

jux.ta.po.sition

1665, coined in

Fr. 17c. from L. iuxta
"beside, near" + French
being ~~close/connected~~ for the joy of God

position. Latin iuxta is a
contraction of iugista
(adv.), superlative of
adj. *jugos "closely
connected," from stem
of jugum "yoke," from
jungere "to join"

pre.face

“What will your wife do if you become our pastor?” That was the question one church member asked my husband at a question-and-answer session at Capitol Hill Baptist Church (CHBC). He was candidating for the position of pastor.

How did Mark answer? Did he reply, “She’ll take charge of women’s ministry. She’ll work with the children. She’ll accompany me on visitations”? No, he didn’t.

“She will seek to love the Lord,” was his straightforward reply. “She will be my wife, the mother of our children, and a faithful member of this church.” Then he added, “Remember, you will be hiring me; not my wife. The best way she can serve you is by letting her be who God has made her to be, and by letting her support me.”

In other words, he did not want the church to view me as an assumed, unpaid member of the church staff. He did not want me in a position. Rather, he wanted me in juxtaposition. That is, he wanted me to be closely connected to my God, my husband, my family, and the other members of the church in a way that fulfills the biblical roles for all wives, mothers, and church members, and yet which also makes the most of the special opportunities that I have to complement my husband’s ministry. That’s what my husband taught his congregation-to-be that evening. It’s what he set out for me as the best path. And not only has this path been freeing for me over the last fourteen years, it has proved fruitful for the church.

One way I have been able to minister simply by living in juxtaposition with my husband over this time has arisen through CHBC’s commitment to training up young men for the pastoral ministry. These men come from our own membership as well as the church’s pastoral internship program. With many of these men come their wives, who also hope to be mentored in how to best support their husbands as pastors. In response, several women and I formed a CHBC pastors’ wives small group several years ago. And it has evolved from the day we started it.

After a number of years using a variety of resources, we adopted Mary Somerville’s book One with a Shepherd as background reading for most of our small group’s sessions. We chose this book because of its biblically-based reflections and wealth of practical ideas, from which both prospective pastor’s wives and seasoned pastor’s wives could benefit. It has provided us with a wonderful springboard for our discussions. Yet as helpful as the book has been in itself, we decided to develop a study guide to make it even more useful to our women. In planning our study guide we wanted to provide more than just the typical study questions. We wanted to also include questions that clarified some important issues mentioned in the book; that fostered learning from older, more experienced pastor’s wives; that brought out heart matters lurking behind the surface issues and how those heart matters could be addressed by biblical truths; that applied key concepts to pastor’s wives in different seasons of life and ministry situations; and lastly--and most importantly of all--that helped pastors and their wives talk through the book’s topics in an encouraging and unifying manner. And so, a fledgling Juxtaposition was pushed out of the nest and into our small group this past spring.

The Lord has richly blessed this new study format here at CHBC. It is our hope that this study guide

might also be a useful resource to help other pastor's wives and their husbands glorify God by being more closely connected to Him, to each other, to their families, and to the brothers and sisters in their churches, bearing much fruit for His Kingdom.

Thanks, Mark, for your wise headship! Soli Deo Gloria!

Connie Dever

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Each session will include readings from the Bible, One with a Shepherd, and Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life to help wives of men in ministry or future wives of men in ministry think about particular topics. The readings by session are listed below.

