

From Section 2: Finding All We Need in God

*"Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord,
'You are my Lord; apart from you, I have no good thing.'" Psalm 16:1-2*

13 Ways to Help You and Your Husband Seek the Lord

While in the Ministry

Here are some ideas for how you and your husband can help each other continue to grow your relationship with the LORD and in godliness.

1. Remember that our life depends upon God

But I think there was something in David's heart that encouraged his constant conversation with God. I think the last phrase in verse two points to it: "for apart from You I have no good thing."

"Apart from You I have no good thing" David wrote. He knew his life depended upon God. There just was nowhere else to go. If there was something he needed, David knew that ultimately God would be the one to provide it. David knew he must seek God's aid in times of trouble. If he was delivered from a dangerous situation or enjoyed good things, David knew that ultimately he had God to thank for it. This fueled David to pray, and it can fuel us, too.

This clinging to God as the source instead of the means of His grace is especially important for us as pastor's wives. There are many times we may be tempted to push our husbands to fix this church situation or to do more with that troubled member. We may be impatient for changes in our church and expect our husbands to be the ones to change it and change it now. While we certainly want to encourage our husbands to say or do the difficult things that need to be done in love, we need to be careful that we are not really pushing for them to rush imprudently into change because we are impatient with God's timing. Like David, we need to be praying about these situations, both for God to work out changes in His perfect timing and by whatever means He chooses—using our husbands or not, as the case may be.

Most pastors deal with feelings of impatience to see certain situations or people would change. Sometimes this may tempt them to say or do things rashly in an attempt to affect a change now! Sometimes God may make this attitude a bit clearer to us than it is to them. God very well may desire to use a gentle, winsome, humble word from us to help them to turn away from acting rashly and to turn back and depend upon God and His timing. Carolyn Mahaney's talk called "Watch Your Man," available online is a great resource for learning how to do this.

Our husbands and we are far from the only ones facing the temptation to hurry along a particular outcome to a long-standing problem. There will likely be many times when we will need offer the same kind of gentle, humble winsome reminder we might offer our husbands to others in our church. We can pray with them for change in the situation, but point them back to trusting God's timing and leading in changing the situation.

2. Have Regular Devotions

This may seem like something we do not even need to state it is so obvious: strive to have a regular, daily devotional time. After all, who is in God's Word more than a man who regularly preaches it and regularly uses it to guide his loving leadership in the local church he pastors, or his wife, who lives this life alongside of him. It's like the air we breathe. And yet, we DO need to say this because sometimes God's Word feels more like a "tool of the trade" rather than the "words of life" to those in the ministry. Sometimes we are around it so much that we don't take time to meditate for their own soul's sake, rather than only for others.

3. Have Regular Checkups with Your Spouse

Ask each other if you are regularly having a devotion time with the Lord. Take time to ask each other what you are learning. What is God teaching you? What are you particularly enjoying about God? Share if/how you have been struck by a struggle with sin in any way as you've read God's Word? What are you thanking God for or asking God for your own soul these days? Does your relationship with the Lord seem dry and distant, or these rich days? Find out if there is any way you can encourage each other's times with the Lord, practically or simply prayerfully. If you are in a season of life with kids, finding time alone with God and His Word can be especially difficult. Put your heads together and figure out how to make this top priority a reality!

4. Keep Your Eye on the End, Not on the Means in Family Worship

Before I was married, I had a little ideal in my head of what family worship would look like, then I had kids! My dreams of eager faces, lapping up every word as my husband led us through a Scripture passage, spouting out their catechism questions and sitting still through prayers, wilted in our busy lifestyle and our kids wiggly behavior. For a while we forced things to look like we had envisioned, but our way was exasperating our kids. Ok, now we KNEW that was bad! (Ephesians 6:4).

We stopped looking at the means we planned to use and started thinking about the end. We wanted our kids to know the gospel. We wanted to leave a library of God's truth in their heads. We wanted them to see the mighty acts of God, both in Bible times thousands of years and in answered prayers this very afternoon. We began to use a missionary model and strategized how to best achieve these good goals with our particular kids.

