

Why Pastors' Wives Misbehave

Someone googled, "Why do some pastors' wives misbehave" and they found my blog, so I figured I should address a possible *why*. (And is Google trying to tell me something?)

Pastors' wives misbehave because they are as human as the rest of humanity. Nobody in ministry is exempt from the sinful nature.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God –Rom. 3:23.

Pastors' wives struggle with the same issues all women do.

Sometimes, pastors' wives fight depression and anxiety just as their neighbor does (and it is hard enough to talk about mental-health issues within the church. If you are the pastor's wife, you exponentially increase the pressure to be "perfect." It's not easy).

Sometimes, pastors' wives have to fight for their marriage as so many other married couples do.

Sometimes, pastors' wives have to fight greed or bitterness.

Sometimes, pastors' wives feel alone.

Sometimes, pastors' wives have had enough from the church, feeling the pressure of high standards and expectations, feeling scrutinized in every move, feeling like the microscope is on them on how they parent, how they keep their home, how many Bible studies they lead, or how many women's prayer groups they are a part of.

Sometimes, pastors' wives wish they had true friends at their church, someone who sees them as a peer, and not just "the pastor's wife."

I cannot speak for any other pastor's wife except me, but I do know what it feels like to be overwhelmed in ministry. I know what it feels like to want to give up and walk away from the church.

I am thankful I am married to a man who puts God first, then his family, then his job. There are many "emergencies" that happen within a congregation, but we are his priority. I have never felt abandoned by my husband, or like I am a single parent, or like he is emotionally present to others but not to our family. This is a hard thing to do when you pastor a church, and I hope you understand that, because many people could look at my husband and think he is not doing enough at church. There are some high and unrealistic expectations for those in ministry, and I want you to know that many, many pastors' families drown under that pressure.

Why someone "misbehaves" is as personal and unique as the circumstances that caused them to make that choice.

Perhaps they felt that they did not matter.

Perhaps she felt her husband was not present at home because he was too involved in the church.

Perhaps they are under a lot of stress.

Perhaps they felt at the end of their rope.

Being in ministry is a privilege and a beautiful thing, but it is also brutally hard!

So go call your pastor's wife, tell her you appreciate her. Ask her out for coffee and ask how her marriage is doing (yes, you can even talk about sex with your pastor's wife!). When her children misbehave tell her you are so thankful they are a normal family. When she looks frazzled, recognize that she also has bad days.

Pastors' wives are women with the same needs, fears and

insecurities as most other women. They are NOT holier, they do NOT hold a higher place of communion with God, and they WILL mess up.

Life is messy; we are all broken people; we all desperately need God.

*Adapted from **Ellen Stumbo's** blog Finding Beauty in Brokenness. Ellen is a pastor's wife, and she 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.*