SESSION 1 THE PASTOR'S WIFE: NOT POSITION, JUXTAPOSITION

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 3:23; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10 ; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9;2:1-5,11-15; 1 Peter 5:1-4

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Introduction, Chapter 1

SESSION 2 CLOSELY CONNECTED TO GOD: LIVING THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:29; 1 Timothy 4:7; Luke 18:35-43, 19:1-10; 2 Timothy 1:7; Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 3:13; 1 Corinthians 13-14

BOOK: Spiritual Disciplines: Read Chapters 1,13; Skim 2-12

SESSION 3 CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HER HUSBAND: ENCOURAGING ONENESS IN HOW SHE RESPONDS TO AND SUPPORTS HIM

SCRIPTURE: John 17: 5, 25; Matthew 19:5-6; Genesis 2-3; Ephesians 5; Galatians 2:20; Titus 2:4; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Colossians 3:18; John 14:10-13; Luke 22:42

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 7, 8

SESSION 4 CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HER FAMILY: LOVING THEM AND DRAWING THEM TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6; Ephesians 4:29; Deuteronomy 6:5-7; John 15:5; Hebrews 4:16; James 1:5; Proverbs 29:15; Ephesians 6:24; Colossians 3:23; Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; James 1:2-5

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 9, 10

SESSION 5 CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HER HUSBAND'S CALLING: COMPLEMENTING HIM AT CHURCH AND AT HOME

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 5:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; John 13:35; Galatians 6:9-10; 1 Peter 4:9; John 13:20; Matthew 10:40-42

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 11, 12

**SESSION 6 CLOSELY CONNECTED WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST:
ONE AMONG MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS**

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Philippians 4:1; Romans 1:9;
1 Corinthians 1:4-9; Ephesians 1:15-21; 5:17; Philippians 1:3-6,9-11; Colossians 1:9-14;
1 Thessalonians 1:2;2:13;5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17;
Galatians 6:1-2; Proverbs 27:5-6; Proverbs 28:23; 1 John 5:14-15; Matthew 18:15-20

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 14, 15

**SESSION 7 CLOSELY CONNECTED TO GOD'S GRACE: FIGHTING FOR JOY
AMIDST THE PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF MINISTRY**

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; Acts 16:14,40; Romans 12:4-8;
1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40; Psalm 24:1; Luke 14:33; Philippians 4:19; Psalm 78:4b,7;
Philippians 4:6; Matthew 6:33; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Philippians 4:11b-13; Luke 12:15

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 2, 13

**SESSION 8 CLOSELY CONNECTED TO GOD'S GRACE: FIGHTING FOR JOY
AMIDST THE EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL DEMANDS OF MINISTRY**

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:17-18; John 15:7; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:28-39;
Philippians 4:4-8; 1 Corinthians 13:5; Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 21:35;
Matthew 5:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:18; Matthew 21:42

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 3, 5, 6

**SESSION 9 CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HEAVEN: A HEAVEN-BOUND LIFE,
PURSUING HEAVENLY REWARDS**

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 10:12

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 4, 16

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BOOKS USED

Spiritual Disciplines of the Christian Life, Donald S. Whitney, NavPress.

One with a Shepherd: The Tears and Triumphs of a Ministry Marriage, Mary Somerville., Kress Christian Publications.

The Bible

SESSION MATERIALS

Each session's materials begins with a brief session overview and a list of session readings, followed by four parts: Small Group Discussion Worksheet, Application Questions Bank, For You and Your Husband, and Digging Deeply, each described below.

PART #1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

This worksheet lists eight questions to help small group leaders and members prepare for discussion. Some of the questions ask for your reflections upon the readings, while others direct you in selecting group discussion questions from the Application Questions Bank, the second section in the session materials.

PART #2: APPLICATION QUESTIONS BANK

Questions in this Question Bank are grouped into the five categories of questions most frequently asked: Point of Clarification, Ministry Situations, Seasons of Life, Heart Issues, and Words of Wisdom questions. Women participating in a small group will be asked to choose a question (or two) from each category that they would particularly like the group to discuss. Women using this as a personal study can also use these questions to help them further apply the session materials to their own lives.

Point of Clarification Questions

These questions address statements needing further clarification from the assigned readings. Particular statements are quoted, then questions and comments are offered to help think through what the author has written.

Seasons of Life Questions

Questions that help apply the session topic to different seasons of life.

Ministry Situations Questions

Questions that help apply the session topic to different ministry situations.

