

A healthy marriage should include a physical intimacy which includes hugs, kisses, massages, and, of course, sex. Physical intimacy is not just about sex. It is the closeness a couple has with each other.

Couples should experience a balance between each of these types of intimacy. One member of the marriage should not overpower the other or else the relationship will not be balanced. There may be times when one member is more prominent than the other because of role or function within the marriage. In the long run of the relationship, balance is the key.

Finally, a couple in a healthy marriage understands they should never stop working on their marriage. Submission to each other, communication, and intimacy are all part of a healthy marriage, but these characteristics will not in themselves make the marriage healthy. The marriage is made healthy through the commitment of the hard work of both the husband and wife.

The Couple Called to Ministry

Being in the ministry is difficult work. Many who are outside of ministry do not always understand the difficulties and hardships those in ministry face in the course of the life God has given them. The Bible speaks of those who are in ministry as “laborers,”¹³³ “hardworking

¹³³ Matthew 9:37-38.

farmers,”¹³⁴ and those who “endure hardship as good soldiers.”¹³⁵ They are to “immerse themselves”¹³⁶ to fulfill the calling to ministry and be “ready in season and out of season.”¹³⁷ Finally, they are to “spend and be spent”¹³⁸ in their ministry work. The Bible does not see this sort of work as an easy task; therefore, the husband and wife should both consider the cost and hardships the call to ministry entails.

The role of the pastor’s spouse has changed through the years. The spouse’s call to ministry should be “evaluated on the same terms as the pastor’s call.”¹³⁹ The spouse should have a calling from God to be in the ministry as He sees in the life of the individual. For the pastor and spouse to work as a team or partners, this is necessary. Although this project’s purpose is not to debate this fact, the role of women has changed in the church. Some denominations have women as pastors which makes the pastor’s spouse a unique role. No longer is the pastor the male and the spouse female as has been traditional in the church. The female pastor and male spouse breaks the traditional mold of the ministry couple.

The clergy husband may be treated as “someone who does something generous that is against gender types.”¹⁴⁰ This can force the clergy husband to do things traditionally the pastor wife might do that do not suit his abilities. Traditional roles do not work in this sense, nor do they really work in any sense. The gifts of the individual should be considered when he or she

¹³⁴ 2 Timothy 2:6.

¹³⁵ 2 Timothy 2:3.

¹³⁶ 1 Timothy 4:15.

¹³⁷ 2 Timothy 4:2.

¹³⁸ 2 Corinthians 12:15.

¹³⁹ Craig Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 3.

¹⁴⁰ Lillian Daniel, “The Pastor’s Husband,” *The Christian Century*, July 14, 2009, 29.

finds a place to minister alongside his or her spouse who is the pastor because “fulfillment and effectiveness result from ministering in accordance to their gifts.”¹⁴¹

Traditional roles for the clergy wife are not what they used to be in the past. Clergy wives may be hesitant to act on the call to ministry because of the way traditional clergy spouses acted and ministries involved in or led. Traditionally, the wife would be home to help the husband in visitation and entertaining whenever needed. Since in many cases, the spouse of the clergy is also working outside the home, it is difficult for them to fulfill those roles and, in some cases, is changing the perception of the clergy spouse. If the traditional role of the spouse is a “demonstration of their Christian commitment, then one can sympathize with the hesitance to continue in the traditional role”¹⁴² of the clergy spouse. The roles have changed which means the role of full-time ministry for the husband and wife is different than in the past.

One of the mistakes many who are involved in full-time ministry make is the mistake of looking at their job in ministry as their commitment to God. While ministry is a commitment to the work of God, it needs to be understood that the job has no bearing on one’s relationship with Jesus Christ. The thought of ministry as the primary relationship to their Savior is a mistake in belief. “Ministry taking precedence over family”¹⁴³ can leave the family left out in the life of those in ministry. Some see the precedent for ministry to be a detriment to their families. In extreme cases, it could be considered abandonment in that they never see their families. There needs to be a balance in the time one takes in their ministry job and time with family. Family should always take precedence over the job. Working healthy hours will “rest the mind and body

¹⁴¹ Rebuli, *The Role of the Pastor’s Wife*, 110.

¹⁴² Laura Deming and Jack Stubbs, “The Two Career Marriage: Implications for Ministry,” *Word & World* 4, no. 2 (1984), 176.

¹⁴³ Moore, *Good Christians, Good Husbands*, 11.

and therefore build a better marriage.”¹⁴⁴

The call to ministry involves both the pastor and spouse. The husband and wife must make that commitment in order to be effective in the ministry in which God has put them. The couple who is in ministry should consider themselves partners in ministry. They must begin to share in the responsibilities of ministry because it affects their family, and it affects the church in which they are a part. Since the marriage should be a lifelong partnership as God designed it, the partnership of a husband and wife should be just as important in ministry.

The call of the pastor to ministry is important to the church. Without this call, the church becomes a business in which a person leads the organization, and God is not part of the equation. As part of the call of the pastor, he or she must understand the concept of Jesus Christ being “the head of the church.”¹⁴⁵ Without the call of Christ into ministry, Christ is not allowed to lead as He should be leading His church; therefore, this call to ministry is important.

The call of the spouse should be considered as well. The question must be asked, “Are they ready for the demands of ministry and are they willing to be a part of the ministry in which their spouse is being called to?” As has been stated elsewhere in this project, it is crucial for the spouse to want to be involved in ministry. In history, John Wesley’s wife and this writer have seen the difficulties that are presented when the spouse of someone who is called into ministry is not called into ministry. It is a difficult situation where many times the pastor is being pulled between the two entities where the end result is the pastor not being able to properly minister to the people of his church.

¹⁴⁴ Jake Kircher, and Melissa Kircher, *Ninety-Nine Thoughts on Marriage and Ministry: Prioritizing the Holiness of Matrimony* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2013) 326 Kindle Edition.

¹⁴⁵ Colossians 1:18.

Still, there is a “foreignness of the clergy role in society, a role even sometimes foreign to the spouse.”¹⁴⁶ Many people do not understand this stressful, difficult role the pastor has taken on in his or her life. If the pastor is not a person who will share with his spouse his life in ministry or if the spouse does not have a call to ministry, this role will be a difficult one to handle. A spouse should be the best resource the pastor can have in his life outside of his relationship to Jesus Christ.

