

Managing A Challenging Marriage Vs Ministry Situation

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Some real facts:

Time demands, meeting schedules, preaching engagements, personal retreats, pressures, etc can hurt marriage and family life.

Feelings of isolation and loneliness can be pervasive and devastating issues in ministry families. Those who are on the front lines of ministry, committed to making a difference on earth and for eternity, may face deeper challenges than others in their family lives.

The effectiveness of a pastor's ministry is remarkably diminished if the marriage and family are wearing away.

Destabilizing challenges in marriage and ministry do not always point to being outside God's will for your life.

How do you go about these challenges?

1. Consolidate A Quality Relationship With Your Spouse

- Build quality and practical friendship with your partner.

Understand each other's passion and motivations.

Pay passionate attention to your intimacy and bonding.

- Your life, marriage and home should be a model.

Your marital experience is a major epistle for success in ministry. You can't be a bad example of husband or wife and expect to raise good families in the church you lead. (1Tim 3:5)

It is difficult to successfully market what you don't model.

- Make your home a safe haven for your children to grow, experience love and develop.

You are your children's first model of a pastor, either good or bad.

Wife, you are the #1 role model your children see for motherhood and good wife. Same goes for husband; your model of fatherhood is the #1 picture your children have.

What sacrifices are you willing to make in order to have your marriage as the best example at home and in ministry?

2. Be Introspective About Your Changes Required In Your Marriage

Perhaps the change needed in your partner is actually an adjustment in you –your attitude, your perspective on certain issues and your priorities.

Can you think of any weakness or indulgence of yours that hurting your spouse or blackmailing the ministry?

This assertion by the apostle Paul to the Corinthians is quite apt. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" 2Corinthians 13:5

3. Systemize Priorities

- Because ministry is so demanding, it is imperative that we set boundaries around our work.

- Do not sacrifice your marriage and your family over ministry.

Sometimes we gloss over 1Timothy 3:5 "For if a man does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?"

- Remember the way God intended the priorities.

God first, our families (spouse, children), then our ministries. By this, we will set a good example for those under our spiritual care and guidance. We will also teach our children how to set healthy boundaries around involvement in activities outside the home.

- Make sure you have a strategy that prioritizes your family. Deliberately establish patterns, boundaries, and traditions. Pray for wisdom as you and your spouse develop ways to accomplish these goals and still minister effectively.

4. Regularly Define Your Ministry Vision

Let each person properly understand and find himself/herself in the vision. It is so difficult to successfully run with or fulfill a vision in which you can't see yourself.

Both partners should be able to make sacrifices for the vision.

5. Understanding Your Giftings And Unique Abilities

Recognize and celebrate your areas of calling and gifts.

Learn to release your partner to do what they are anointed to do.

Realize that you possess different energy levels at different times.

Try and discover each other's work style.

Help each other become more efficient.

Maturity and understanding will eliminate the wrong spirit of competition and jealousy (especially where similarly gifted).

6. Intentionally Fellowship Together

Time togetherness gives birth to team togetherness.

Successful husband and wife team ministry requires time for re-commitment to one another, your mandate and especially God (fellowship).

Study together regularly - you build up one another.

Pray on issues together - by this you give God opportunity into your challenges and access wisdom for great ministry results.

7. Develop Proactive Benevolence As A Habit

This is a condition where a partner makes intentional choice to become what will be beneficial to the spouse's life.

- Proactive benevolence demobilizes selfwill when we choose to understudy what our partner needs and give it to them instead of forcing your wants on the relationship.

- Submission is the victory over selfwill. While submission is a command for wives it's first an injunction for us all. (Eph 5:21-22)

- When God created submission, it is made for us to be able to tolerate our partner's poor attitudes.

For a man, submission is when the wife understands respect for him and willing followership to her leader.

For a woman, submission is when the husband understands care and honor for her as his indispensable partner.