

9 Secrets That Your Pastor's Wife Wishes You Knew

She's always there. Sometimes in the background, sometimes with a welcoming smile up front, sometimes noticed and appreciated, sometimes being silently judged. Your pastor's wife; the powerful force behind most church leaders often perceived as a mystery by the rest of the church.

It doesn't have to be that way.

What if we just asked our pastor's wife to candidly, honestly, even anonymously share some of their secrets? What if we invited them to share their hearts and tell us what they wished the church knew?

I posed a simple, open-ended question to a panel of pastors' wives in different states, from different denominations, with various years of service, "If you could tell the church a few things about your role as a pastor's wife, what would you say?"

The women selected are the wives of music ministers, children's leaders, senior pastors and youth pastors. Some of them serve in churches with large staff and even larger budgets, others in newer church plants, and even some from old and barely surviving congregations. Despite such different backgrounds, their responses were strangely similar and in several cases, almost identical.

I've sat for coffee, exchanged emails and had lengthy conversations with many who freely shared their secrets with me in exchange for the promise of anonymity. What follows is a condensed collection of their words.

1) "I wish people knew that we struggle to have family time." There was one common response that I received from

every single pastor's wife. Every. Single. One. Over and over again, many pastors' wives shared numerous occasions where planned vacations had been cut short (wouldn't that be hard?). They told me tales of family evenings being rearranged for crises of church members, middle-of-the-night emergencies and regular interruptions. A true day off is rare; even on scheduled days off their husbands are essentially on call 24/7.

2) "Almost every day I'm afraid of screwing it all up." They don't have it all together. They battle many of the same issues every other woman battles: marriage issues, extended-family difficulties, sickness, finances, children who make poor decisions, fear and insecurities. Some seasons of life are obviously harder than others; but remember, ministry wives are not Wonder Woman with special powers. Please have a little mercy and extend grace.

3) "Being a pastor's wife is THE loneliest thing I've ever done and for so many reasons." Personally, I think this is surprising to many (it was to me). Several ladies shared the difficulties of finding friendships that are safe, being looked at (or treated) differently and even the desire to be invited for an occasional ladies night out. One woman shared, "Invite us to something just to get to know us. We like being known." People in the church often assume that the pastor's wife is always invited and popular. In reality, for whatever reason, many ladies fear befriending them. On Sunday mornings pastors' wives are often sitting solo, and those with children are essentially single parenting.

4) "It is OK and welcomed to have conversations with me about things that do not pertain to church, or even Jesus. There I said it!" They have a variety of interests. Believe it or not, many pastors' wives went to college and had full-time careers before becoming "Mrs. Pastor's wife." They have hobbies, likes and dislikes, and though they often serve beside their husband, they are individuals with their own unique gifts.

Do not make the mistake of assuming your pastor's wife has the same personality as her husband. One wife shared that when they announced their engagement people regularly commented on how good of a singer she must be (because her husband-to-be was a music minister). When she shared that she sounded more like a dying cat than an elegant song bird, the shock on their faces was evident.

5) "Sundays are sometimes my least favorite day. Wait—am I allowed to say that?" Sundays are hard. And long. And there is no rest. To a pastor's wife, Sunday means an early morning of rushing around to have the family ready in their "Sunday best." Although you may not see your pastor's wife on the platform, rest assured, Sunday is equally tiring for most (all) of them.

6) "It's hard to not harbor resentment or to allow your flesh to lash out at members who openly criticize his ministry." They hate church criticism more than anything. It's hurtful. Offensive, and yes, it's very hard not to take it personally.

It is one of the most damaging things they witness regularly inside the church whether it be through emails, social media or gossip. They wish people understood how serious God's Word speaks on the danger and power of our words. And how much it can injure the pastor's family.

7) "Please don't look down on me or assume I don't support my husband just because you don't see me every time the church's doors are open."

Most wives are not paid staff. They are wives, often mothers, and some are employed outside the home. They need to be allowed the freedom to pray and choose the ministries they feel called to.

8) "I wish people knew that we taught our children to make

good choices, but sometimes they don't."

Jokes about pastors' kids should be avoided at all costs. The risk of rebellion in a "preacher's kid" is no secret. They aren't perfect and never will be (are yours?). They have to learn to walk in their faith just as other children and need encouragement and love to do so. Again, extend grace.

9) "What I can tell you is I have been blessed beyond measure. I have been given gifts, money, love and prayer—so much prayer—by so many."

They love their church and understand the role comes with special challenges and special blessings; it is fulfilling and brings them great joy.

One Extra Thought

Though it was not a common response, there was one that stood out. The top of the list of one seasoned pastor's wife simply read, "I deleted my number 1." Some secrets are so difficult to share, even the promise of complete confidence is not enough to bring them out.

These godly women have something they want us to know and as a body of believers working together toward the same goal, I think we might gain a better understanding of how to appreciate our leaders by listening. All of these responses point to a singular truth: Your pastor's wife is a human being who desires to be known, just as you do.

*Reprinted with permission from Shattered Magazine. **Christina Stolaas** is a mom to four young kids, wife, a lover of the outdoors and people. In her free time she enjoys writing, training for road races, drinking too much coffee, belly laughs with friends and pursuing a deeper walk with Jesus. She is forever thankful that God's script for her life needs no editing. (Romans 8:28) [Click here to view the original post.](#)*