

THE PLACE OF MARRIAGE IN THE PASTORAL MINISTRY:

A FOCUS ON THE PASTOR AND WIFE'S RELATIONSHIP.

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ABSTRACT

The Pastor and wife's relationship in the Pastoral ministry, is an attempt to stimulate what marriage really is in the ministry work today. It is to throw challenges to the Pastors and Pastors' wives on what should be the right priorities, as they do ministry vis a vis their relationship in marriage.

The first chapter spells out the introductory materials such as the motivation, purpose of the study or work, the scope, research methodology employed as well as the definitions of some major terms that are used in the essay.

Chapter two is a review of who the Pastor and the Pastor's wife are individually and their roles at home, church and ministry at large.

The Place of the Pastor and his wife in the ministry is highlighted in chapter three; where light is thrown on what should be the relationship that should exist between them for a successful ministry.

Chapter four is an analysis on the questionnaire and interviews conducted on Pastors and Pastors' wives both in training and on the field.

The concluding chapter is on the summary of the essay, conclusion and recommendations made from the various research works carried out, to help the Pastor and the Pastor's wife in their ministry endeavours.

B. Conclusions.

From the entire study, the following conclusions are made:

1. The population was well distributed into ages as in chapter four.
2. There is a great disparity in educational attainment between the Pastors and their wives. And that this wide gap in educational attainment affected other aspects of their relationship especially in the areas of love and affection, sex and satisfaction.
3. Church marriage is what must be done by the Pastor and wife in a way to normalize their marriage irrespective of court and traditional marriages, ^{that they may} be more acceptable by the people and to function well in ministry.
4. Some pastors and pastors' wives get their priorities out of order. The order as seen by the writer should be God, the Spouse, Children and Ministry in descending order. Anything short of this will mean loss of rewards, dissatisfactions, non-achievements and stunted growth⁴ in their relationships, ^{at their} homes and ministries.
5. Some pastors and wives shy away in discussing sex matters with their Spouses. Such, the writer feels are over spiritualising issues here. The more couples discuss sex matters with each other, the lesser the

⁴Mosley, Priorities in Ministry, p. 17.

sex problems they will have, and the more intimate they'll be in their relationship. Once this is established, it will be difficult for any of them to think of flirtation or commit adultery with another person. Sex is one of the strongest chords that firmly binds a relationship between a man and a woman.

6. Pastors and wives don't have time together for relaxation, strolling, retreats and games. And the Pastor who expects his family to do all the adjusting whenever there is conflict between his role as a pastor and his role as a husband (and father) has the wrong idea. Neglect of his wife (and children) does not contribute to his stature as a minister.⁵

7. Most Pastors and Pastors' wives understand the feelings of their spouses. This is commendable. But both parties should work hard to see that this strengthens their relationship and not weaken or distrust it.

8. Most pastors and wives both handle the finances of the home. This is also commendable. But where both do not have a voice with the handling and distribution of its benefits, poses a problem to their relationship. None should be ignorant of the financial condition of the home even if one of them is in charge.⁶

⁵Walker, The Human Problems of the Minister, p. 90.

⁶Reuben Herring, Marriage and Money (Nashville: Broadman Supplies, n.d.), p. 3.

C. Recommendations.

Marriage is a great responsibility. And a successful Pastor and Pastor's wife never run from responsibilities. It should be known that God has called the pastor and his wife to fulfill together the ministry work given them, and that certain roles are to be performed by each of them only through the grace God has given them, which cannot be performed by the other. There are some problems in their relationship and pastoral ministry in which only the pastor may solve and vice versa. Therefore, if both refuse to humble themselves in solving their problems, there will be commotions in the home and ministry work.

For a balanced or stable relationship to exist however, the writer tends to make the following recommendations.

The first thing to do is to pray and pray through on any situation. Before a Pastor marries, he should pray to know God's mind on who to marry. And if he is married as an unbeliever before meeting Christ and been called into the ministry, he should also pray to God, to transform his partner (vice versa). Prayer breaks every barrier and it moves obstacles, crises and doubts away.

Another thing is patience. After praying on matters, the Pastor and wife should exercise patience, especially when one of them is yet to be convinced. The Pastor's wife also needs a lot of patience to be able to work with her husband understandably and successfully. The ministry

work demands a lot of patience from both parties.

Acceptance is another trait that both should possess. Both should accept each other's background, weaknesses, goals and visions amicably, irrespective of their ethnic group or tribe, academic attainment and way of life (philosophy of life). Okunlola says if the Pastor and wife refuse to accept each other as they are, they can never be fulfilled in life⁷ and in the Pastoral ministry.

Education brings a maturity of character that is essential⁸ for a pastor and his wife as they combine their work at home, the church and the community. Pastors should work harder and make sacrifice in improving the educational attainment of their wives. For instance, Emiola Nihinlola has been able to assist his wife as a nurse to go for more training in family planning, professional therapy, midwifery, public health and community health.⁹

Pastors and wives should confide in each other and not in another person. This will help them to share both their joys and sorrows together. Otherwise, it will jeopardize the home and ministry. Both should adjust their

⁷ Interview with Olufemi Okunlola, Ogbomoso: Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, 19 February 2001.

⁸ Joann Swanson, "The Conflicting Expectations of the Role of the Pastor's Wife," Bangalore Theological Forum, 25, March - June 1992, p. 21.

⁹ Interview with Emiola Nihinlola, Oyo: Emmanuel Baptist Church, 12 March 2001.

relationship with their spouse so that it would be difficult for any of them to confide in another person. However, Church problems should not be extended to the home.

They should talk, plan, eat, sleep, pray and discuss on the children together. There should be enough time for discussions and prayers. Even if they cannot go to places for relaxation and strolling, their bedroom should be enough for that. They must bear the vision together and maintain personal attractiveness and everyday courtesies. The Pastor cannot do ministry alone. He should bring his wife up spiritually for compatibility.

Once awhile, both should create time for family retreats and attend seminars for Pastors and Pastors' wives. They should also go for personal retreats once awhile as well as visiting Christian guest houses for relaxation and "enjoyment." Both should give out each other for sex at all times they need each other. Sex is God's gift and must be used maximally unto God's glory. A low sex drive or rigidity in sex affects the relationship.

Pastors should have interest in their wives and appreciate them even before Church members and their children. They should also have interest in what their children do; that the children may also have interest in what they do. They should never sacrifice their homes for the ministry. They should however form relationships with other pastors and church members without any preference.

As a leader in the community, the Pastor must get