Questions of the Heart

Questions that draw out heart issues behind struggles related to the session topic.

Words of Wisdom Questions

Questions that help older or more seasoned pastor's wives share helpful insights they have learned with the younger or less experienced women.

SECTION #3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

Questions and suggestions to aid you as a couple in thinking through each session topic, either before or after your small group discussion.

SECTION #4: DIGGING DEEPLY

This is an optional in-depth study of the session readings. These are particularly helpful for small groups who want to extend each session into two or three sessions; or, for women who are studying on the materials on their own.

OPTIONS FOR USING THIS STUDY GUIDE

Here at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, we use this study as a nine session, bi-weekly, small group each spring and fall for pastor wives and future pastor's wives at our church. This allows the wives of our interns (who are only here for four months) to attend the entire study, while allowing others who are more permanently in the area two chances each year to hear the same materials. Given the number of young mothers and very busy schedules of the pastoral staff, we find this allows everyone to take advantage of the study in the course of a year.

There is much material contained in each of the nine sessions. Leaders may choose to extend each session into two or even three sessions, using the Digging Deeply Questions and more of the Application Question Bank questions, covering the entire study in 18 or even 27 sessions.

LEADING THIS SMALL GROUP...a final note

We have found that an extra dose of grace needs to be salted over all of the sessions. As Gail MacDonald once said, life as a ministry wife is a "High Privilege, High Calling." We find that women are quick to find themselves unequal to the task of pastor's wife. They often have regrets or fears about their own shortcomings. We need to remind them of their great and good God who loves them, empowers them with His Spirit to do whatever it is He calls them to do, and always, always is full of compassion and forgiveness, working all things to the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose.

Make sure to begin and end with prayer, asking for God to help you each better know Him, love Him and serve Him with your hearts and lives.

Session 1

THE PASTOR'S WIFE: NOT POSITION, JUXTAPOSITION

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this introductory session, we will take a first look at the biblical view of the pastor's wife, clarifying that a pastor's wife is not a church position, but simply a godly woman married to a pastor. We will study what general roles we have as godly women members of a congregation as well as special opportunities related to our husbands' calling to the ministry. Our discussion questions will help us think through our own experiences, misconceptions and expectations about our roles as pastor's wives as well as the heart issues that lurk behind our struggles. We will look to Scripture and to the advice of more experienced pastor's wives for wisdom.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE Colossians 3:23; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10 ; 1 Timothy 3:1-7;
Titus 1:5-9;2:1-5,11-15; 1 Peter 5:1-4

BOOK: One with a Shepherd Introduction, Chapter 1

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

Part 2: APPLICATION QUESTIONS BANK

for personal reflection and small group discussion

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. "Continuing in Titus 2:3 we see that Paul addresses older women as the main ones leading in church ministry." (p.6) What does the author mean by "leading in church ministry?" It seems that Paul is exhorting Titus as an elder and pastor to be leading in church ministry by teaching the men and women, both older and younger, in the special roles they have in each other's lives. What is Titus to teach the older women to do? What is Titus to teach the younger women to do? How does this affect how older women and younger women are involved in ministries in the church? How might older women be more freed up to take more leadership roles among certain church ministries?

2. Mrs. Somerville says to older women: "Put on your work boots and get ready to use all of the wisdom you have accumulated through years devoted to your character and your home. Free up the younger women to focus on their main ministry in the home. Get active in women's ministries, whether one-on-one or in large groups. We cannot excuse ourselves from service thinking that the younger women won't want to hear our outdated opinions." (p.6) Which of the roles Titus mentions for women change when the children leave the home? Which ones still remain for older women? While being freed up from child-rearing responsibilities and being full of wisdom from years of experience makes older women more available and well-equipped to teach younger women, and fulfills this biblical command, who is still left at home after the children are gone? Who, by Scripture, is still to be the wife's primary focus to help? Why must we be careful to not abandon our first calling of supporting our husbands when the children are gone? How can our husbands help their wives as older women to know who and how much they are to be involved in teaching younger women?