Family worship took place during dessert. Bible stories were added to bedtime. We listened to Scripture songs as they danced around or as we drove in the car. We spoke of the Lord and prayed as we went through the day, a la Deuteronomy 6:7. These kinds of changes dialed back the exasperation and filled up their little hearts with the testimony of God and His Word.

5. Others Need to Know Us for God to Grow Us

Finding safe friends is a tricky thing for pastors and their wives. It takes time and discernment, but be patient and ask God to provide these very precious people, even if just one. You and your husband need someone with whom you can share your spiritual struggles and you can count on to be both supportive and honest.

As you assess your times of prayer, you will probably see patterns of strength and success and patterns of obstacles and weakness. Find somebody in a similar season of life and find somebody in the next season of life who has faced similar struggles to yours. Seek their advice. Ask for their prayers. Ask your husband to pray about these things for you, too. And if a change in schedule can help, he may be able to help you on the practical side as well. Don't forget: God may have called your husband to be a pastor, but he's called to care well for you, too.

Your husband needs to know your struggles. And together you need to figure out if your struggles are a short-term issue or if they stem from a longer-term pattern. If they are coming from a longer-term pattern (such as chronic over-tiredness, almost never any time to study God's Word and pray because you are constantly on duty with the kids, etc.) that is spiritually unhealthy, then together you can think of practical ways to break the pattern and create a better environment for growth.

Encourage your husband in friendships in which he can share and receive advice about his own personal walk with the Lord, as well as times of discouragement in the ministry that affect his relationship with the Lord. Share with other pastor's wives your strengths and weaknesses you have had in praying for your husband's ministry. Ask them what they do to pray for their husband's ministry. Ask your husband how you can best be praying for him and his ministry.

6. Borrow from Others

Sometimes I feel like I get in a rut, praying the same old thing day after day. I find that by choosing to pray for people elements from by Bible reading, from the words of hymns or the prayers of other godly men and women from collections of prayers like [The Valley of Vision](#) help refresh my prayers for myself and others. The vast number of sermons available online provides great biblical teaching. Some days I'm just so busy with so much to do with my hands, but if I downloaded sermon I can listen to the audio and be growing my soul even as I'm folding laundry or driving home after dropping the kids off at school.

As you reflect on the words of the hymns and prayers you read, think of particular applications of the truths they contain to your roles in supporting your husband both at home and in his ministry. Pray that God would apply these truths to your heart and to your life and use them to help you support your husband even this very day as well as prepare you for how you will need to support him in the future. Think of particular applications to the truths to your husband's ministry and pray them for him: that God might encourage your husband with these truths, increasingly live them out, and, be able to use these truths in his words, actions and preaching to encourage others.

Ask God to grow these truths in the hearts of all your church members, bringing greater unity among God's people and greater glory to Himself.

7. Use Your Bible Reading to Inform Your Prayers

Ask God to not just help you understand the truths the Bible passage that you are studying contains, but also would use it to transform your life as you reflect on them. Bible study leads to godliness as what we know impacts how we grow.

Ask God to help you apply the passage to your husband and others, too, as you pray for them. Think about one truth from the passage that you could share with others. Ask Him to bring to mind anyone specific He might want you to encourage by the truths you've dwelled upon that day, either in person or by letter or email. Ask Him to put others in your path that might need to hear that truth and to give you the opportunity to say it to them.

8. Don't Care How You Feel

Our emotions are wonderful gifts from God and when they are working in our favor they help fuel our prayers. But, they are nothing to count on! Pray whether you feel like it or not! God doesn't value our prayers by the emotional heat of our heart but by their accordance with His will! Forge ahead even on dull days!

I have come to use times when I don't feel like praying as wonderful times of defiant prayer. What do I mean by that? I don't mean defiant against God, but defiant against my feelings.

Do I feel in despair about a situation? Then I am praising God for His sovereignty over the situation and His complete ability to do whatever needs to be done. I am thanking Him for His perfect timing in the situation and am asking Him to work powerfully in it, according to His good and perfect will. Does God feel far away? Then I am praising God for His Holy Spirit that dwells inside of me, comforting me and giving me strength and wisdom, even when I don't feel like it. I am thanking Him that He is near and I am asking Him to comfort me with His presence.