When a man and wife get married, “God sees you as one. There is no my calling or your calling. It all works together.”¹⁴⁷ It is important for the spouse to have a calling to ministry as well as the pastor. The call to God’s work is a unique one, and the call to be a pastor’s spouse is also a unique one. Understanding the unique call of both will help the ministry couple truly be partners in their marriage and in the ministry. Still, the husband and wife are not the only part of the family. Those that have children must consider how the children effect the family and on the way ministry is approached.

Healthy Child Relationships

Some couples do not have children. They have either chosen not to or God has not blessed them with children. This project, while primarily dealing with the relationship of husband and wife, also sometimes have the added blessing of children. The dynamic of children must also be considered since they are indeed part of the family. Children are born into the ministry. The decision to be a part of ministry is not theirs to make until they are older and understand the dynamics of a call to ministry. It is the responsibility for both parents to be a part of their children’s life. Parents who have made the decision to be in ministry need to make life as

¹⁴⁶ Daniel, “The Pastor’s Husband,” 29.

¹⁴⁷ Alexander, *Marriage and Ministry*, 132 Kindle.

normal as possible for the children. Normalcy, as best as a ministry family can have, is important to the child's life. Time and effort must be made for children. They did not make the ministry commitment the parents made.

Normalcy for ministry children is being part of the church. As the parents value the commitment they have made to God and to the church they also have made a commitment to their children. Children of those in the ministry should be taught this value as they grow. Children can become involved in the church in various aspects by serving as they grow older. By children serving this way, it becomes a "benefit for the family and the congregation"¹⁴⁸ by children showing an example both to other adults and other children within the congregation. Taking part in serving at the church also allows the family to be together in the greater context of the family of God. By doing this, children will begin to learn the blessing which comes from serving God. As with all other activities children do, this idea of service to the church must be well thought out and planned.

As children are raised in this environment of ministry, they need to experience the love of God as much as any child would need to in any Christian home. Carefully planned family time, both in and outside of church, are essential to the health and well-being spiritually, mentally, and physically of the child. Both parents should have an active part in raising their children. Many times a pastor will spend an inordinate amount of time at the church. This can happen to pastor's spouses as well which in turn places the whole family in church more than they need to be. Couples must learn to take time away to be with family.

Finally, children must be kept out of the various problems associated with ministry as much as possible. This recommendation is to not limit children to the world of church work and

¹⁴⁸ Croft, and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 1332, Kindle.

make the church life seem better than it is; however, this effort is so children do not become disillusioned with the church in later life. Children can rebel against the church and against God because of the actions of a few people and because it seemed like the only life they knew is the church. The difference here is the love of God in the life of the individual and the love of the church as it pertains to a mother or father's work. Children need to feel the love of God in their lives. This can be accomplished through the love of their parents and the love they experience through the church. Because the church is made up of people, there inevitably are times when difficulties arise and people are difficult. Children in these cases need to understand they are not the problem. Unless they are part of the problem, they need to know they are safe and secure in their environment.

As children grow, they can have a greater understanding and responsibility in the working of a church. The children in a ministry family are not the individuals who were originally called into ministry. Children whose parents are in ministry should be raised as a normal, devoted Christian home would raise Christian children. Christian service begins when one accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and this is no different for the family who is in a position of ministering to other people. Children should be loved and learn to love as Christ loves them.

Working as a Ministry Partnership

Marriage is the life of two people made one by God. Since this couple has been made one, he and she has a part of one shared life. Therefore, "marriage is about sharing. If you do not share, it is not a marriage."¹⁴⁹ Two people come together. They make decisions together. They

¹⁴⁹ Jimmy Evans, *Our Secret Paradise: Seven Secrets for Building a Secure and Satisfying Marriage* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2006), 123.

do things together. They build a life and family together. A marriage partnership brings two people who are different in many ways and makes them one so the two apart are better as a whole.

The couple who is in ministry should then be called as a couple into ministry as a partnership. As one is called, both should be called as one. God's design allows for it. This calling of both instills a ministry partnership between the husband and wife who are engaged in a life of ministry. Since a husband and wife are called companions, they serve together. Paul writes about Aquila and Priscilla "together with the church in their house"¹⁵⁰ as they served together. He also mentions the fact that he and Barnabas "have a right to take with them a believing wife as the other apostles do"¹⁵¹ indicating some of the other apostles had wives who accompanied them in their work of the gospel. They gave of themselves for the ministry in the support of their husband. God's design for the pastor's wife is to be her husband's helper through the love of Christ. The same is true for husbands of female pastors. They are to help and partner together in the ministry using their gifts in that ministry.

The ministry partnership between a couple becomes an important ingredient to the work which is done in God's Kingdom. This partnership makes the marriage stronger, therefore, strengthening the approach to ministry. The way this partnership is manifest will be different for different couples; however, there are elements which should be common to married couples as they serve together.

First, spouses must understand the career demands of the pastor. Most people who serve on ministerial staff are on call twenty-four hours a day. It is essential for the church staff person

¹⁵⁰ 1 Corinthians 16:19.

¹⁵¹ 1 Corinthians 9:5-6.

to make sure he or she spends time with his or her spouse and children. However, emergencies happen, and pastors cannot set a time when to deal with an emergency in the hospital or a death in a family. Spouses need to understand what may happen and also possibly be a part of the ministering process. Many times, a spouse may have a different insight on a situation and be able to offer help. Encouragement is needed to help sustain each other as they minister together. Every person needs support and encouragement to carry out the directive of God.

The pastor should recognize the role of the spouse in ministry. It is important to realize the value of each other in ministry and to acknowledge each other's gifts and interests as work is accomplished together. An understanding can also be developed around the expectations of the congregation and needs of the family. Each person should value the contribution they give to the ministry.

Understand Priorities

The job of ministry is one that can feel like an intrusion on the family and its life; however, the family investing in the ministry will not see the ministry as an intrusion. Careful planning must be considered to spend time with family outside of the work of the church. God has called both husband and wife in the ministry as a couple. It will take both people to plan their lives accordingly in God's plan. Couples should learn how to put boundaries in their lives so they are living accordingly to God's design.

