

Confessions of a Pastor's Wife: You Don't Have to be Super-Spiritual to Talk to Me

Life is messy. In the middle of the joy, celebration and goodness of life, there are strokes of pain, loss, heartache, foolish choices, unrealized dreams and wrecked relationships. I call this brokenness. And I like broken people because broken is real, and there is beauty in brokenness.

I don't want to pretend life is perfect. I don't want to hide behind Christian clichés and say, "God must have a plan," "God's timing is perfect," "God will carry you through this," "God works in mysterious ways," or "God must have allowed it for a reason."

The statements are true—so true. But so is the grief and the loss and the pain. Sometimes we feel it so deeply that we wonder if we will be able to face life again, if we will be able to get up, if we can face one more tomorrow.

Relationships break, and our world crumbles. Jobs are lost, and our security is gone. A poor choice destroys our family. The guilt of sin crushes our heart. Loved ones are lost, and we cry out, "Why?" We feel broken. So broken.

And that's where I want to meet you. I want to sit across from you and hear about the mess. I want to know your story and what has brought you to where you are. I want to know what breaks your heart. I want to know your worries, your fears, your challenges.

Don't change for me, the pastor's wife. My life isn't perfect either. I am just as broken. I've made mistakes. I've been deeply hurt by people I love. It's part of life.

I want us to share honestly. I want us to find a place where it is OK to be vulnerable—where you know it's OK if you swore,

that you mentioned you like to drink or that it breaks your heart that your marriage seems to be failing. It's OK.

I will listen to you. I will cry with you. I will pray for you. Because I know sometimes it is hard to pray for ourselves, and that is when God brings other people into our lives—so they can do the praying for us while we get back up on our feet. And I will tell you that even if you don't feel God's presence, He is with you, and He doesn't let go. And I will celebrate with you when you find redemption and healing and peace.

I want us to have this real relationship—an honest friendship where there is no pretending. Where you can say what is in your heart and I can also share what is in mine. We are not meant to do life alone; we were meant to do life together.

Let's put away the perfect, and let's embrace the broken. Let's do it at church—especially at church. It's time for real relationships.

*Adapted from **Ellen Stumbo's** blog at . Ellen is a pastor's wife and writes about finding beauty in brokenness with gritty honesty and openness. She is passionate about sharing the real—sometimes beautiful and sometimes ugly—aspects of faith, parenting, special needs and adoption. She has been published in Focus on the Family, LifeWay, MomSense, Not Alone, and Mamapedia among others.*