

STATISTICS ABOUT PASTORS

Pastors today are faced with more work, more problems, and more stress than any other time in the history of the church. This is taking a frightening toll on the ministry, shown by the statistics below:

Pastors:

- Fifteen hundred pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches.
- Four thousand new churches begin each year, but over seven thousand churches close.
- Fifty percent of pastors' marriages will end in divorce.
- Eighty percent of pastors and eighty-four percent of their spouses feel unqualified and discouraged in their role as pastors.
- Fifty percent of pastors are so discouraged that they would leave the ministry if they could, but have no other way of making a living.
- Eighty percent of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the ministry within the first five years. Ninety percent of pastors said their seminary or Bible school training did only a fair to poor job preparing them for ministry.
- Eighty-five percent of pastors said their greatest problem is they are sick and tired of dealing with problem people, such as disgruntled elders, deacons, worship leaders, worship teams, board members, and associate pastors. Ninety percent said the hardest thing about ministry is dealing with uncooperative people.
- Seventy percent of pastors feel grossly underpaid.
- Ninety percent said the ministry was completely different than what they thought it would be before they entered the ministry.
- Seventy percent felt God called them to pastoral ministry before their ministry began, but after three years of ministry, only fifty percent still felt called.

Pastors' Wives:

- Eighty percent of pastors' spouses feel their spouse is overworked.
- Eighty percent of pastor' wives feel left out and unappreciated by the church members.
- Eighty percent of pastors' spouses wish their spouse would choose another profession.
- Eighty percent of pastors' wives feel pressured to do things and be something in the church that they are really not.
- The majority of pastor's wives surveyed said that the most destructive

event that has occurred in their marriage and family was the day they entered the ministry.

Pastors' Marriages:

- Seventy percent of pastors constantly fight depression.
- Almost forty percent polled said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry.

Pastors' Children:

- Eighty percent of adult children of pastors surveyed have had to seek professional help for depression.

Pastors' Relationship With the Lord:

- Seventy percent of pastors do not have a close friend, confidant, or mentor.
- Ninety-five percent of pastors do not regularly pray with their spouses.
- Eighty percent of pastors surveyed spend less than fifteen minutes a day in prayer.
- Seventy percent said the only time they spend studying the Word is when they are preparing their sermons.

God's intent isn't that the ministry destroys you, but builds your inner, spiritual man. That way, you can go on to do greater and greater works for Him. Yet, what we are seeing today is droves of pastors leaving the ministry defeated, depressed, and dejected. Why is this happening, and what can we do about it?

First of all, let's deal with the question of why. I think that if we look at what the pastors said, we'd have to conclude that the problem is the church people, especially the leadership. Unfortunately, that's a hard one to change.

However, if we look at the last section of statistics, the ones that deal with the pastor's relationship with the Lord, we see some interesting clues to the true root of the problem.

More than anything, God has called pastors to have an intimate relationship with Him. That must come before the ministry, that must come before the congregation, and that must even come before the family. As you can plainly see from the statistics above, we literally cannot survive in the ministry without taking the time to be with the Lord.

If we, as ministers, don't have an intimate relationship with the Lord, how can we expect to have anything to minister to others? Our congregations don't need yesterday's warmed over breadcrumbs. They need the fresh meat and manna for today. But, you know what? We need that too.

What Can You Do?

How can you avoid becoming just another one of these statistics? I believe there

are certain steps, that we as ministers, can and must do to help ourselves not only survive in the ministry, but excel in it.

- Find other pastors who you can enter into covenant with. This should be a mutual, trusting relationship; where you can openly talk and pray for each other, without fear that the other pastors will gossip about you. As ministers, many times our lives are very lonely. Finding others whom you can build relationships with will help alleviate the stress and loneliness of being a pastor.
- Get into relationship with a mentor. We all need help from time to time, maybe even more so when we're in the ministry. You need someone who has the wisdom, experience, and hopefully the anointing to minister to you as a pastor. God has provided for this need within the five-fold ministry. It is part of the calling of the apostle. Jesus never built an organization, nor did Paul. They built relationships with other ministers whom they could pour their lives into. All of Paul's letters are an example of this. He wrote to the elders and ministers over the churches he had established, giving them help and instruction. Find someone with the same anointing, and get into relationship with them.
- Fall in love with studying the Word of God. If the only time you spend studying the Bible is to prepare a message, you've put a muzzle on yourself, as you feed your sheep. They're receiving, but you aren't. You need to be fed as well. Take time to study for yourself. If messages come out of that, that's fine. But the point is to receive. Take time to go to conferences and seminars as well, where you can receive ministry and encouragement.
- Last, and most important, spend time in the presence of the Lord. I have noticed very clearly in my own life that the more time I spend in the presence of the Lord, the easier it is to deal with the difficult people in my life. When we pray and worship, we receive from God. We are strengthened, we are lifted up, we are emotionally healed, and the burden is taken off of our shoulders. More than anyone, pastors and ministers need prayer time; they need worship time; they need time alone with the Lord. Not time when they are praying for their congregations, but time when they are just being alone with Jesus. Time to pray for themselves, their families, and to receive strength from the Holy Spirit.

Remember the wisdom of the apostles in Acts chapter six. They found that they weren't able to spend the time they needed in prayer and Bible study, because of the demands of the ministry. So, they asked the people to select deacons from amongst themselves; in order to take some of the burden of the ministry off of the apostles.

Why did they do this? So that they could spend their time in prayer and study of the Word. If your leadership isn't taking that load, then they aren't leadership. You need to train them in their duties, and allow them the blessing of truly serving the

people of God.

Be encouraged, brother. You don't have to become a negative statistic. God wants you where you are, not so that your church can be a millstone around your neck, but so that you can be a blessing to them. There is victory for you at the foot of the cross. Take your burden there, and allow the Lord to lift you up.

Source: <http://maranathalife.com/lifeline/stats.htm>

These statistics came from across denomination lines, and have been gleaned from various reliable sources such as Pastor to Pastor, Focus on the Family, Ministries Today, Charisma Magazine, TNT Ministries, Campus Crusade for Christ and the Global Pastors Network.

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