

Ministers' Wives: Ways to Enjoy God-Given Friendships

Written by Jennifer Mathewson

I love the holiday movie "It's a Wonderful Life." Every year I watch it when I'm feeling financially stretched, physically tired, and extremely lacking in holiday cheer. In the film, Jimmy Stewart's character, George Bailey, feels much the same way, but by the end, he learns that in spite of life's difficulties, the person who has friends has much.

I recently attended a discussion group for minister's wives. One of the greatest needs mentioned was friendships. Like Elijah, minister's wives faithfully serve the Lord and our families, but we often serve alone in a sense, having limited interaction with close friends. Ministry is demanding, but how can ministry wives avoid the pit of loneliness? How can we reach out when there are risks involved? Let's begin by embracing the lessons of 1 Kings 19.

Be open. Elijah was a mighty servant of God who was used to doing things by himself. But when he hit an emotional low, he allowed the Lord to bring a friend into his life. Ministry wives do not need to experience that low before we realize that life is a team sport and we need other players in our lives. We can stop keeping people at arm's length and allow - even ask - the Lord to bring us a friend who will minister to us.

Be wise. Elijah needed friendship, but he didn't befriend the first person who came along. He exercised wisdom, and so must every minister's wife. We need female friends who have nothing to gain from our position; who can be sensitive to our specific needs and schedules; and who can listen to our joys and heartaches while also speaking truth into our lives. Certainly every person does not fit this bill; therefore it is discernment and wisdom, not isolation, that's needed.

Be blessed. The Lord blessed Elijah by bringing Elisha into his life. Oh, how the Lord longs to bless us as well! Blessings, however, are an interesting thing. God can give and give, but it's up to us to eagerly and thankfully accept His gifts with open hands. Godly friends are indeed a gift and blessing from the Lord we must invite into our lives, acknowledging that we need other people.

Last year the Lord brought a new friend into my life. Like me, she is a pastor's wife and also has a tendency to do things alone, but the Lord knew we needed each other, and I am indescribably blessed to count her as a friend. All of us in ministry can embrace the fact that a woman who has a friend has much. Likewise, every minister's wife can know that it really can be "a wonderful life" when we are open to, wise about, and blessed by the "Elishas" God wants to give us.

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