Boundaries help the couple decide what they can and cannot do in ministry. They need to be able to say "no to the control, pressure, demands, and sometimes real needs of others."¹⁵² The ability to say no and establish boundaries can and will allow the ministry couple to protect themselves and their family from some of the overwhelming aspects of ministry. Family

¹⁵² Cloud, *Boundaries*, 28.

relationships must have “specific boundaries and hedges in place showing active love for the family”¹⁵³ while shielding them from some aspects of ministry. Setting boundaries makes burnout in the ministry less of a possibility and allows the established boundaries to define the parameters in which the ministry couple will be able to minister to those around them.

Investment in Each Other

Each person should show concern and interest in each other’s part in ministry. Although the pastor takes the lead in the overall ministry of the church, he or she should have a vested interest in all the ministries in the church. The pastor should show concern and encouragement for the spouse’s involvement in ministry. This also shows a concern for one another as they encourage each other toward victories in Christ.

Church work can be frustrating for both. There are times when there is no one else the pastor or spouse can turn to except their spouse. The support of the spouse can uplift a person who is going through a difficult time in ministry which makes a difference in the marriage. Without this support, there could be a danger of the pastor or spouse finding this emotional support from other sources. This can become a danger for the marriage relationship and, therefore, a danger for the ministry in which they are a part. Reports of ministerial marital failure does happen. It also happens in the life of the spouse as well. Unfortunately, this failure happens for a variety of reasons. Reasons for this failure include abandonment, seeking out emotional support, and seeking out physical support. These issues can happen less if ministry couples understand their need to be supportive in all aspects of their lives together. One such breakdown in the lives of the ministry couple can be in their spiritual development.

¹⁵³ Nelson Searcy, *The Renegade Pastor: Abandoning Average in Your Life and Ministry* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 2013), 26.

Second, the ministry couple should show a responsible spiritual development. The spiritual development of the family cannot remain stagnate. The church is not and should not be the only spiritual growth for the individual or the Christian family. In the same way, the ministry couple must be responsible for their own spiritual development as well as the spiritual development of their family. This will result in a spiritual intimacy between the couple. By “cooperating with the Holy Spirit’s work”¹⁵⁴ in the life of the couple, communication and commitment grow stronger in their relationship with God and each other.

Communication

Communication is also prominent in the couple who are ministry partners. Just as communication is important to the healthy marriage, communication is the key ingredient in any healthy relationship or in ministry. The husband and wife must be committed to communicate with God and each other. Communicating with God is essential, and communication with each other is important as well. Communication provides a foundation for each other’s needs. Conversation should happen. This communication is important in that it is “one of the most important ways to communicate affection and caring”¹⁵⁵ towards the other person.

Communication also allows the couple to manage boundaries. Boundaries being in place allow the couple to know when these boundaries are being overstepped. The boundaries in this sense are the boundaries of being away too much for work. The couple must have the sense of knowing what each other feels about the time spent in ministry for the individual and the family. It can become too much, and each person must be able to communicate these boundaries so the relationship of the couple or with the children is not strained. Pastors need to be aware of the

¹⁵⁴ Chapman, *Covenant Marriage*, 197.

¹⁵⁵ Harley, *His Needs, Her Needs*, 69.

conflict of home and work. Pastors should not neglect their families for the sake of the church. They must not allow the church to take up all their time. “Abandonment is not spiritual and is antithetical to the work of God.”¹⁵⁶

Pastors rarely feel off of work. The church can be a rival for loyalty to their family. They have to make that evening phone call, or they have a meeting that needs to be attended. The pastor should be aware that these things, if they become overbearing, can be difficult on the marriage. They must be willing to take days off, including vacations, and pursue “interests outside of the ministry.”¹⁵⁷ Pastors need to learn that time is an important aspect of the family. They must also distinguish between time with family, time with children, and time with their spouse.

Sometimes a congregation or member of the congregation may be disappointed because the pastor was not there for something they perceived as an emergency. Pastors need to learn the practice of “differentiation which is the ability to remain connected in relationship to significant people and yet not have our reactions and behavior determined by them.”¹⁵⁸ Pastors should determine whether he or she needs to take care of the need or if there could be a delegation system, especially with the deacon body, which the needs of the congregation can be taken care of in a meaningful fashion. This allows the pastor to better manage his time.

Understanding boundaries may become difficult in the marriage and the church. People within the church do not always consider the amount of time a pastor may spend away from his spouse or family for his work. There may be occasional disappointment on the side of the church

¹⁵⁶ Moore, *Good Christians Good Husbands*, 3.

¹⁵⁷ Burns, Chapman, and Guthrie, *Is Ministry Killing Your Marriage*, 3.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

and family. Still, God established the family, and great care must be taken to establish those boundaries of work habits.

Third, the spouse's calling should provide practical help. Providing practical help in the family helps perform certain tasks for the pastor is free to do the work of ministry. For example, taking care of children, or being available for specific needs of the family will help the pastor not worry about needs being met. Performing domestic help is especially true for male spouses of pastors or ministers. A female who is minister to children, will need specific support from her husband, especially on the weekend or on Sunday.

The call of the spouse includes career advice to the church staff person. Church staff move many times during the course of a career. The spouse must understand the need to move in ministry. When the pastor is sensing a call to another place of service, spouses should be ready to offer wise counsel. In some cases, the spouse does not have a choice. In other cases, the pastor does not even have a choice when moving to a new place of ministry. Still, the spouse can provide support and some guidance.

If possible, the spouse should have input into the potential change of ministry. This would include being a part of the interview process. A spouse can often have an insight the pastor might not have or miss because of excitement or preparing for the meetings he or she may have. Many times the spouse is better at certain aspects of life than the pastor and can provide support and guidance in the direction of the possible change.

The call of the spouse should be allowed to be a part of what ministry he or she feels God is leading. Years ago, the spouse (especially if she were female) was asked to fulfill the role of pianist, children's minister, or some other leadership role in which she may not have had a gift.

The God-given gift of the spouse should help to determine where the spouse may help in the ministry situation.

