

Navigating Expectations in Ministry

Areas of Expectations

Take some time to note expectations in each area.

Family (husband, children, parents):

Tending to the needs and wants of your family within the demands of ministry.

Congregants:

Wondering if you are letting them down because you're not meeting their version of a pastor's wife.

Other pastors, spouses, staff, leaders:

Looking forward to friendships or mentorship and feeling disillusioned with relationships. Wondering if you hold up to comparison or their version of a pastor's wife.

Culture:

What you think culture expects as women and as pastor's wives.

Self:

Feeling acute failure as you fall short of your ideal version of a pastor's wife.

God:

Your expectations of God and your understanding of his expectations of you. Trying to understand your disappointment with God when you feel like you're not supposed to be disappointed.

After naming your expectations, what are you feeling right now? What reactions are you noticing?

As ministry wives, not only do we struggle internally to think of ourselves rightly but there are many who want to identify us according to their categories...Some will express disappointment that we're not what they hoped, and some will want to elevate us beyond what we actually are.

Christine Hoover

Classify Real/Perceived Expectations

★ What is valid?

★ What is realistic?

★ What is essential?

✗ What's not valid?

✗ What's not realistic?

✗ What's not essential?

Cross out and set aside all that's not valid, realistic, or essential **without guilt**.

Merge idealism with reality.

Realign asking God "What are Your expectations of me?"

Grieve and lament what you feel is lost. **Bury** self-expectations so that God might fulfill his expectations in and through you.



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Turn to God

And now to simply be in Christ—not always striving, working, doing. To receive who we are and not who we think we “should” be. To discover and obey what he has for us. To love and serve out of the overflow of who we are in him.

Who am I?

My Identity is not something I achieve but rather receive from the One who made and saved me. It’s “not a weight that we hold but rather that holds us.”
(Christine Hoover)

True Identity as a beloved child and servant of God is an Anchor for our souls.

False Identity as anything other than a beloved child and servant of God is an anvil crushing our souls.

Lord, will you convince me of who I truly am? Show me what You want to do in and through me.

...I was trying to make ‘pastor’s wife’ my identity. I’d traded in ‘disciple’ and ‘dependent on God’ and even ‘wife’ and ‘friend’ for a nebulous label of ‘pastor’s wife.’...The mantle felt outsized and unmanageable because it was not my true, God-given identity...It’s simply the means [and opportunity] by which I can serve others.

Christine Hoover

Freedom to Be

You have freedom and creativity to decide how you involve yourself as the pastor’s wife.

If you don’t take responsibility for living your God-given life, it will not get lived. There is no one else in the world like you. No one! One of the greatest ways you honor and glorify God is through embracing your unrepeatable life.

Geri Scazzero

What are my God-given strengths, preferences, passions, skills?

What is my season of life? What are the limitations that go with this season? Opportunities?

Is there something I’d like to start? To stop?

What brings me life? When do I feel most loved and loving?

Where is God at work? What is He doing? Is He inviting me to respond? Is it for me? Is it for now?

Sometimes no is a very godly answer.
Kay Warren

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Remember

Remember

*It was God who called you. He is in charge.
He invited us to be a part of His Great Commission.
He chose you!
As His daughter
As a pastor's wife.*

Remember

*Your personal value to your Heavenly Father.
If you hung up your apron,
He'd embrace you,
Wipe the tears,
Whisper reassurances to your soul.
He'd say it doesn't matter.
He loves you deeply
And that love is not connected to what you do.
It's who you are...His beloved child.*

Remember

*That you are clay.
He is the potter,
His glory is revealed in the chips and cracks.
Being clay forces us to depend on God.
We can't do this without Him.*

Adapted by Robynnn Bliss

Resources

Expectations and Burnout: Women Surviving The Great Commission by Sue Eenigenburg and Robynnn Bliss

How to Thrive as a Pastor's Wife by Christine Hoover

Sacred Privilege: Your Life and Ministry as a Pastor's Wife by Kay Warren

The Pastor's Wife by Gloria Furman

The Emotionally Healthy Woman by Geri Scazzero

Every Moment Holy by Douglas McKelvey