

Seven Things Pastors' Wives Wish They Had Been Told Before They Became Pastors' Wives

April 6, 2013 by Thom Rainer

I am especially grateful to have the opportunity to hear from pastors' wives since much of my focus is on pastors. Our recent, informal survey simply asked the open-ended question: "What do you wish you had been told before you became a minister's wife?"

Thank you to the pastors' wives who were willing to give us such great feedback. And thanks to Chris Adams for doing the survey and to Amy Jordan for assembling the data.

The responses are in order of frequency. A representative comment follows each response.

1. **I wish someone had told me just to be myself.** "I am a people-pleaser by nature, so for me, not being prepared to handle being a pastor's wife with my personality was a heavy burden to carry early in our ministry."
2. **I wish someone had prepared me to deal with criticism of my husband and me.** "It was hard to deal with negative experiences, conflicts, or criticisms, especially in relation to my husband and our area of ministry. So I would harbor feelings of resentment when it came to ministry and my man."
3. **I wish someone had reminded me that my husband is human.** "I wish someone had told me that my husband could not be God for me. I was disillusioned at first to find out that he indeed is just a man."
4. **I wish someone had told me that others were watching us (the glass house syndrome).** "Even though they are watching us, we don't need to be controlled by what they expect of us."
5. **I wish someone had told me there are some really mean people in the church.** "I was really surprised. I had to learn not to pay too much attention to them or they would get me down."
6. **I wish someone had told me how much my husband needs me to build him up.** "I need to be his cheerleader. Dealing with critics in the church is difficult. He needs to hear that I respect him now more than ever."
7. **I wish someone had told me that my schedule will never be normal again.** "Your husband will be very busy. Expect that. But come alongside him in the areas of time management and organization."

One pastor's wife told us that her role was like getting a job for which she never applied. She wrote this funny script in her response:

Husband: "Honey, I got you a job today."

Wife: "Really? Okay, but I wasn't looking for a job. I have plenty to do here running the household and raising the kids. That was our plan, right? Me stay home with the kids so you could fully dedicate yourself to the ministry."

Husband: "Yeah, yeah. But I really need you take this job for me."

Wife: "Well, okay, just tell me what to do and when it needs to be done by, and I will do everything I can to make it happen."

Husband: "Well, right now there are no specific responsibilities. Basically, it's just doing anything at church that no one else steps up to do or wants to do."

Wife: "Oh my, that is a tall order. Okay, I'll do it. I guess we could use the extra money anyway. Things are always tight around here on a pastor's salary."

Husband: "Well, actually honey, there is no salary . . ."