

Why the Church Must Wake Up to Depression Epidemic Among Pastors

Best-selling author and singer Shelia Walsh says the church must wake up to the number of pastors struggling with mental illness.

In a recent interview with *The Christian Post*, Walsh shares how her own battle with depression that brought with it thoughts of suicide helped her to experience the power of Jesus Christ.

Walsh, 62, a former host of *CBN's The 700 Club*, told the *CP* that 26 years ago, she checked herself into a hospital. Doctors diagnosed her as suffering from clinical depression.

"At the time, I was serving as the co-host of *The 700 Club* show on The Christian Broadcasting Network," she said. "I knew how to put on a good face and isolate myself from people. I was surrounded by people, a ministry leader, but so desperately lonely and depressed. Up until that point, I'd based so much of God's love on me getting everything right. When you end up in a psych hospital, that platform has been pulled from beneath you."

"There was such a profound sense of, 'The Lord is close to the brokenhearted,'" she said. "So often, that's what depression feels like. You feel as if you've been crushed. But in those times, that's when you can experience the presence of the Lord. When things go wrong, we feel as if God has left us or doesn't hear us, but I am learning that even in the darkest places, God's timing is perfect and His presence is promised."

Walsh draws from her own experience with depression to write about eight practical steps to help women cope and keep moving

forward in her new book *It's Okay Not To Be Okay: Moving Forward One Day At A Time*. {eo}

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