

The “Out-of-Sync” Pastor’s Wife

By Melinda Scheich

When people ask me, “How do you like being a pastor’s wife?” my reply is always the same: “Well, it depends on who the pastor is! The one I have is pretty good!” The value and honor he extends to me on a daily basis has significantly contributed to my positive experience as a pastor’s wife, and I feel sad when other friends of mine view being a pastor’s wife as a cross to bear.

As I’ve matured, I have discarded the assumption that I have to meet a set of criteria from a pastor’s wife manual. In Jesus’ power, I strive to be simply real, genuine, authentic — yet gracious and compassionate.

I like to think of myself as the “Out-Of-Sync” pastor’s wife. Here are my words of encouragement for others who may feel the same way:

Love your people

Each year as my husband received vicars, I gave each vicar’s wife the same advice: “If there is one thing you need to remember, it’s to love your people.” When that is truly what you feel in your heart, whether sun shines or rain falls, the people will know they are loved and cherished. They will more likely respond with a bit more patience and understanding during tough times if they know they are valued. When they rejoice, I rejoice; when they weep, I weep.

Accept your seasons

Be realistic as to what’s right for you: Do you have the energy to be VBS playground director or head up the Sunday school Christmas pageant? Are you a mover and shaker who thrives on change, or are you a behind-the-scenes player who enjoys taking exacting care of the altar?

As we began our family, our church did not have a moms’ group, so I started a moms’ Bible study and sharing group that lasted many years. I had thought I would follow my oldest two children up through their middle and high school involvements at church, but God blessed us with another child — my caboose. So, I started back at square one and led Together With Jesus, a Sunday school program for two-year olds. It was a blast! An advantage was that I could develop those ministries from my computer in my living room without having to attend a plethora of meetings or spend frequent time away from home.

Give yourself permission to say “no”

It’s okay. It’s really okay. My favorite adage is, “If you say ‘yes’ to something, you are saying ‘no’ to something else.” Decide what that “no” is and whether the commitment is worth it.

Do not be afraid to give the members of your congregation a view of our world.

Pastors’ families often do not have extended relatives living close by. If so, it is not possible for us to say, “Sure, I’ll

third are the same, and try to pull us away from time we should spend together.

Pursue your passions

Scripture is full of reminders how we are created special and how our wonderful Savior Jesus Christ loves us. In joy-filled response for that great love, consider pursuing opportunities that allow your God-given talents to shine as you demonstrate Christ’s love.

In my work as a pediatric behavior nurse, I have come to have contact with — and have truly grown to love — many families who have children with autism, families who felt isolated, alone, and exhausted. My passion is now focused on this wonderful community, and, as a result, I founded the Autism

Family Network of Lincoln, Nebraska, which gathers for informative and social events and keeps in touch via the Internet. Although some of the network’s families belong to our church, the majority do not. It is a flourishing outreach ministry and has become a wonderful way for me to share the love of Jesus with people outside our congregation.

Loving others, accepting your seasons, giving yourself permission to say “no”, and pursuing your passions: *that* is how we can be salt and light — and pastors’ wives! — and ultimately be “in sync” with our churches, and our communities, and ourselves.

Melinda lives in Lincoln, Nebraska, with her husband, Jeff, and their three children. Melinda works as a pediatric behavior nurse specialist. Jeff is a pastor at Christ Lutheran Church and leads the “Room 211” multi-sensory worship. They also have a Maltese named Molly who recently had adorable white fluffy puppies!



volunteer ... I’ll just leave the kids with my mom and come on over to help.”

In addition, our husbands are not around most nights and weekends, so it’s not always possible for us to jump in the car and do our errands while he happily watches the children for us. Responsibilities often need to be handled during the day while the children are at school, which, if you also work part-time as I do, becomes a small window of time.

When I’m invited to many evening events and I need to decline, I clearly express my struggle in my response: “I would love nothing more than to be with all you ladies, but when Jeff is out, I need to be home for the children; and when he is home, I really want to be there with all of us as a family.”

A pastor’s family struggles with all the issues common to other families. We try to keep our priorities in the correct order: God, family, and work. However, in our case, others often assume the first and