3. Mrs. Somerville says to younger women: "your main role is to love your husband and children, to guard your purity, to be a worker—a kind worker—at home, and to be subject to your own husband so that the Word of God may not be dishonored. Any other ministry that you pursue in the church must not interfere with these priorities." (p.7) How is an important part of how older women teach the younger women still by example, not just by teaching them? Why is it so important for the older women to keep doing what they were doing as younger women?

4. "To have a home characterized by order, we must be disciplined ourselves to have a place for everything and to train our children to put things in their place when they are through with them, to clean their rooms, and to live harmoniously with one another." (p.8)

a. Does this mean we always to have a spotless home? What is the difference between being characterized by order and always in order? How does "order" vary from season to season of life, days of the week or even times of the day?

b. What does it mean to live harmoniously with one another? No struggles? No frustrations? Always happy with each other? Or is it a life characterized by love, grace, forgiveness, and respect for the authority of God, the husband/father and mother? How can we help our family members live together in harmony this way? Why can this kind of harmony look far more messy than always being happy with each other, yet be so honoring to the Lord?

5. Mrs. Somerville refers to the sample lists of gifts in the Bible. (p.10) Then she says, "If anyone is not using his or her gifts, the church is crippled. So don't try to be an ear if you are an eye. If you are an

eye, be the best eye you can be, don't try to taste and hear too."

a. What is Mrs. Somerville encouraging us to do?

b. Why does knowing that God is the one who empowers His church for His glory show that the church is NOT crippled if anyone is not using his or her gifts?

c. Why are there many times when we are needed to serve in areas where we are not gifted? How can sticking only to your "gifts" actually be less helpful to the church?

d. Why is asking our husbands where, how and how much we should serve the best way to serve in the church, whether using specifically identifiable gifts or not?

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What different seasons of life do we go through that affect our role as a pastor's wife?

2. What stays the same in your role as you go through different seasons of life?

3. What changes in your role do you face as you go through different seasons of life?

4. What season are you in now? What struggles as a pastor's wife are you facing now? What opportunities and blessings?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. What different types of ministry situations are there?

2. How do you see your role as pastor's wife affected by the type of ministry your husband is in or will be called to?

3. Which type of ministry best describes the one in which your husband is called to or expects to be called to? What struggles are you facing in your role as a pastor's wife in this current situation? What opportunities and blessings?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. Why is it hard to see a supporting role as significant? What desire(s) in your heart does this come from? What sin(s) show in these desires? What Scriptural truth does God give us to help us escape the temptation of these sins?
2. Who is our model of the glorifying God with a supporting role? (Philippians 2:4-11)
3. What heart issues must we beware of if we become an integral part of one or more of the church's public ministry?
4. Who do you go to for help in seeing your heart issues and sin regarding your desires and expectations as a pastor's wife? How might that change from situation to situation, season to season?
5. What heart issues do you see behind your present season, situation as a pastor's wife? Is there anything you need to repent of and ask forgiveness from God or from others? What Scripture points to how you are to deal with those heart issues and avoid sin?
6. How can the others in your group best pray for you and hold you accountable for areas where change of heart is needed?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. Did you think you would be a pastor's wife? Did you want to or not want to? Why or why not?
2. How has your role as a pastor's wife been different than you thought it would be?
3. What expectations for your role have you had to deal with? How did you deal with them?
4. What have you or your husband done to help correct wrong expectations for you as a pastor's wife?
5. What different struggles have you faced in each season you've gone through? What struggles are you dealing with now? What blessings and opportunities?

6. What ministry situations have you been in? What words of wisdom or warning would you give someone who is in that situation or preparing for that situation?

7. How did you transition from one ministry situation to the next? From one season of life to the next?

8. How have you guarded your heart when others have placed unbiblical expectations upon you? How have you learned to respond to their unbiblical expectations in a godly manner that cultivates unity?