Much of this section has focused on the spouse and how the spouse works within the bounds of ministry. However, the pastor who strives to work together with his spouse as partners in ministry must understand the possibilities that come with serving as ministry partners. First, pastors need to let their spouses know the value they possess as a part of the ministry partnership. There is a “deep desire to be respected, valued, and appreciated by our spouse”¹⁵⁹ in any marriage. Still, the spouse of a pastor needs to know he or she is a valued part of the ministry. The church needs to know how valuable the spouse is to the ministry in which God has placed them. In these cases of a partnership in ministry, the spouse is not a bystander in the church. He or she is important to the ministry of that pastor, and it must be made clear the need to be seen in this respect.

As a partner in ministry, the pastor should keep the spouse informed of things that are happening in the ministry. Communication is key here. Surprises are not always welcome when there has not been good communication or planning. As with keeping the spouse informed, the spouse can provide input into what is happening in the ministry. Having a different point of view can shed new light on a matter that had never occurred to the pastor. Many times, because of the potential intimacy with their spouse, they can become a valuable, trusted advisor in the ministry.

The spouse should be allowed, as a partner, to work within the gifts God has given him or her. This means the spouse does not do things in the church that the other pastor’s spouses were expected to do throughout the years. Just as with any other member of the church, the pastor’s

¹⁵⁹ Harley, *His Needs, Her Needs*, 212.

spouse “longs to be accepted as a member to use his or her gifts and talents”¹⁶⁰ for the body’s use. The spouse should be allowed to volunteer where he or she feels comfortable and gifted in volunteering. Pastors need to realize the spouses should be closely connected to them, being available to do ministry together and seen together. Many times the spouse is gifted in a different way than the pastor is and allowing them to complement each other will only strengthen the ministry.

As ministry partners, spouses can work effectively in the ministry to which God has called them. Each person within the partnership should understand the role they have in the ministry according to their gifts God has given. By working together, the enjoyment and blessing of ministry can be raised to new heights as God works through each individual collectively and together to continue to do the ministry in which He has placed them. When the focus of ministry becomes a partnership with God and each other in a marriage, it becomes God’s ministry and how can “we” accomplish the work in “our” ministry. Marriage is about being together and doing things together. What is “difficult for one is easier for two,”¹⁶¹ thereby bringing the two closer together in all relationships.

¹⁶⁰ Judith S. Hylton, *The Faith of the Pastor’s Wife: Surviving in Ministry Yet Remaining in Love with God and His People* (Bloomington, IN: Westbow Press, 2012), 57.

¹⁶¹ Ben Mandrell, *Discovering the Power of Partnership*, <http://www.lifeway.com/article/pastors-discovering-power-partnership-marriage>, 2013.

Chapter 5

The Benefits of a Healthy Ministry Marriage

The partnership between a pastor and spouse is not a new phenomenon in church ministry. Historically, there have been great examples of husbands and wives who have partnered together in ministry. There have also been examples of husbands and wives who have not partnered together in ministry. It is not the path some husbands and wives want to take in ministry. Some do not want to work together. Some spouses do not feel called to ministry. Some do not feel a great need to be a large part of the work of their pastor spouse or the church in which he or she serves. Some spouses help around the church because they feel the need to be productive in the traditional role. In other words, they are “leading by default”¹⁶² because the traditional role of a pastor’s spouse dictates their leading, or no one else will do whatever needs to be accomplished for the particular local ministry. Either way, pastors’ spouses are thrust, at times, into various leadership roles they have no gift for or desire to fulfill. Some spouses may embrace the role they have and accept what they are doing in life. Some may decide it is not something they want to do but will do it in a begrudging way. There can be conflict here. It is not God’s intention that we “abandon our lives in some areas to be extra ordinarily faithful in others.”¹⁶³

In some instances, pastors do not want their spouses to be an integral part of their ministries. These pastors do not see a need for their spouse to be involved in their ministry or work; however, the pastor who has this point of view may be missing some blessings personally

¹⁶² Lori Whilhite, Brandi Wilson, and Kay Warren, *Leading and Loving It: Encouragement for Pastor’s Wives and Women in Leadership* (New York, NY: Faithwords, 2013), 1.

¹⁶³ David Horner, *A Practical Guide for Life and Ministry: Overcoming Seven Challenges Pastors Face* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 3.

as well as the church missing blessings. Sometimes this type of pastor will tend to overwork for the sake of doing God's work. They do not realize a "wife (spouse) is a blessing and not an anchor to hold one back"¹⁶⁴ in their career as a pastor. Both the pastor and spouse working together can provide a greater ministry than the one who works alone in his ministry trying to fulfill the needs of everyone. Many times this kind of reasoning is from a larger church setting where multiple staff are working. Still, the spouse of the pastor has much to give a ministry setting of any size if indeed he or she is called to the role.

The Partnership

It cannot be underestimated that being in ministry is difficult work. There is much time and effort involved if one is going to fulfill God's call into the ministry. There may be a great deal of time spent away from family, and this love and devotion one has for God should not be interfered with by the family or anything else in that case. God should have the priority in one's life. Still, one can be a devoted spouse and not neglect the ministry in which one is involved. God knows the needs of those who are ministered to, and He also knows the needs of the family life of the individual. The secret is understanding the difference between one's devotion to God and devotion to one's work. Balance is important here. God does not hold church ministry as being more important or family as being more important. He "sees both as serving Him and His purposes on earth."¹⁶⁵ The ministry couple need to delicately balance ministry life and home life. This balance will be different for different people, but it should not be neglected.

¹⁶⁴ Moore, *Good Christians Good Husbands*, 141.

¹⁶⁵ Doug Patch, *Balancing Home and Church Ministry*, accessed July, 29, 2015, www.xenos.org/essays/balancing-home-church-ministry, 3.

As one contemplates the call of God into vocational ministry, one should choose a spouse wisely. Marrying the wrong person in any marriage can be difficult. In the ministry, marrying the wrong person can be disastrous. John Wesley married a woman who did not share his call to ministry. It strained their personal lives as well as making his ministry difficult. Oswald Sanders shares, “a man must have a wife who fully shares his spiritual aspirations and is willing to make necessary sacrifices.”¹⁶⁶ In other words, the spouse should have a clear calling to serve God in this capacity. Wesley’s wife did not have this call, and, therefore, Wesley had a difficult time balancing family and ministry. A marriage in ministry where each person does not share in the call of God to some extent could be considered an unequally yoked marriage. The difficulties developed here could be as great as a marriage between two people who do not have the same spiritual belief system. Ministry is difficult work, but it can be “especially tough if spouses are not supportive”¹⁶⁷ of the ministry. The choice of a spouse who shares the call to ministry and accepts the difficulties and challenges should be wisely taken into consideration. Thom Rainer suggests in the situation of a spouse who is not called to ministry is to make sure the one called to ministry “expresses unconditional love to the spouse, pray with the spouse, seek council, and be willing to leave the church”¹⁶⁸ if the pastor is working in ministry at the time. Marriages come first; jobs come later.

