



"IS IT WORTH THE EFFORT?"

Recently a ministry wife said to me,

"I know there are privileges of being a ministry wife but I just can't remember them!"

Maybe you feel the same – you are in a season when the pressure of ministry is keenly felt and the privileges are escaping you.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How do you view being in ministry alongside your husband?

What are the pressures you are experiencing?

Is there any particular part of ministry life you are resenting?

How would you define your purpose in life?

1. THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

SERVE WITH GLADNESS

*Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!
Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we
are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

Psalm 100:2-3

Remembering all that God has done for us through the Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, knowing we are his people, should cause us to serve Him with a glad heart.

SERVE THE LORD

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Colossians 3:23-24

When we feel the glare of disapproval or the pressure of expectation, we need to remember we are serving the Lord, not human masters. God will build his church; we can be confident of his good purposes.

SERVE SECURELY

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

Psalm 16:6

Because we are “in Christ” we have a delightful inheritance, we have a secure status. Dwelling with Christ is pleasant and we need to focus on our relationship with him first and foremost.

- *What characterises your service? Joy, focus on the Lord, security in Christ?*

2 . THE RIGHT FRAMEWORK

What is the Christian life all about?

Lots of answers can be given – worship, service, evangelism, mission, thanksgiving, praise, sacrifice, etc.

Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.”

Luke 9:23

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.

Romans 12:1

For each Christian there will be challenges and difficulties and this is certainly true of ministry life. There is fellowship with Christ as we share in his sufferings (not in a redemptive sense but an identification with him) and we become like him in his death (Philippians 3:10).

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:29-30

The Message paraphrases this as follows *“Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”*

Part of bearing the burden of ministry and service and knowing it to be “light” is recognising the privileges and blessings of ministry life as well as the challenges.

- *What is your framework of life and ministry? Do you expect there not to be challenges and difficulty? Service should flow from our relationship with the Lord – how can you see this in your life?*

3. THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

There’s an old hymn by Johnson Oatman Jr called *Count Your Blessings*. At the end of the chorus it says:

*Count your blessings, name them one by one
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

Pause and make a list of the privileges and blessings of ministry before looking down the list below. See if any overlap with the ones I’ve thought of – you may have lots more!

- **HE’S MY HUSBAND** – When you see your husband serving sacrificially, out of his comfort zone, remember that you are part of him being able to do this. You are essential to his well-being. You are his helper in ministry. You are able to support and care for him in ways no one else can. This is a privilege.
- **WE WORK TOGETHER** – Regardless of what you are able to do or not do in ministry terms, you are your husband’s partner in ministry. As you pray, serve and support you are enabling God’s kingdom to be extended as you and your husband stand together in ministry. This is a privilege.
- **WHAT WE SEE AND KNOW** – As a ministry wife you will be part of the joys and sorrows in church life. To see men and women persevere in their faith in the most private of ways through heartache and loss and to be able to stand with them in grief and trials is a privilege. You see something of the hidden work of God in the lives of those in your church family. You may be the first to know of answers to prayer and the first to hear of men, women and children coming to faith. This is an immense privilege.
- **BLESSINGS FOR MY FAMILY** – If you are blessed with children, they see and hear something of the work of God which other children may not. They learn to relate to many in God’s family who they may not otherwise meet. They hear of God’s work across the world and you can show them that God never fails us when we put him first. What a privilege for them and you!

- **OTHERS STAND WITH YOU** – You may feel at times that ministry is lonely but you are not on your own. The work you are involved in is prayed for by others in the church, by fellow ministry couples, and by FIEC. God promises to supply all your needs. Cultivate friendship with other ministry couples and be open and share matters for prayer. It’s a privilege to have these friendships.
- **PEOPLE ARE THANKFUL FOR YOU** – This can be a surprise, when you are thanked for something you consider was very small, sending a card or a text, or just being friendly and welcoming. It’s a privilege to serve in small ways which are appreciated more than we know.
- **TIME TOGETHER** - Freedom over your diary means that sometimes a longer lunch hour, an afternoon walk, coffee together are possible; a husband at home for tea when many fathers are commuting or working long hours and don’t see their children in the week; flexibility over a day off. These are all benefits of a role that isn’t a job but is ministry which isn’t bound by work hours.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. How does clarifying your purpose in life help you to cope with the pressures and hold onto the privileges of ministry?
2. Talk to your husband about the pressures you are feeling, and he is feeling too. Pray together about these, seeking the Lord’s help.
3. How do you view service? Remember who you are serving, what you are building and the “pleasant place” you are in. Does this challenge you? In what ways are your thoughts and attitudes affected?
4. Do any of the privileges surprise you? Can you recover or refocus on them in your own life?
5. Write a prayer of thanks to the Lord expressing your gratitude for being able to serve as a ministry wife and the ways He has blessed you.
6. Share with another ministry wife the privileges and blessings of serving the Lord as a ministry wife in the last year.