9. What blessings have you seen in your husband's ministry as a result of you living out the biblical roles of a pastor's wife?

10. How has God used your role as a pastor's wife to make you more Christ-like?

11. How has your understanding of your role changed over the years?

12. How do you still see yourself needing to grow in this role?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Review together the attributes and responsibilities of a pastor/elder mentioned in these passages from 1 Timothy 3:1-7;

Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4

2. Wife to Husband:

a. Ask your husband how you can pray for him and best support him in each of these duties.

b. Share ways that you delight/have delighted to support your husband in his role in ministry.

c. Share heart issues you see behind your struggles as a pastor's wife.

d. Share ways you would like him to pray for you in your supporting role.

e. Ask your husband: How can I better support you?

3. Husband to Wife:

a. Share struggles and blessings you have experienced in these specific attributes and responsibilities as a pastor/elder.

b. Share ways your wife has supported you in your ministry and how that has been helpful.

c. Share ways she can pray for you as a support to your ministry role.

Ask your wife:

a. Do you struggle with feeling less important because of your supporting role in ministry?

b. Do you need me to teach the congregation into clearer, more godly understanding of your primary role as my support?

c. What roles do you feel pressure or encouragement to fulfill from yourself, the congregation or from me?

d. How does your season of life affect what you do?

e. What struggles, blessings, opportunities do you see in our current ministry situation? How can I help you?

f. How can I encourage you in your role as my support?

g. How can I help you know that you've carried out your roles well as a pastor's wife?

4. Review together your involvement in the church and assess how it fits with biblical roles. Would you change anything? What?

5. Pray for your congregation and for yourselves that God would help you to have a godly perspective on the roles God calls you to. Pray for unity, joy and the bearing of good fruit through you, as a couple, put together intentionally by the Lord, for work within His Church. Pray He would help you bear patiently with unbiblical or unrealistic expectations and gently help change them through word and example.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS

1. Mrs. Somerville says: "What an honor and privilege to be in union for life with a man devoted to serving Christ for the highest of all possible purposes—building His church!"
 - a. Why does she call this the highest of all possible purposes? Do you agree?

 - b. How can this eternal perspective upon your union with your husband give you joy in day to day life?

2. What did Maria Taylor look for as of utmost important in her future husband? (ix)

3. In what situation did Maria and Hudson serve? (ix)

4. What was Maria's life in supporting her husband like? (ix)

5. How could she have been discouraged? (ix)

6. What was the overriding factor in their marriage that helped them not to be discouraged? (ix)

7. What affect can the unity we have with our husbands have upon their ministry? Why?

8. What does Mary Somerville call the "key to a fulfilled life as a ministry wife?" Why? (ix-x)

CHAPTER 1

1. Read the Associated Press release quote, top of page 2. Do any elements of this quote describe your life or how you feel sometimes? Which ones?

2. How do you finish Mrs. Somerville's question: "The pastor's wife (elder's wife, missionary's wife, etc) must _____." ? (p.2)

3. What expectations do you feel from your husband, yourself, your congregation, etc.? (pp.2-3)

4. Whose expectations do we need to strive to meet?(See Colossians 3:23; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10, pp.2-3)

5. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4

a. What kind of men does God call pastors/elders to be?

b. What role does God call pastors and elders to have in the church? How should they carry out this role?

c. What do these passages tell us about our roles as wives to these men, directly or indirectly?

d. How can we help support our husbands in their responsibilities?

6. Read Titus 2: 1-5, 11-15

a. Paul was writing Titus as an elder/pastor in Crete. What does this passage tell us about Titus' responsibilities as a elder/pastor to the church in Crete?

b. Which of these responsibilities hold true for our husbands, too?

c. How can we support our husbands in these responsibilities?

d. What does Paul tell Titus to teach the women to do and to be?

e. Are you an older woman, free from child-bearing responsibilities or a younger woman? (p.6)
What is Paul encouraging you to do, based on this passage in Titus? Can you share examples of how you have tried or hope to try to fulfill these duties?