By these defiant prayers, God helps me to persevere and pray in the hardest, most unlikely times. The peace and joy He has brought me during these prayers have become some of the sweetest experiences in pray I have ever had.

Don't wait to feel your need for God's strength to help you through your day or for God to prepare you for situations that lie ahead. The truth is that you need it, whether you feel like it or not! On the other hand, your problem may not be struggling with feeling your need for God's strength, but struggling with feeling that God will provide for your needs in the situations of the day ahead.

Perhaps your husband has a night full of committee meetings and you are faced with caring for all the children alone that evening—including your young teenage girl who is going through a difficult patch of mouthiness and attitude. You've really been struggling with addressing her heart issues and behavior with a firm, loving, patient attitude with her instead of anger. It always seems to be particularly bad when your husband is absent. Will this be another evening of failure? You feel like no one can help you or your daughter. God certainly hasn't seemed to help you overcome your daughter's issues or yours. You wonder what good it does to pray. Don't care how you feel! Keep on praying! God may have not answered your prayers in your timing or your technique, but He is at work! Don't give up!

Unending budget problems. Tensions among staff. False accusations of church members. Writer's block on Saturday night. Squabbles over music style. A few disgruntled prominent members leave the church. Young sheep keep losing their struggle with destructive, besetting sin. Members who feel unloved or uncared for....and on and on. Sometimes the struggles and sin of the saints weighs our husbands down to deep discouragement. Yet it is these very same difficulties that provide opportunities for those beautiful, defiant prayers to God. God uses them to help us keep on praying for God to work out His will in each of these situations and to encourage our husbands to persevere through difficult ministry times.

Choosing to pray defiantly, against our feelings and the pessimistic outlook of a situation, can be a great way to help others in the church to persevere through trying circumstances in their lives, too. As they see us respond to our situations this way, they are encouraged to do so in their situations. And, when others in your church share their troubles with you, you can show not just compassion and sympathy or offer advice. You can pray defiantly with them about them. Now hear me, I am not saying that you down play the suffering they are going through as you talk with them and pray with them. To the contrary! You are acknowledging how difficult or even impossible their circumstances might be, but how much greater God is and how absolutely able He is to meet their needs in them.

We can fuel our desire to pray by remembering that God works powerfully through them. Our prayers, whether they are short or long, feel effortless or belabored, are all powerful. Why? Because God has ordained them to be so! He has woven the fulfillment of His great plans for the world into the prayers of His people. They are actually part of the good works that God prepared in advance for His people to do.

Now when I think of good works, prayer is not exactly the first thing that comes to mind. I don't know about you, but when I think of good works, I think of, well, get-your-hands-dirty good deeds. Prayer doesn't seem to fit the bill. But God clearly thinks differently from me on this matter. The New Testament alone has hundreds of accounts of God's people praying and commands for them to pray about a great number of different things.

Understanding that God has ordained to do great things through the prayers of His people can help us to pray more. Perhaps you are in a dry season and prayer is particularly difficult now. Think about how many prayers of yours that God has answered even during this season. If He has ordained to do as much as He has during this dry season, can you imagine what He might have ordained to do if we were to pray more?

We can fight to keep praying, remembering that God promises to powerful work through our prayers. No telling how our prayer-answering God may equip us for today and for the future through our prayers! No telling what ministry opportunities He may bring us or how He may choose to glorify Himself! This can help us to pray on!

We remind our husbands of God's plans to work through His people's prayers when they are discouraged. We can boldly pray for fruit from our husband's ministry, knowing that God has woven the fulfillment of His plans for even their ministry into the prayers of His people. This can encourage both us and our husbands to pray big and pray boldly for God's work through our husbands. Pray for powerful preaching, fruitful evangelism, growing knowledge, obedience and delight in God.

We can gather together, not just to chat, but to pray for each other. God gives His people far more than just a sympathetic ear to offer each other. He gives them to opportunity to intercede powerfully on their behalf, imploring their kind and generous Heavenly Father to care for their needs.

