

Katy Perry and Why Pastors' Kids Fall Away

Katy Perry is currently the highest-profile pastor's kid (PK) that has walked away from her faith. In a recent interview, she said she is no longer a **Christian** and doesn't believe in **heaven, hell** or "an old man sitting on a throne."

Perry represents a host of PKs who have struggled with their faith. Recent stats from Barna Group research says that:

- 40 percent have gone through a period where they significantly questioned their faith
- 33 percent are no longer active in church
- 7 percent no longer consider themselves a Christian

What causes this? Pastors who were asked answered:

- Unrealistic expectations were placed on them (28 percent)
- Negative experiences in church (18 percent)
- Father or mother were too busy at church to spend time with them (17 percent)
- Faith not modeled at home (14 percent)
- Influence of friends or peers (9 percent)

When pastors were asked what they've done best in raising their kids, their responses included:

- Introduced their kids to Christ and maintained a Bible-focused home (37 percent)
- Spent time with them and supported them (21 percent)
- Loved them (12 percent)
- Taught them good values (10 percent)
- Allowed them to make their own choices and be themselves (9 percent)

Here's what pastors said they wish they had done better:

- Spent more time with their kids (42 percent)
- Been more understanding (8 percent)
- Given them more Bible teaching (5 percent)
- No regrets; wouldn't change anything (19 percent)

I have a special place in my heart for kids who are PKs because I am one. I grew up to serve the Lord and live for Him. Looking back here are a few reasons that happened for me:

1. My parents practiced what they preached. I could argue with what they believed, but I couldn't argue with how they lived what they believed.

2. My dad and mom spent time with me. My dad spent hours with me in the backyard, practicing pitching with me when I was in Little League. When I got into high school and played basketball, he was there in the stands cheering for me. My mom poured her life into me and was always there for me.

3. I was able to see past the negative side of ministry. Yes, there are negative sides to ministry. Sheep bite, and people are not perfect. At times there are politics. The church is made up of people—people who struggle and have weaknesses like we all do. But I was able to see past that and see the bigger picture.

4. I made a personal choice to follow Christ, and my faith became my own. I came to Christ when I was a young child. It was a very real experience that I can still remember to this day. When I was in high school, God began to speak to me about being a pastor.

My parents had never asked me about being a pastor. In fact, they had mentioned several times that I should consider being a schoolteacher, and I had personally told God I would never be a pastor. Yes, I would be faithful to church and serve Him, but not working for a church.

But when God calls, you have to make a choice. You can say yes

or you can walk away from His will for your life. After struggling for months, I made the choice to say yes to God's plan for my life.

I say that to say this: At the end of the day, each person must decide for themselves if they will follow Christ or not. Yes, godly parents do make a difference and help cultivate the soil, but they cannot make the decision for their child.

Do I blame Katy Perry's parents for the road she has chosen? No. She picked this path. I could have just as easily chosen to go down a path away from God.

If your pastor has kids in your children's ministry, I want to encourage you to do the following:

- **Love them.** They are just like the other kids in your ministry. They want to know you care about them, not because of who their father is, but because of who they are as an individual.
- **Let them be kids.** They are not perfect. They are going to misbehave at times and make mistakes. Don't say, "You should know better. You are the pastor's kid!" This places unrealistic expectations on them.
- **Don't mistreat their parents.** When you talk about the pastor or cause strife in the church, you not only bring hurt to him, but you hurt his kids as well. Even if they don't know the details (hopefully their parents are protecting them from the negative side of church), they sense when there is strife and division in the church.
- **Pour into their lives.** Just because their father is the pastor, that doesn't mean they don't need other people to teach them, mentor them and speak into their lives. Yes, my parents were my primary spiritual influence, but there were also lots of godly leaders who poured into my life over the years. They all had a part in my decision to follow Christ.

- **Don't place unrealistic expectations on their father that causes him to be gone from home all the time.** Help protect their father's time. They need a father at home just like other kids. Don't contribute to them resenting the church because it took their father away all the time.

What are your thoughts about PKs? If you are a PK, share your experience growing up.

Are you a pastor or staff member in ministry who currently has kids at home? What are some other ways we can support and encourage PKs? What are some other reasons why you believe some PKs walk away from God?

Share your thoughts with us in the comment section below.

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