



A Letter to Children's Pastors' Wives—

Your Gifts

by Joey Ellis

Note

It is understood that not all children's pastors are male with a wife. Many of you are female with a husband. Others of you are single. Regardless of your situation, there are things to learn from these letters. As you read them, pray for the Holy Spirit to minister to you.

One of the greatest gifts God has given me is my wife. "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights," (James 1:17). Her gifts and abilities complement mine. She is strong in areas where I am weak. Together, we help each other fulfill the calling God has on our lives. Wives, you have been given to your husband as a gift. Look for ways you can be an asset in the ministry together. Here are some gifts you can give your husband.

The Gift of a Positive Attitude

The most important gift you can offer your husband is a positive, encouraging attitude. Your attitude has a large impact on the degree of success you will experience together in ministry. Always remember, "It is not what

happens *to* you that counts, it is what happens *in* you" (John Maxwell).

Be sure to praise your husband for jobs well done. Realize there will be times of failure. In these times, remain positive. Speak words that will motivate him to learn from the experience and to continue on in ministry.

Your words are powerful. They can make or break your husband. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21). You have the choice to build up your husband or to tear him down. Not every wife can lead praise and worship or be a puppeteer, but every wife, without exception, can be a positive influence on her husband. Your positive encouragement may be the greatest gift he will ever know.

The Gift of Peace

Offer your husband the gift of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). Make your home a safe place. Pastoring is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week responsibility. Your husband needs a place to get away from the hectic pace of ministry.

One easy way to do this is when he gets home, allow the answering machine to answer

the calls. Only return those calls that are absolutely necessary, knowing that most can wait until later.

Another way you can do this is by allowing your husband to have a few minutes to unwind when he gets home. There are many jobs that need to be done by your husband at home. It is important for him to help you with the children and the chores around the house. However, try not to greet him at the door by handing him a broom and a "To Do" list. Give him time to relax for a few minutes.

The responsibility of keeping a peaceful home is shared by both husband and wife. Doing your part to make your home a peaceful place will enhance your marriage and your ministry. When the pressures of the world intrude, there is no shelter like a peaceful home.

The Gift of Relief

Many times your husband will need the gift of relief. Look for signs that your husband is under too much pressure. "Carry each other's burdens," (Galatians 6:2). Evaluate the situation and, with his consent, try to alleviate some of the ministry load. Maybe you can make a few phone calls for him or help recruit others to help him.

There have been times when my wife has seen areas of need that required attention. When I have not been able to give the issue the time it needed, she willingly took care of the situation for me. This type of help will bring great relief to your husband.

Many times in children's ministry, your husband may feel he is performing the clown routine of making sure all the plates stay spinning on their poles. When one begins to fall, he runs to the pole to get it spinning again. But if two or three begin to fall at the same time, it requires someone else to come alongside and help spin the plates.

The Gift of Acceptance

Give him the gift of acceptance. Many times in marriage, one spouse will try to change the other to his or her way of seeing life. It is important to release your husband to the Lord. "He will sit as a refiner and

purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites" (Malachi 3:3). He will purify His pastors—that includes His children's pastors.

Because you will see life from different perspectives, there may be times you would do things differently from your husband. Be careful not to constantly try to change your husband.

Sometimes change is needed. However, do not complain. Rather, allow the Lord to shape and mold him. Ruth Graham was quoted as saying, "It is not my job to change Billy. It's my job to love him." He may never be the "perfect pastor" everyone desires for him to be. Yet, time and experience are great teachers. Try to see him through the Lord's eyes and not your own. Know that God has great plans for him (Jeremiah 29:11). God will refine his weak areas.

The Gift of Endurance

Give your husband the gift of endurance. Ministry is not getting

easier. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up," (Galatians 6:9).

As pastors' wives, it is easy to get stressed out because so many people need you. Your husband needs you, your children need you, and your church needs you. It is important for you to stay focused on your call to ministry. Many times it will be the only thing that will carry you. Realize that though you may not be the one in the pulpit speaking, you still play a vital role in the life of the person who is speaking.

Remember the T.E.A.M. concept—Together Everybody Accomplishes More. Children's pastors and their wives must be a team. God has placed you and your husband together for a reason. Giving your husband these gifts will enhance your marriage and your ministry.

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