

10 Unfair Expectations People Place on Pastors' Wives

In many churches, the pastor's wife carries heavy burdens.

Sometimes, they are impossible expectations.

To be fair, this post could refer to any church staff person, male or female, so it could be called ministers' spouses. For simplicity, and because I primarily hear from this group of people, I refer to them as pastors' wives.

So what are some of these unfair expectations? Here are the top 10 expectations imposed upon these ladies.

1. **"I am expected to attend every function at the church."** One wife told us that church members resent it when she is seen doing anything outside the church.
2. **"Many church members expect me to know everything that is happening in the church."** In other words, they should know everything their pastor/husband knows.
3. **"We have several church members who feel free to complain to me about my husband."** So her church has several members who are lacking in emotional intelligence.
4. **"Church members utilize me as a de facto assistant to my husband, giving me messages for him."** One wife shared with us that she received 11 messages to give to her husband after a specific worship service.
5. **"I am still amazed how many church members expect me to function as an employee of the church."** Some are expected to lead music or play piano. Others are expected to act in a specific ministry employee role such as student or children's director.
6. **"Some of the members expect our children to be perfect and act perfect."** One wife explained that she and her

husband were new to a church when a church member confronted them about their misbehaving children. Their outlandish sin was running in the church after a worship service.

7. **"I am always supposed to be perfectly made up and dressed when I leave the house."** A church member expressed her dismay to a pastor's wife who ran into a grocery store without makeup. You can't make this stuff up.
8. **"I have no freedom at our church to be anything but perfectly emotionally composed."** This story really got to me. A deacon chastised a pastor's wife for shedding tears at church four days after her dad died.
9. **"I think some of our church members expect my family to take a vow of poverty."** She was specifically referring to the criticism she received for purchasing a six-year-old minivan after her third child was born.
10. **"So many church members expect me to be their best friend."** And obviously, a pastor's wife can't be the best friend to everyone, so she disappoints or angers others.

These are some of the comments we have received at this blog over the years from pastors' wives. And it seems as though these trials are more gender-biased. For example, the husband of a children's minister commented that he rarely has the pressure and expectations that he sees imposed upon female spouses.

But more than other staff positions, the pastor is naturally the focus of attention and, often, criticism.

And the pastor's family, by extension, becomes the focus of unfair and unreasonable expectations. {eoa}

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