

# *Introduction*

Why am I writing this book? I'm doing so because I want each pastor's family to enjoy the pastoral life as much as we did. That is not to say that we didn't have frustrating days, sorrowful situations, and challenges. Oh, those came along with the territory; but then again, what job *doesn't* have those things? This book most definitely does not have the answers to the challenges we faced within the pastorate; in fact, I'll go so far as to say that there are no answers in this book. What it *does* have is suggestions and/or conversation starters for you to use as you decide what is best for you and your family in dealing with the challenges that come with the pastoral life.

There are many wonderful books that have been written to pastors' wives. I have read and been blessed by many of them. Some of the books speak to your spiritual well-being, others to having confidence in who you are in the role that God has asked you to fill, and still others are philosophical in nature.

With that in mind, I need to warn you that this book is *not* like those types of books. This book is not an in-depth look into anything, nor is it full of theories or deep spiritual awakening. It is a very simple-minded, practical, "let's get down to it" kind of book.

Its purpose is to help initiate thoughts and conversations of important issues that many pastoral families come face-to-face with. This book attempts to take a humorous, raw, and real look at some of those issues. At times, while reading, you may find tangents, random thoughts, or seemingly flippant musings, but that's the beauty of being a pastor's wife. There is never a dull moment – things just come without warning.

In this book, I have attempted to address the questions that other pastors' wives have asked me. Unfortunately, when someone asks me a question, I am not the type of person that can answer it spontaneously. I am one that needs time to think about and process my answer, so that I know I have answered it the best way I know how. These chapters are my responses to those questions, after many moments of reflection and prayer.

Why am I writing this book *now*? I have asked the Lord this question time and time again these last few years. With four young children, as well as venturing into the international mission field, I kept assuming that God would understand why I couldn't write it right now. Well, He continued to press it upon my heart and mind, so I slowly began to dabble into the writing of it during my last couple of years we were in the pastorate. This past year, however, God

has given me a sense of urgency to complete it, and now I realize why. I want to be able to share my thoughts and suggestions while the experiences are still somewhat fresh and real to me.

As a pastor's wife, you will probably be faced with many of these topics. My desire is that, by using this book, you can be proactive with your thoughts, discussions and decisions about each topic so that each one can be looked at as a positive aspect of the ministry God has called you to. Unfortunately, many times, when we are in a reactive mode toward important topics such as these, they can be a source of stress, as well as give us a negative mindset toward the church.

Oftentimes, you will need to be creative in your decision-making with regard to these topics. That's okay! Enjoy the process of making each unique decision so that the pastoral experience can be a positive one for you, as well as each other member of your family.

There was one book I held on to when I was pregnant with each of my children – What to Expect When You're Expecting. During pregnancy, your body goes through so many changes and transitions, and it was always nice to refer back to that book and realize the things I was experiencing were normal and expected. It was such a comfort to be assured that I

wasn't alone in dealing with certain feelings or experiencing different things.

However, when I became a pastor's wife, there was no book or manual like that. The things I was going through – were they normal? The feelings I was sensing – were they okay to feel? The frustrations I had – was I alone in feeling them? As time has passed, and I have had the opportunity to watch the lives of many pastoral families, I have come to realize that they are normal things that are experienced. I was not alone in these things.

So, that's why I'm writing this book. I don't want you to feel alone. We are a special group of women that has the privilege to be pastors' wives. Yes, the privilege. God has called you to do this. No, the calling wasn't as formal as your husband's ordination service, but He has asked you to use your gifts for His glory in this way.

*Kristin McGinnis*