God has woven the working out of His plans into the prayers of His people. Let's be a part of that working out! If someone shares their discouragement or needs with you, stop right where you are and take a moment to pray about it. You will encourage them by your offer to pray, remind them that it is God who is Giver of all good things, as well as be at work already in asking God to work out His good plans in their lives.

9. Put Prayer, Scripture and God's People in Your Path

Daily devotion times are of great importance, but there are seasons of life when we are so busy that we seem to have little time to sit down and pray. And then there's the fact that life as a way of sending curve balls we could never anticipate.

Here are some ways to seek the Lord (and support your pastor-husband) during the day.

- Try posting Scripture around the kitchen sink to dwell on as you do the dishes, or near the rocking chair where you nurse your baby, and there's always the bathroom by the toilet. These can be nice little feeding troughs where you can meditate on God's word and pray in those free moments.
- Enlist your calendar in your prayer life. Mark important dates in others' lives to pray for. Pray through your husband's schedule. Google calendars make this easy. You can even color code different categories in your online calendar for easy reference. Have a category for your regular schedule but then make another category for your husband, your children, and others. If you have a gmail account, it will even send you daily alerts about anything you have listed for a particular date. When you check your email, you will be reminded to pray!

- Putting prayer in your path through sticky notes placed in key places around your house or through online calendar alerts are particularly useful when you, your husband and family, his ministry or others in the church are faced with a particular struggle or need that is a source of continual distraction, great urgency, dire need that you need to go back to pray for it again and again. When the problem includes a thorny heart issue, such as unforgiveness or bitterness, I like to include a Bible verse to remember to pray for the parties involved. The online calendar alerts are especially helpful for women who are in a season of life, like I am, who are doing a lot of computer work.
- Putting scripture and prayer in your path is also a great way for women on the go, living their lives in between car pool lines, the soccer field, piles of laundry and grocery store checkout aisles. A full-blown quiet time with time to pray and study the Bible may be a rarity. Putting prayer in your path can help you keep praying for more aspects of your life, your husband's ministry and the lives of others in your church even when you seem to have very little sit-still time. Make these the theme of your sticky notes or Google alerts that you put in your path.
- If you use sticky notes, take a pile of sticky notes with you into your church's prayer meeting or keep them by your telephone or computer desk, or other places where you tend to receive information about things to pray for others. Write down requests as you receive them and then put them in whatever spot you have designated to look at them as you do something else. And by the way, if you are praying about something of a sensitive nature, you may want to come up with a secret short hand to remind you of what to pray for, but not advertise the issue to the rest of the world via your sticky notes!
- If you are using online calendar alerts, you may want to take a note pad with you to church and keep one by the telephone, computer desk, etc. to write down the prayer requests and add them to your calendar when you get a chance to go online.
- Pray for God's strength, wisdom and blessing upon each segment of your schedule as you come to it. Ask Him for wisdom to give you the right words to speak to a hurting friend. Ask Him for strength to bear patiently with your children or to maintain a forgiving spirit with an angry member who has decided you should know how offended they were about how your husband or the elders handled a particular situation. Ask Him to bless your efforts to make your home a welcoming, restful place for your husband as you clean. Thank Him as-you-go, too, as you see Him answer prayer after prayer!
- Learn the rhythm of your husband's daily schedule and pray for it as you go through your day. Ask him in the morning what he has planned for the day and how you could best pray for him. How encouraging it has been for my husband to be greeted at the end of day with not just the general "how was your day?" question, but questions about how specific events have gone!
- When life gets busy, add in "tag along" women into your life to come along with you and spend time intentionally building each other up, spiritually. Driving to pick up the kids from school? Take some one along to share what God is teaching you from Scripture or how you can pray for each other. Folding laundry? Fold another lady into your task and listen to a sermon or podcast and talk about it. These are just two examples of how you can add people into what you are doing already and seek God at the same time.
- Weave Stop and Pop Up Prayers into your daily life. A Stop and Pop Up prayer is stopping and praying right when someone shares something that needs prayer. Instead of saying, "I'll be praying about that," (and me usually forgetting to pray about it later), it's saying, "Let's pray about that right now." It has been one of the best tips of seeking God along my daily path that I've ever learned. And I'm so grateful for professor Christy Wilson for teaching it to me.