Many pastors marry while they are in seminary, or they get married after they are finished with school. In these cases, the pastor and potential spouse should discuss the call of God to ministry and how that might impact their life together. They must weigh the change they

¹⁶⁶ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, 57.

¹⁶⁷ Thom Rainer, *Seven Things to Consider If Your Spouse is Not Supportive of Your Ministry*, accessed July 7, 2015, www.thomrainer.com/2015/03/seven-things-to-consider-spouse-supportive-ministry/, 2014.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

may have in their lives. God's call to ministry can be strong to those who are considering the call of God later in life. If the pastor feels this call and the spouse does not, it may be beneficial for the couple to wait before becoming involved in ministry. A pastor will have difficulties "making it without a supportive spouse."¹⁶⁹

As marriage in ministry should be a blessing, children are a blessing as well for those who are involved in ministry. Children do not usually have a choice for their involvement in the church, but they still can be vitally involved in the ministry of the church as they grow older. Children then learn how to be productive members in the Kingdom as they accept Christ and grow in their faith of Him. Although it may take years to see the fruit from a couple's children, as they mature in the church, proper cultivation will be worth the wait in reaching their maturity and fruitfulness.

Pastors and spouses need to realize they have biblical responsibilities to fulfill as husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers. The image of the marriage includes spiritual oneness which Paul reiterates a passage from Genesis in Ephesians, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."¹⁷⁰ Paul is referring to the fact God designed marriage to be a partnership. The partnership should include all of life's adventures, including the ministry in which God has called people. The marriage union includes physical, emotional, and spiritual oneness to be shared together. The husband and wife biblically share these responsibilities. This involves a purposeful presence in the other person's life. The presence in the other person's life is the unique bond which a husband and wife should have together. The couple can find out that next to one's salvation, a marriage lived

¹⁶⁹ Rainer, *Seven Things to Consider If Your Spouse is Not Supportive of Your Ministry*.

¹⁷⁰ Ephesians 5:31.

“according to God’s design is the most wonderful and satisfying gift you can find”¹⁷¹ in life’s experiences.

Ministry families should experience the privilege of sharing ministry together. Sharing ministry together is a bond which God designed for the husband and wife to serve together. This shared bond in ministry will further strengthen the bond of the couple as they seek God’s will together for their lives. The bond of a partnership as the couple grows together and works together will enhance their personal lives.

There are times when a spouse does not have the call to ministry. Some spouses are drawn “into ministry believing because their spouse has been called to ministry, they will serve God in this way”¹⁷² because the relationship they have with their spouse dictates it. That is a flawed philosophy. The call must directly be from God. It can be very difficult if one person in the marriage has that call to ministry, and the other does not. Research has shown that “men choosing not to marry may be more constrained in their career attainment.”¹⁷³ This same research suggests this is not true for female clergy. This could be due to female clergy typically being in more liberal situations; however, the spouse without a call to ministry does not mean that serving in the ministry is out of the question. One may have to wait or find other ways to minister without being in full-time ministry. Although there is not one single answer to the situation, the person feeling called should consider the spouse’s willingness to be a part of the call from God. There may be reasons for a spouse not to feel called to ministry. A spouse’s misgivings about ministry may be a reason to wait and trust God in the situation. It is important

¹⁷¹ Greg Laurie, *Married Happily: Secrets to a Great Marriage* (Dana Point, CA: Kergyma, 2004), 3.

¹⁷² Benoit, “The Changing Role of the Pastor’s Wife in Today’s Evangelical Church”.

¹⁷³ Nesbitt, “Marriage, Parenthood, and Ministry,” 411.

to understand the reservations a spouse may have and to understand his perspective on the situation. Making concerted efforts to ease the difficulties of ministry is something else which can help the spouse become more at ease with the prospect of becoming a part of ministry. Still, without the call to ministry by both the pastor and spouse, difficulties in ministry will happen.

Ministry Children

This biblical responsibility of the husband and wife partnership also carries over to the raising of children as well. Scripture is clear in what parents are to do to properly raise their children in the Lord. This is designed by God to be a shared responsibility. This shared responsibility between the husband and wife in the life of their children cannot be effective without the presence of each person in the life of the children. As a shared responsibility, children need to feel they are loved and understand what it means to love God and serve God but that the job of ministry is not more important than the life of the family. Children in ministry families should be taught the responsibilities of ministry in the family. There will be times when ministry takes precedent because of an emergency. Still, the personal presence of the mother and father in the lives of their children cannot be overstated. The key is proper balance between family and work.

Raising children in a ministry home can have advantages for the children. Children in ministry have different experiences and opportunities that will shape their lives for years to come. A positive experience in ministry for children will help them grow into adults who are part of God's plans in the kingdom of God. The goal is not for the children to be called to full-time ministry. The goal for the "parents is to shepherd their children."¹⁷⁴ That is God's mandate for

¹⁷⁴ Jerry Pipes and Victor Lee, *Family to Family: Leaving a Legacy* (Lawrenceville, GA: Jerry Pipes Productions, 1999), 10.

parents. In being properly shepherded, they will be more open to what God calls them to be. The practice of spiritual disciplines within the family is important in the raising of children. In families in ministry, it has a positive effect on ministry satisfaction as well as sustaining the relationship one has with God,”¹⁷⁵ thereby establishing God as the head of the family and trusting in Him for the family needs.

The most important aspect in the notion of being called as a husband and wife into ministry is obedience to the commands of God. A husband and wife may have a certain vision to which they may feel God has been leading them. Blocks may be put in the way of either of these person; however, the faithful person will find ways to use the block to find a different way to serve God. If those that love Him are faithful, He will be faithful to provide the opportunity. Depending on man’s vision instead of God’s is short termed. It must be “God centered to provide positive, long-lasting impact”¹⁷⁶ in the ministry.

