



WORN OUT PREACHERS AND RESTED SAINTS

J.J. Turner, Ph.D. ©

The three preachers were huddled in a remote corner booth in *Denny's*. It was late; they had lost track of time because of the nature of their conversation. Between the three of them there was a combined total of 30 years in full-time ministry. They had decided to meet because of previous brief conversations that had shared at “preacher’s luncheons.”

After the typical small talk preachers are known to engage in, they finally had the nerve to bring the topic to the table for discussion. They were worn out from their ministry duties; maybe even on the brink of burnout. The early joys of ministry were in the distance, as the demands of now were taking their toll on their ministry, personal health and family.

They were in agreement in confessing that prayer, Bible study and preaching had become more of a duty than a blessing. They dreaded to hear the phone ring or the demands of another visit to wayward members. A day seemed like a week; nights were sleepless and Sunday’s came too quickly.

A note of resentment entered the discussion as it was pointed out that the church members had it easy; they had no idea of what the preacher was experiencing; that he was worn out from serving them. He was their spiritual superman; their jack-of-all-trades waiting for the next service call. Of course there were some exceptions, but few as they recalled.



Finally the discussion got around to their wives. All three were in agreement that their wives were under as much stress, or maybe more, than they were. They were worn out too. Some of the members treated their wives like they were employees too, demanding things other women weren't expected to do. One preacher admitted that he and his wife were seeing a counselor because of ministry stress. The children were also brought into the discussion. They, too, were under stress because their father was a preacher. They admitted their families were worn out too.

All three agreed that it wasn't fair that they were worn out while the brethren rested. But what could they do? What was the solution? They came up with this initial plan:

1. To meet once a week to discuss and pray about how to reduce stress and prevent burnout in their ministries.
2. To discuss what they were doing with their wives and invite them at a later date to their meetings.
3. To start taking a day off from ministry activities during the week; only responding to genuine emergencies.
4. When the time is deemed right to discuss fatigue, stress and burnout with their church leaders; maybe a retreat for all the men, or expenses to attend a seminar or workshop on stress and burnout in ministry
5. To attend an upcoming ministry burnout seminar in an effort to better educate themselves and acquire tools for stress and burnout prevention and cures.

APPLICATION:

Take a few minutes and write a brief description of when you last felt worn out in your ministry? What one intentional thing will you do to respond to being worn out because of this lesson?



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The **Jeremiah Institute** conducts seminars on ministry stress and burnout. Watch our NEWS sections for times and places. If you are interested in sponsoring one in your area please contact us.