



WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE MARRIED TO A PREACHER'S WIFE

J.J. Turner, Ph.D. ©

I am not sure if Tammy Wynette had a particular occupation in mind when she sang her country song, *Stand by Your Man*. Her point is that you need to keep loving him even when it is difficult to understand him. I do know one thing however, I am married to a lady who has stood by her preaching man through thick and thin; through good times and bad times; and has always been there loving and caring for me—her man.

My wife didn't sign on to be a preacher's wife. She married a sailor; later I was a machinist, and then a policeman: she stood by me in those three jobs. Then we obeyed the Gospel and I decided I wanted to prepare myself to preach; not really having a clue what that would involve; especially the part of working with churches. We learned together as we faced the challenges of me being a full-time preacher and her my helpmeet, partner and shoulder to cry and lean on.

Being married to a preacher's wife wasn't like being married to a sailor's wife, machinist's wife or a cop's wife. She didn't have to be involved in my duties on a ship, in a factory or on the beat; but when I became a preacher all that changed. She became involved for three major reasons: (1) she was a Christian and loved the Lord, (2) she had her own responsibilities as a Christian, and (3) the brethren expected her to be involved. The first two reasons for standing by me were without problems. The third, however, caused challenges along the way, which she handled in a Christlike manner.

Wives of preachers are constantly being asked what is like to be married to a preacher. Rarely, however, is a preacher asked what is it like to be married to a preacher's wife. Well I know and I want to share a few of the blessing that come from being married to a preacher's wife.

First, it is like being married to any other faithful and godly Christian women except she has to put up with the preacher 27-7-365. She sees me at my best as well as at my lowest. My wife reminds that I am human too; which I need to be reminded of from time to time. She loves the Lord and makes a major contribution to my spiritual growth and welfare.



Second, she will be the first to admit that she is not the woman of Proverbs 31. In fact, she doubts that such a woman ever existed; at least not one married to a preacher. Perhaps Solomon was using a metaphor to personify wisdom as a woman. She works hard just like other wives, mothers and house wives; sometimes complaining that I don't help her (preachers can be neglectful too).

Third, we have been blessed with two children, a boy and girl five years apart age wise. She has not only done all the duties of a mother but she has had to spend many nights alone while I have been out comforting the hurting, sharing the Gospel and attending endless meetings. I was gone a lot from home preaching meetings, speaking in lectureships, and counseling church leader with problems. She stayed at home faithfully attending church, taking care of sick kids, and calling repairmen. She went the second-mile. She more than stood by her man—she sometimes had to stand alone.

Fourth, we have shared the burdens and frustrations of 45-years of full-time ministry. We have laughed cried and shared anger because of behavior of fellow-Christians. We have shared in the joy of seeing souls come to Christ in obedience to the Gospel. We have discussed quitting but after a good night's sleep and prayer we reignited and were ready for another round.

Fifth, being married to a preacher's wife allows you to see her come home, not in her normal jolly, upbeat mood, but all down and discouraged. She was asked to take the lead in a project and when she did, she was ignored, rejected and rebuked. After all, she's the preacher's wife and needs to stay in her place. I then have my turn to encourage her as she has done for me so many times.

Sixth, being married to my wife, who also happens to be a preacher's wife, has been an excited journey. The amazing thing is that all the scars have been turned into stars. We have shared more blessing than we ever deserved. God and some of our brethren have been so wonderful; those who haven't served as reminders that the Bible is right. We have grown together and experienced more togetherness than would have in any other vocation. We are a team, partners with God in the greatest work in time and eternity.

Seventh, what is it like being married to a preacher's wife? It is beyond any feeble words I could write trying to explain. It carries with it an awesome sense of respect, joy and awareness that I must faithfully stand by my woman, believing with Browning, "The best is yet to be." I can only say to my lifelong, friend, lover, companion, partner in



JEREMIAH INSTITUTE

J. J. TURNER

jeremiahinst@aol.com

www.jeremiahinstitute.com

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ministry, Isabel, I love and appreciate you more than I can every express in words. Thanks for standing by your preacher man; you have made the road easier and a joy.

These few words have not done justice to what it is like to be married to a godly preacher's wife. There is so much more. I encourage all my preaching brothers to sit down and write your own version of what it is like to be married to a preacher's wife; that gift from God who stands by her man.

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