Benefits of Ministry Partnership

Spiritual Benefits

Pastors and their spouses may feel they are partnering in ministry. In reality, they may just be living lives in parallel and not really interacting together. They may be even working in the same ministry together but in different areas and are not really working together as a couple. Couples who do not partner together forget “few combinations are more effective in modeling

¹⁷⁵ Andrews, “Spiritual Family, and Ministry Satisfaction Among Missionaries,” 117.

¹⁷⁶ George Barna, *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God’s Plan for Your Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 161.

spiritual life and equipping families than the husband and wife team”¹⁷⁷ working together to further God’s kingdom.

As pastors and their spouses work together as partners in ministry, they may find benefits for both the couple and the church. This partnership, a husband and wife who are both called to ministry, understand ministry, and are wholeheartedly accepting of what God has in store for them both spiritually and as a couple, will be fulfilling to the couple in many ways.

The couple becomes a model for the church. This model is not that they are better or different than anyone else in the church, but they can model the difference between the couple who has God at the head of their household and one who does not. The importance of modeling cannot be understated. Although the pastor and spouse should not want to be elevated above others, they are still a role model and counselor for many within the church.

Through this, the couple can grow stronger spiritually both as individuals and together. Being a pastor, with its demands, and having a family, with its demands, can only be done correctly if one is dependent on God for strength. It is not just the pastor who needs this strength. The spouse also needs the strength and guidance only God can provide. The couple can pray together, study the Word together, and seek God’s will together. Through this, they will discover the presence of God more than they may have in the past.

Discussing what is being taught to the congregation and being open to each other’s ideas, allows God to work through them as individuals and as a team. Adam stated, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”¹⁷⁸ As they discuss the issues involving the church, they can

¹⁷⁷ Larry Keefauver, *Put Your Wife in Her Place...as a Ministry Partner That Is*, accessed July 30, 2015, <http://ministrytodaymag.com/ministry-leadership/women-in-leadership/1066-put-your-wife-in-her-place-as-a-ministry-partner-that-is>, 2009, 1.

¹⁷⁸ Genesis 2:23.

begin to understand and implement the response God would want them to have, and they live those plans out in their lives. God then becomes the focal point in their lives thereby leading the church to make God the focal point in their lives. Even by discussing a lesson together, God's Word becomes deeper, discussing them together and then seeing how God works through those plans.

For example, instruction on the importance of forgiveness can have a lasting effect on those who are teaching the lesson. The husband and wife who are ministering and sharing together will become better forgivers themselves if they are to take to heart what they are teaching others. Role-playing petty arguments and immature responses to conflict can help better understand Paul's admonition to "overcome evil with good."¹⁷⁹

Prayer has always been an important part of the Christian life. Communication with God should be one of the most important aspects of any Christian. The prayer life of the couple is strengthened through the need to find direction in Christ. Ministry couples find as they pray for their home life as well as their church life they become closer to God and to each other. It is only through prayer that "peace, joy, and the strength to meet the demands of daily life in ministry"¹⁸⁰ is found. Spiritually, this strengthens the couple as they pray together individually and corporately for their marriage, family, and the church in which they serve. The prayer life of the couple is strengthened, making their ministry more directed toward God.

The whole home, children included, can benefit from the discovery that modeling a godly marriage can have on the home. Spiritual growth and progress, if taken seriously, can only help and enhance the experience one has in marriage. Timothy is told to "practice these things,

¹⁷⁹ Romans 12:21.

¹⁸⁰ Jenna Floyd, *Ten Things Every Pastor's Wife Needs to Know* (Green Forest, AR: New Leaf Press, 2009), 3.

immerse yourself in them, so all may see your progress.”¹⁸¹ By intentionally practicing spiritual discipleship, the couple will find not only their individual lives closer to God, but they will find their lives together better because their lives are spiritually bonded to Jesus Christ who should naturally lead the Christian family in general but especially the family who is in ministry.

Personal Benefits

In the book of Ecclesiastes, the writer states, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.”¹⁸² While this has many implications, this truth is especially fitting for those who are partnering together in ministry. When someone is down, the other can life up and encourage. When one is trying to find direction or make decisions, the other can help guide. No one person can do the job of ministry and do everything in a quality and effective manner; therefore, the ministry couple who partners together can be a help and guide to each other. Furthermore, involving the entire family in ministry together will bring the family closer together as a unit. Serving together can mean the husband and wife can thrive together. As the couple lives God’s calling for their lives together, their lives will begin to flourish as well.

Because the pastor tends to spend a large amount of time doing church ministry, the feeling of isolation tends to occur for the spouse. This feeling of isolation can and does extend to the relationship the spouse has with the church family. Many times it becomes difficult for the spouse to become close friends with anyone in the church because of perceived status on the part of the church, and the fact it is difficult to talk about church matters and conflicts with someone who is a member of the church. While it is important for couples to develop relationships outside the church, the partnering of a couple, can begin to diminish that feeling of isolation a spouse

¹⁸¹ 1 Timothy 4:15.

¹⁸² Ecclesiastes 4:9.

may begin to have. The couple will find the need to become closer because there is no other person that can know the personal life that the spouse. Love becomes modeled as Jesus modeled love - unconditionally.

By allowing each spouse to use and pursue ministry based on their gifts, strengths, and passions will allow the couple to better partner together. Traditional roles for the spouse or children may not work. Sometimes, if forced into these roles, those who are involved may become unhappy and resentful. By using the gifts God has given the individual, each person can better work together in the place of ministry and at home. The couple can use each other's strengths for the fulfillment of the ministry. By relying on each other, they begin to become dependent on each other in their lives and in their work.

Couples become better communicators when they work together as partners. They learn to talk appropriately to each other about the victories and defeats of ministry and how to work to make it better. Because of this dynamic of communication in ministry, couples will find they communicate better in the home as well. When two people depend on the help and opinion of the other, they will communicate their needs to each other and better coordinate their lives in ministry and at home.