7. Given what we've learned from these passages in 1 Timothy, Titus, and 1 Peter, how is our call to be godly women, supportive wives, and committed members of our congregations the same as other wives? How is it different?

8. What special opportunities do we have as pastor's wives as we live out the general responsibilities of godly women?

9. How do the biblical responsibilities of pastor's wives differ from the expectations you feel? (Review your answers from "Question 3")

10. How can we use Scripture, prayer, our husbands and godly friends to help us strive towards the biblical expectations?

11. How can we winsomely help the congregation understand and encourage pastor's wives to assume their biblical roles instead of unbiblical ones?

12. What was Mary Moffat's ministry situation? How did she serve/support her husband in his ministry? (pp.8-9)

13. Mary once said: "Is this the sort of work I've left home and friends to spend my life doing, in this uncongenial heathen land?" (p.9) Why did she feel this way? Do you ever feel this way about some of the work God calls you to as a pastor's wives? In what ways? At what times?

14. What helped her see these "menial tasks" as important? (p.9)

15. Who are we models for in our congregations? How? Why can this be such a powerful role? (pp.9-10)

16. What concerns does Mrs. Somerville have about pastor's wives working outside the home on a long term basis? (p.8) What makes these concerns valid?

17. Read 1 Peter 5:4

a. What does Peter say elders/pastors will receive from Jesus, the Chief Shepherd?

b. Why should this be encouraging for pastor's wives? (p.viii) How can this be encouraging to you at times when you feel unappreciated or unnoticed?

18. Why should we not be overwhelmed by the life God calls us to live? Who is our sufficiency for the life God calls us to live? (See 2 Corinthians 9:8, p.11)

19. Why is juxtaposition a better idea than position for a biblical view of the pastor's wife? How does this foster fruitful ministry? How does this bring glory to God?

Session 2

CLOSELY CONNECTED TO GOD: LIVING THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is dedicated to learning about ten key, spiritual disciplines set out in Scripture. We hope that you will develop an honest assessment of your practice of these disciplines; and, you will use them to grow closer to God and to bear richer, more bountiful fruit for Him, as a godly woman and in the special opportunities you have to serve Him as a pastor's wife.

NOTE: This session's readings come from Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald S. Whitney. While the session materials have you read Chapters 1 and 13, and skim Chapters 2-12 in preparation for your small group study, we would suggest you take this book and read Chapters 2-12 fully as part of your quiet times. Use the application questions at the end of each of Whitney's chapters to help you consider how to better incorporate these spiritual disciplines into your life.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:29; 1 Timothy 4:7; Luke 18:35-43, 19:1-10; 2 Timothy 1:7; Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 3:13; 1 Corinthians 13-14

BOOK: Spiritual Disciplines: Read Chapters 1,13; Skim 2-12

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

Part 2: APPLICATION QUESTIONS BANK

for personal reflection and small group discussion

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

none for this session

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Which spiritual disciplines do you practice? Which ones do you find easier/harder to practice during your present season?

2. What changes have you made to make it possible to practice them?

3. What fruit have you seen from spiritual disciplines in your present season?

4. Who are your best sources for giving and receiving the encouragement of fellowship during this season?

5. What circumstances and people in your present season create the greatest areas of need for the spiritual disciplines right now?

6. How do the world, the flesh and the devil plague you the most during this season? What spiritual disciplines have helped you?

7. How can we pray for you in your current season?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. Which spiritual disciplines do you find easier/harder to practice during your present situation?

2. What changes have you made to make it possible to practice them?

3. What fruit have you seen from spiritual disciplines in your present situation?

4. Who are your best sources for giving and receiving the encouragement of fellowship in your current situation?

5. What circumstances and people in your present situation create the greatest areas of need for the spiritual disciplines right now?