10. Don't Miss Your Church's Worship Gatherings

Gathering together to worship God and to receive His Word is so very important for each of us... and you are NO EXCEPTION! They are a wonderful and crucial part of our being fed upon God's Word and refreshed by the Holy Spirit.

Audience Issues

God's people gathering together for worship each week now as a dress rehearsal of the great Day when God's people from every tribe and nation gathered together before God's throne, worshipping Him forever. But for both pastors and their wives, these weekly dress rehearsals sometimes feel more like "Opening Night" with their stomachs full of jitters and the audience filled with critics. I know I certainly struggled with this problem, especially during the first months of my husband's time at a new church; or, when he is going through a season of criticism from the congregation. My body might be sitting in the pew and my eyes might be focused on my husband, but my heart was not receiving God's Word. Instead, it was taken up with analyzing his sentence structure or calculating popularity votes. My stomach was twisted up with stress instead of my soul filled up with truth.

What has helped me when I've struggled in this way? Five things have helped:

- Asking God to help my husband enjoy God and grow from the worship service, even as he is leading it. That he would be preaching to himself every bit as much as he is preaching to the congregation.
- Confessing to God my sin of fearing people and desiring popularity
- Asking for God's grace to help me focus on His Word and not on my man
- Turning my gaze on the Lord and the fact that it gives him pleasure when his people gather together to worship him and love one another. This gathering of his church is not a club meeting, it is a gathering before Him, for His glory and our good.
- Entrusting God to work through His Word in others, however He desires
- Taking sermon notes to force my mind onto what was being preached

Don't Just Show Up; Be Filled Up

Another challenge that many pastors' wives face is simply to get to be in the service to worship and hear God's Word at all! Perhaps there's a shortage of nursery workers, or no one to teach the children or a special lunch that must be prepared during the service so that it is ready to be served immediately afterwards. Many times the pastor's wife volunteers to fill in the gap or make the extra sacrifice that is needed to serve others. This may be especially true in small churches/church plant situations. Or, there may be an attitude problem yet again with one of your children during the service; or perhaps one always seems to be sick and needs to stay at home. With your husband in the pulpit, you are the only one left to take care of the issue during the service. And there you are, once more missing the preaching of the word.

Catching It Later Is Missing Out

If you "just" missing the preaching of the Word you might be tempted to think it's not such a big deal. You can always just look up the passage and reflect on it yourself another time. If your husband sermons are available online, you can catch it later. But the truth is, the Lord has called your husband to be a shepherd over all of the sheep in your church -- including you. And chances are, if it is anything like my husband, his sermon preparation has involved far more depth and many more hours of both study and prayer than my daily devotion of the same passage usually does. He has been called to be the encourager of God's people. And that message is something the Holy Spirit may use to work powerfully in your heart. But you have to be there to hear it.

Spiritual Superfood

But there's more. Hearing the preaching of the word is not the only spiritual discipline going on during each weekly gathering of your church. Look at this passage from Colossians:

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Do you see that your church's worship service is like a superfood devotion. The singing of this hymns and spiritual songs, the prayers, the testimonies as new Christians are baptized and as mature Christians share what God is doing in their lives, the sharing of the Lord's Supper, the giving of our tithes and offerings, the opportunity to bring non-Christians to church to hear God's Word and see how God's people love each other, the fellowship that takes place afterwards. All of these, plus the preaching of the word take place when you gather together. Your personal devotions at home are little dress rehearsals for your weekly gatherings of the local church. In your weekly gatherings of your church, on the dress rehearsals for God's people gather together with God in heaven.

Encourage from the Pew

All of this would be reason enough to see how important it is for you to regularly be a part of the church service if you were just another member. But you aren't just another member. You're the pastor's wife. That service allows you a chance to encourage your husband's hard work. It allows you as a couple or even a family to discuss at home what you took part of the church. It can fuel your prayers and times in God's word throughout the rest of the week. It prepares you to have encouraging conversations with church members or visitors, some of which you may want to share with your husband at home, and that helps him understand them and love them better as their pastor.