The couple who partners together has the ability to share struggles and failures together. Through Christ, they can work through the difficulties and challenges faced in ministry and at home so they do not have to feel they are facing the struggles alone. Each person needs to be willing to open up to the other person and be able to be honest without the feeling of facing condemnation from the other member. Problems in both realms (church and home) will always exist, but working and striving together, the couple is also allowed to share victories as well. Working through problems to see victories benefits each other so the couple can encourage one

another in their lives together, giving God the glory for what they are doing and seeking Him in the direction He wants them as a couple to go and the direction the church should go as they minister to people.

In this ability to partner, couples who partner in ministry will find the ability to partner in other things as well. Couples going through the difficulties and victories of ministry together can minister in new ways. They can partner better in their marriage as well because of the bond and experience they have learned to endure and succeed through Christ.

Couples find they gain insight and wisdom from each other because they are different from each other. Their perspectives allow them to see a situation or problem differently. They then can tackle the issue together. Ministering together is not just the act of supporting the spouse as they lead a church or just by supporting with words and actions. Ministering together is physically ministering side by side by praying, visiting, and doing ministry together. God created man and women to complete each other as a team. The full counsel of a man's perspective and a woman's perspective in any situation can provide an invaluable benefit. By partnering together, each person can provide support when dealing with gender-specific issues.

Couples find they become closer as a couple and are better friends. Many people express that their spouse is their best friend. Best friends are constantly together and a part of each other's life. Pastors and their spouses as ministry partners and best friends understand the reality of their spouse being the only one who can and will be their helpmate. The husband and wife working together in marriage grow closer as a team and the relationship they build becomes closer. The church sees the couple laughing, joking, or even crying together as they share their victories and failures. This strengthens the marriage. The couple should never let "Satan, society, church, or church member separate them from having a fruitful marriage and ministry

partnership.”¹⁸³

Another benefit to the couple and family is they have a common mission for themselves. Having a shared or partnered ministry provides the opportunity for the whole family to be involved in the ministry itself thereby providing input into the ministry. The common vested interest by the couple allows both to be a part of the direction of the church. The spouse of a pastor does not always feel a part of the ministry in which their husband or wife is pastor of whether they are senior pastor or associate pastor. By intentionally being a partnership in ministry, the couple has a shared interest in the overall picture of the church.

As the couple grows and ministers together, they begin to learn the new commandment in which Jesus gave, “love one another.”¹⁸⁴ The couple can begin to love each other unconditionally, getting stronger every day. Because of this, the couple begins to learn love should be extended toward the people who are involved in their ministry. The strong marriage based on unconditional love will withstand the pressures of ministry and of time. The partnership in ministry understands conflict will happen; however, this conflict, when love is prevalent, can be resolved and deepen the love each has for the other. For the couple who does not know how to resolve conflict, ministry will be difficult. Effective ministry cannot happen to the people who are being served should there be unresolved marital conflict in its leaders. Conflict in the home will affect how one ministers in the church.

Benefiting the Church

As a couple works together partnering in their lives and ministry, they become a model to

¹⁸³ Keefauver, *Put Your Wife in Her Place...as a Ministry Partner That Is*, 3.

¹⁸⁴ John 13:34.

show “how the man and woman lead them dealing with conflict and failure,”¹⁸⁵ beginning to see what a difference partnering with their spouse in their lives will make. This pattern is not just in their spiritual lives; it is a pattern in their everyday lives as well. By connecting with their spouses, “pastors will begin to see a mature presence developing”¹⁸⁶ within the church or organization they are serving. They begin to see that encouragement and support which is so important for either spouses to have from each other as they work together. The definition of roles and distinction in the partnering couple need to be communicated to the church, so they know what the roles are. Knowing these roles will result in a stronger organization. The church will see modeling by the ministry couple which can carry over to the ministry of the church. The pastor’s role is usually known because he or she is the primary person the church hires. The spouse’s role is not so much known to the average person. These roles should be communicated clearly for the functioning of the church.

By serving together in one united ministry together, the couple will model for other couples how to make their own lives together be more effective for God’s kingdom. Thus, the path to serving God for people in the church together will become clearer. Furthermore, modeling a healthy marriage demonstrates healthy relationships for the church. Ministry strength can come from a healthy marriage relationship working together for the Lord. Visibility of a healthy marriage can begin to help build marriages in the church, strengthening the ministry itself.

The pastor and spouse as they are partnering together will be able to counsel people and couples together. Each person can give insight into the area which might be a problem in the

¹⁸⁵ Keefauver, *Put Your Wife in Her Place...as a Ministry Partner That Is*, 2.

¹⁸⁶ Norman Thomasma, “Becoming a Healthier Pastor: Family Systems Theory and the Pastor’s Own Family.” *Calvin Theological Journal* 40 no. 2 (205): 407.

marriage that needs help. They can provide a healthy place where people can come in confidence and be helped both spiritually and relationally. A woman can give certain perspective to a problem which a man sometimes cannot see. By having them both present (when appropriate), the pastor and spouse will be able help the couple in need.

Another benefit the church experiences from a partnership between husband and wife is the shared gender-based ministry the pastor and spouse can have. Each of them can serve as a mentor for the men and women of the church. Years ago, many Sunday School programs were divided into male and female divisions. As couple's ministries became stronger, men's and women's classes began to disappear and, in some cases, creating a need which in many respects was not being met. Many women have strong ministries for women in the church. The same is true for men. These gender-specific ministries help connections be made in both women and men thereby the possibility of new friendships being made. Both men and women can also connect to the ministry leader who best understands their daily lives in a gender-specific way providing a venue where ministry can happen in the men and women's division of the church.

The church also benefits from the balance of gifts that each person has been given by God. For example, a pastor and wife are invited to a party with other church members. The pastor may not want to go because he is naturally introverted. His wife, though, is someone who is more outgoing and may have an easier time maintaining a conversation with someone. Because of these diverse gifts, the husband and wife can go to this party whereas she can help him be more open to the fellowship at a party. While the above is an example, there are an infinite number of combinations between two different people and their complementing personalities. These unique gifts God puts together will allow both to be able to serve where one may have difficulty in an area. It allows the couple to become more personable when one might

be weaker in this area. This can occur in many aspects of the couple's personality. Differing personalities between the ministry couple allow them to minister more effectively.