6. How do the world, the flesh and the devil plague you the most during this situation? What spiritual disciplines have helped you?

7. How can we pray for you in your current situation?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. What heart issues are behind your failures to practice the spiritual disciplines? Which of these heart issues do you identify in yourself? Is there sin you need to repent of and ask God forgiveness for?

2. What Scriptures shed light upon your heart issues and ways to fight your particular heart issues?

3. Which of the spiritual disciplines have helped you fight best against sin in your life?

4. Which of the spiritual disciplines have helped you bear with godliness and patience those others (particularly church members) who have sinned against you, your husband or your children?

5. How have you seen the Holy Spirit work upon your heart as you have practiced the spiritual disciplines?

6. How have you seen the Holy Spirit work in the hearts of others as you have practiced the spiritual disciplines in your own heart?

7. Do you feel guilty for not practicing spiritual disciplines more than you do? How do you deal with this guilt? What biblical truths help you?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. What spiritual disciplines do you practice/have you practiced? What fruit have you seen in practicing them? What defeats have you seen in not practicing them?
2. How have the ways you've practiced the spiritual disciplines changed in each season you've been through? Why?
3. What disciplines have been the most difficult to preserve during your various seasons of life?
4. How have the ways you've practiced the spiritual disciplines changed in each situation you've been through? Why?
5. What practical tips do you have for women in various seasons, especially for those with young children?
6. How have you encouraged your husband in the spiritual disciplines? Has he/does he struggle with making a devotional time out of sermon prep, seminary study, etc.?
7. How have you encouraged your children in the spiritual disciplines? How has sensitivity to whether they are converted or not affected what you do with them?
8. What have been the greatest obstacles you've faced in keeping the spiritual disciplines? The greatest aids?
9. Who do you go to for fellowship? Do you feel like you must keep a distance in how personally you share of your own/your family's struggles from some/all members of your congregation? How do you decide who to fellowship with and on what level?
10. How have you seen the Holy Spirit work upon your heart as you have practiced the spiritual disciplines?
11. Which of the spiritual disciplines have helped you bear with godliness and patience those others (particularly church members) who have sinned against you, your husband or your children?
12. How have you seen the Holy Spirit work in the hearts of others as you have practiced the spiritual disciplines in your own heart?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Review the 10 spiritual disciplines Whitney focuses on in his book, using the chart you made.
2. Share with each other:
 - a. The spiritual disciplines you are practicing presently.
 - b. Fruit from your life, situation and season you see God has given you as you practice them
 - c. Ways you have seen your spouse model the spiritual disciplines to the benefit of yourself, your family and the congregation
 - d. Struggles you are having with spiritual disciplines, ways you would like to grow in the spiritual disciplines and how you can best pray for each other
3. What fruit do you see from the spiritual disciplines in your life, our family, the congregation, etc?
4. Is there any way I can support you better, spiritually or practically, so that you have more opportunity to practice the spiritual disciplines?
5. What about our routine helps/impedes the practice of spiritual disciplines in our family?
6. What circumstances and people are particular sources of struggle right now? What spiritual disciplines might be most helpful in those struggles?
7. What heart issues are behind any failures to keep the spiritual disciplines as God would like each of you to? Is there any sin that needs to be confessed and forgiven? What Scripture sheds light on the heart issue or how to have victory over it?
8. Are there aspects of the ministry that make it harder for you to practice the spiritual disciplines? Why? What heart or practical reasons are there behind these difficulties? What can you do about them?
9. Which of these spiritual disciplines do we do together as a couple or as a family? Should we do more together? What benefits would that have? How can we do that?
10. Who do you fellowship with? How do they build you up? How do you build them up?
11. Spend time praying for yourselves, each other, your family, and the congregation to become more diligent in practicing these spiritual disciplines. Ask the Holy Spirit to work powerfully in your hearts to give you a greater desire and perseverance in them. Ask Him to give you wisdom to know how to implement any changes you think would be good to make in your practice of these spiritual disciplines; and a plan. Ask Him to bear good fruit that will glorify God and will transform you all into greater Christ-likeness.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 1 QUESTIONS