I would strongly urge you to watch for patterns of absenteeism from the church service. Your heart might be more heavily invested in seeing your husband's ministry thrive through you making another "little sacrifice" during the service, but you will serve all far better by regularly feeding your soul together with the saints than regularly sacrificing for them in this way.

Many church plants and small churches especially face a shortage of volunteers in childcare. It's easy to feel like you should fill the holes whenever they arise. I know I certainly did when our church was small. It felt like the best way to keep families happy so they would keep coming back. And that would encourage my husband's ministry.

But beware! Take time to discuss with your husband how much time he thinks it is good for you to spend missing the service and filling these shortages. And if there are some Sundays when there is no childcare or teaching for the children because no one else has volunteered, then so be it. Cheerfully obey your husband's advice to be in the service and make the shortages a point of prayer. Remember: God is the ultimate provider for His church. You are only His servant. Trust God to fill the needs. Not only does this allow you to receive God's Word, but it is a great model of obeying your husband and trusting God to encourage others in the congregation, too.

11. The Two-Way, 4-for-1 Deal

Kind of like a calendar, is your church's sermon card. This is a listing of upcoming sermons and the Scriptures that they are on. If your church has one (or if your husband has a listing of what he plans to preach, he can share that with you even if you don't have a sermon card), then you can do what I call a 4-for-1 Deal. There's two of them.

4-for-1 Deal #1: Get quadruple value out of your study of Scripture by studying the passage during the week what your husband plans to preach on the following Sunday. This allows you to reflect on the passage yourself, enjoy discussions with your husband on it, pray more specifically for God to help your husband preach it truthfully and powerfully, and then have you better prepared to learn even more as your husband preaches on it Sunday morning. Even if your husband doesn't know the passage he's preaching from until later in the week, you can reverse the order: hear his sermon on Sunday then meditate upon it throughout the following week.

4-for-1 Deal #2: (Easier to do on the go, if that matters) Take your bulletin from the previous week's service and meditate on the songs, scripture verses, and any notes from the sermon you wrote down. Get quadruple value out of your study of Scripture by studying the passage during the week what your husband plans to preach on the following Sunday. This allows you to further marinate in the truths reflected in that service and ask God to grow them in your life and the lives of others.

As my husband says, "Your encouragement to me is like the wind in my sails." So, whether it's discussing his preaching passage with him ahead of time and sharing our reflections, in the week before he gives it; or, if I'm sharing with him the truths God taught me and is helping apply to my heart during the week after he's preached, this is deeply encouraging to him. Even if no one else learned anything from the passage he worked so hard on, he knows that I, the one he treasures most did.

Sometimes we feel like we don't know what to pray for others because we just don't know what's going on in their lives. But one thing we do know that if there in church they are going to hear from God's Word. We can pray in advance for them as we meditate on the upcoming sermon passage in preparation week. Or, we can be praying that passage (and application points from our husband's sermon) for them after they've heard the preaching, if we are meditating on the previous Sunday's service.

12. Don't Simply Study for Others

Don't confuse time spent speaking about the Lord with time spent speaking to the Lord. Your husband and even you may spend quite a bit time every week preparing to teach God's Word. This time of preparation can be a rich time of study, but don't just study to teach someone else. Make sure you take time to dwell upon the truths and seek the Lord for the sake of your own soul, too.

13. Be Grateful for the Times of Bible Study, Prayer and Worship Service Attendance You Do Have

It's easy to get discouraged with our weaknesses in Bible study and prayer. It's easy to feel like you will never escape the tyranny of the urgent with a sick kid or a last-minute ministry need that takes us out of the worship service we are trying to so desperately to regularly attend! We still don't have daily quiet times, or at least they are not as long or in some way fruitful as we would like. We still forget to thank God at the end of the day for the many blessings He gave us. We still do not feel as close to God as we think we should, etc.

This is a trick of our great enemy! Satan knows that any prayer of God's people is powerful. He would rather shut you down with discouragement than have you pray as you now are. Don't play into his hand! Instead of just beating yourself up for what you aren't doing yet, thank God for what He has enabled you to do. Yes, certainly ask Him for more grace, but be grateful for what grace He has given you already.