Partnering in ministry allows the couple potentially to help each other out in the ministry. Having varied gifts allows the spouse to help lead where the other person is weak. When couples work together, they can avoid the exhaustion that can be accompanied with working within one's weakness. By doing this, God and the church can be served better and more efficiently.

Partnering in ministry allows husbands and wives to share in the rewards of ministry together. Working together can strengthen the bond that exists between the husband and wife that are partnering in ministry. By having a deeper partnership with one's spouse, lives will be enriched. Pastors, if they release the wisdom and anointing which God has given their helpmate, they will find an invaluable resource which they never have had before. Furthermore, spouses should consider coming alongside their partners in ministry, and then they may watch the results God births in each other through their teamwork.

Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. Are you a

Pastor
Spouse

Pastors will be directed to question two. Spouses will be directed to question twenty-two

2. Were you married before or after you became a pastor?

Before
After

3. How do you feel about your calling to your current place of ministry?

Definitely called
Somewhat called
Neither called or not called
Definitely not called

4. How many hours per a week do you work in ministry?

20-30 hours
30-40 hours
40-50 hours
More than 50 hours

5. Was your spouse part of the interview process at your place of ministry?

Yes
No
Not applicable

6. How many days do you take off in a week?

It depends on the week
1 day
2 days
More than 2 days

7. How often do you feel truly off the clock from work?

When I am asleep
 When I am at home
 When I am on vacation
 I never feel off the clock

8. How much time do you take for family in a week?

	Less than an hour	1-2 hours	2-5 hours	5-10 hours	More than 10 hours	Not applicable
Spouse	Spouse Less than an hour	Spouse 1-2 hours	Spouse 2-5 hours	Spouse 5- 10 hours	Spouse More than 10 hours	Spouse Not applicable
Children	Children Less than an hour	Children 1- 2 hours	Children 2- 5 hours	Children 5- 10 hours	Children More than 10 hours	Children Not applicable
Whole Family	Whole Family Less than an hour	Whole Family 1-2 hours	Whole Family 2-5 hours	Whole Family 5- 10 hours	Whole Family More than 10 hours	Whole Family Not applicable

9. Do you have a time of family devotions or prayer?

Every day
 2-3- times a week
 Occasionally
 Never

10. Do you have a family mission statement?

Yes
 No

11. Do you feel it is important for your spouse to be involved in the church's ministry?

Very important
 Somewhat important
 Not very important

12. Do you and your spouse feel comfortable working together in ministry?

Yes, definitely comfortable

Somewhat comfortable

Not very comfortable

13. How much do you talk to your spouse about church matters?

A lot

Some

Very little

None

14. If you talk to your spouse about church matters, is it beneficial?

Yes, definitely

Yes, sometimes

No, it is not beneficial

I do not talk to my spouse about church matters

15. Did you consult your spouse before moving to your current place of ministry?

Yes

No

Not applicable

16. Do you protect your family from the problems of ministry?

Yes, as much as I can.

Yes, the most controversial parts

No, I think they need to be exposed to it all.

17. Do you keep talk about work to a minimum when you are home?

Yes

No

18. Do you assure your children that ministry problems are not their fault?

Yes

Sometimes

Depends whether they are involved in it or not

No

19. Is your allegiance to the church more important than family?

Yes
Somewhat
No

20. Do your work habits reflect your answer to the previous question?

Yes
Somewhat
No

21. Rank these titles as you use them in your life.

Employed
Parent
Christian
Spouse
Community
Church member

22. Do you feel you and your spouse are a ministry team?

Yes
Somewhat
I don't know
No

23. Were you married before your spouse became a pastor?

Before
After

24. Were you part of the interview process when your spouse was interviewing for his/her current position?

Yes
No
Not applicable

25. Do you feel it is important for the spouse to be involved in the interview process?

Yes
No
I don't know

26. Do you feel a calling to the church where your spouse is a pastor?

Yes, definitely called

Somewhat called

Neither called or not called

No, I am not called to this place of ministry

27. How many days does your spouse take off in a week?

It depends on the week

1 day

2 days

More than 2 days

28. Do you work at the church where your spouse is pastor?

Yes, part time

Yes, full time

No

29. How much are you involved in the ministries of the church where your spouse is pastor?

A lot

Some, but I try not to do too much

None

30. Do you feel it is important for you as a spouse to be involved in church ministries?

Yes

Somewhat

No

31. How many hours per week does your spouse work in ministry?

20-30 hours

30-40 hours

40-50 hours

More than 50 hours

32. How much do you and your spouse talk about church matters?

A lot

Some times

Very little

None

33. Does your spouse find it beneficial to talk to you about church matters?

Yes, definitely
 Yes, sometimes
 No, it is not beneficial
 I don't know

34. How much time do you spend with your family on a weekly basis?

	Less than an hour	1-2 hours	2-5 five hours	5-10 hours	More than 10 hours	Not applicable
Spouse	Spouse Less than an hour	Spouse 1-2 hours	Spouse 2-5 five hours	Spouse 5- 10 hours	Spouse More than 10 hours	Spouse Not applicable
Children	Children Less than an hour	Children 1- 2 hours	Children 2- 5 five hours	Children 5- 10 hours	Children More than 10 hours	Children Not applicable
Family all together	Family all together Less than an hour	Family all together 1- 2 hours	Family all together 2- 5 five hours	Family all together 5- 10 hours	Family all together More than 10 hours	Family all together Not applicable

35. Do you have a time of family devotions or prayer?

Yes, every day
 Yes, occasionally
 No

36. Do you have a family mission statement?

Yes
 No

37. How much does your spouse talk to you about church matters?

A lot
 Some
 Very little
 None

38. Do you protect your family from the problems of ministry?

Yes, as much as I can

Yes, the most controversial parts

No, I think they need to be exposed to it all.

39. Are you willing to talk to your spouse about church matters?

Yes

Sometimes

No

40. Rank these types of people in order of priority.

Employed

Christian

Married

Community

Church Member

Parent

41. Do you want to be considered part of a ministry team?

Yes

Somewhat

I don't know

No

42. Do you feel you and your spouse are a ministry team?

Yes

Somewhat

I don't know

No

Appendix B

Institutional Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

July 29, 2015

Arlen Pfenninger

IRB Exemption 2260.072915: Ministry and Marriage: The Calling of Both Pastor and Spouse

Dear Arlen,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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