

5 Tips for New Ministers' Wives

Written by Cindy Dykes

Being a minister's wife presents unique blessings and challenges, and while there's no specific manual on handling those situations, consider five tips from Cindy Dykes, wife of Pastor David Dykes, Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas.

1. Be Yourself - All the Time.

The temptation to play the role of the always-happy minister's wife can be overwhelming at times. Be happy, but also be real! God has gifted you with unique talents and personality traits that He doesn't want absorbed into a role you think you have to play. When you feel pressure to be or do something that's just not you, remember that your calling is to be who God created you to be.

2. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!

Almost as important as knowing and being yourself is clearly communicating with your husband and family (a standard for any marriage). You'll have unique needs that your husband may not pick up on. Talk to him about how you feel, what your desires are in helping him to lead, and what your needs are as his helper. Let him know you need his support as much as he needs yours.

If you have children, your relationship will set an example of unity and will also be a reassurance you want the best for the entire family. Talk to them about pressures and needs they're facing as well.

3. Know Your Priorities.

The ministry is your husband's job, and you're his helper. As I see it, our jobs are more to be wives and mothers than the default VBS director, church cook, or even pianist. My top priority has been to make my home a haven – family first, and then church. Set boundaries and focus on your first calling, which will allow you to follow God's leadership in church involvement.

4. Build Relationships with Church Leaders.

Enjoy your time and relationships with staff members, lay leaders and their families. Get together with other ministers' wives on a regular basis, and find ways

to support other ministries with your gifts. For example, if you have a women's ministry leader in your church, you as a minister's wife have something unique to contribute, and you may ask her how you might get involved in an advisory role or in another way.

5. Develop a Solid Support Network.

Any minister's wife can tell you the importance of having a balance of friends inside and outside of church. God blessed me and my husband with a circle of friends who just let us be David and Cindy instead of "the pastor and his wife." Here are two ways God has led me to build some new relationships:

Join (or start!) a ministers' wives network in your area, and consider seeking a mentor who is a minister's wife. While church relationships are obviously precious, there's something to be said for friendships outside your church setting. You might even contact your local Baptist association (or other organization) to see if there is a network or mentoring program already in place specifically for ministers' wives in your area.

Another way to develop outside friendships is to plug into your community. Even though it hasn't yielded deep, long-lasting friendships (yet), one thing I've been doing for the past few years is simply cooking part-time at a local deli! I get a real kick out of it because I meet so many people and enjoy the interaction aside from the traditional church setting. It keeps me in touch with the "real world." Get out there and try something new in your neighborhood!

By identifying and preparing for your unique role and needs as a minister's wife, you'll be better prepared to support your husband, your family, and your church in ministry.