Perhaps as pastors' wives, it is especially easy to beat ourselves up over our shortcomings in these areas. Shouldn't we be especially strong? Haven't we seen up-close more than most God's power and blessing in our lives and the lives of others? But these are all just Satan's ploys. Forget the pecking order of what we should be compared to others! Thank God for however He has helped you to pray and however He has answered your prayers for yourself, your husband's ministry and for others. Thank Him for what you DO glean from the worship services you DO attend. Ask for God's forgiveness for laziness or over-busyness or a dry heart, receive His forgiveness and praise Him for His mercy! Yet again, He shows us that we need a Savior! Yet again, what a great depth to grace we are! Then move on! Ask Him for more grace, more strength, more blessing! Ask Him to help you and your husband scheme for more or better time for you to grow.

Questions for You

1. What are some things you have done that have helped you or your husband to keep seeking after God?
2. How hard is it for you to regularly be in the worship service? Do you see an impact on your spiritual health when you are missing too much?
3. How does the season of life of your family impact your personal time with the Lord? Any tips you can share with others in the same season of life?
4. Do you have any words of wisdom you can share with using your personal devotion times to undergird your husband's ministry?
5. What has helped you or your husband during spiritually difficult or dry times?

Some Final Words of Encouragement

Over the last few sections, we have seen how seeking the Lord is so important to both our husbands and to us in our personal life, in our married life, and in our ministry life. We've looked at the three, very powerful means that God's Holy Spirit use to grow us in our knowledge of God and our godliness—prayer, studying God's Word, and being encouraged by God's people. I've offered many practical suggestions that can help you strengthen one another through these means. Are you overwhelmed yet? You might be. Here are a few words to encourage you before we close this section on seeking the Lord.

Not Your New Standard of Success, Not a To-Do List, More Like a Help Wanted Ad

Please do not make any of my suggestions your new litmus test of whether you are a loser-wife to your pastor-husband or not! These are simply ideas of how you could possibly support him as you seek the Lord. Think of them as possibilities and come up with your own. They are NOT a to-do list!

This Is God's Gift that He Loves to Give

We do not seek God on our own. It is a work of God. It is His promised gift to us. Our inability points us to our need for God. We must ask Him to help us. It is only by God's gracious gifts to us that we ever change! Remember the phrase at the end of this verse: "Apart from You I have no good thing."? We should not be surprised that we will have to ask God to help us have this kind of fellowship with Him? And the great news is that this is a gift that God delights to give us! God created us to know and love Him. He created us for fellowship with Him and what is prayer if not the fellowship of earth through the Holy Spirit that is a foretaste of the exquisite feast of knowing God face to face in heaven?

Yes, this is a gift we can count upon receiving from God if we ask Him, for it is a request for more of His Holy Spirit. Remember Jesus' promise in Luke 11:13: "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

God promises to give us more of the Holy Spirit if we ask Him; and through Him, God can work powerfully in us! He can grow in our hearts a greater desire to speak with Him. He can prompt our hearts to pray. He can help us have the discipline to persevere in prayer even when we don't feel like it. We can ask Him to give our heart a new lens: one that clarifies our spiritual vision and helps us to see Him and His glorious plans at work in this life. And in response cry out to Him with our praise, thanksgiving for what He has done and our desire for Him to do even more.

We can ask God to help us pray today to work in our hearts and prepare us by His Spirit for the times that are ahead. We do not know what lies ahead in our husband's ministry that will tempt us to respond in sinful ways. We don't know what ways He may call us to serve. But God does. He can equip us today for what lies ahead. And when trials come, we can know that God has already been at work, preparing us for them.

We can ask God to help us to pray for our husband's ministry. If it is a dry ministry time, we can ask God to help us to keep persevering in prayer for fruit and joy. If it is a bountiful ministry time, we can ask Him to help us to keep on praying, remembering that He is the source of all the good fruit that our husband's ministry is experiencing. We can share with others our own struggles in prayer, asking them to pray for God to help us, too. We can encourage others who are struggling to pray with our own struggles, by praying for God to help them and by sharing with them some of the ideas from this section that we have found helpful.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen." Ephesians 3:20-21