1. Read Romans 8:29

Whitney says “Discipline without direction is drudgery.” What “direction” does this passage say God has planned for us as Christians? (p.16)

2. Read 1 Timothy 4:7

What does God command us to do as part of becoming like Christ? What does it mean that He has commanded us to do this? (p.16)

3. What are “Spiritual Disciplines”? (p.17) Which ones does Whitney focus on in his book?

4. How do the biblical accounts of Bartimaeus (Luke 18:35-43) and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) relate to us today as we pursue the spiritual disciplines?

5. Whitney mentions people, circumstances and the spiritual disciplines as the three, primary catalysts God uses for changing us and conforming us to Christ-likeness. What distinguishes the spiritual disciplines from people and circumstances? (pp.17-18)

6. What dangers are there in not keeping the spiritual disciplines? (pp.23-24)

7. What freedoms are there in keeping the spiritual disciplines? (pp.23-24)

CHAPTER 13

1. Why does Whitney say the godly person is usually a busy person? (p.236)

2. How can the spiritual disciplines make a godly person out of a busy person? (pp.236-237)

The Role of the Holy Spirit

1. What is the Holy Spirit’s role (office)? pp.237

2. What five things does the Holy Spirit’s presence do in a believer? (p.237)

3. Read 2 Timothy 1:7. What kind of spirit does God develop in His children, by the Holy Spirit? (p.238)

4. Why do we persevere in the faith even when we feel like giving up?

The Role of Fellowship

1. How does God use fellowship with other believers to supplement the spiritual disciplines?

2. What is the difference between socializing and fellowship? What does true fellowship look like? Why is it important? (pp.240-241)

3. Read Ephesians 4:16

What does the "mutual edification" of fellowship do within the church? (pp.241)

4. Read Hebrews 3:13.

a. What does the writer say fellowship is important to prevent? (pp.241)

b. What does it mean to encourage each other, biblically? (pp.241)

5. What will Christians fail to develop without true fellowship? Why? (pp.241)

The Role of Struggle

1. Why can Christians expect to struggle? (pp.242-243)

2. What does Whitney say about the role of struggle in pursuing the spiritual disciplines? (pp.242-243)

3. Whitney mentions "the world, the flesh and the Devil" as the three sources from which we can expect to struggle. What are each of these? How do each of these cause us to struggle? (pp.243-244)
The World:

The Flesh:

The Devil:

4. Who has won our ultimate victory over these three? (p.244)

5. How do the spiritual disciplines help us in our struggles? (pp.244-245)

More Application

1. Why should we practice the spiritual disciplines in light of eternity? (pp.245-246)

2. Read 1 Timothy 4:7 How do we know that we must practice the spiritual disciplines if we want to be godly?

3. Why do many Christians fail to practice the spiritual disciplines? (pp.246-248)

4. Why is being closely connected to God the key to everything else we do as godly women, and as pastor's wives? How does this foster fruitful ministry? How does this glorify God?

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES CHART CHAPTERS 2-12

Ideally, it is best to read through this whole book in your quiet times, prayerfully considering how to incorporate more of these spiritual disciplines into your life. For small group discussion purposes, skim chapters 2-12, noting section headings, bolded phrases and key topic sentences. Fill in the charts on the next pages as an overview of the ten spiritual disciplines he discusses. Use it to help you assess how you are practicing these disciplines, and to reflect on their importance in the life God calls you to as a woman and a pastor's wife.

Spiritual Discipline	Description of Key Concepts	Benefits	What You Are Doing Now	What You Would Like to Do? Why?
<p>Bible Intake, Part I Hearing, Reading, Studying</p>				
<p>Bible Intake, Part II Memorizing</p>				
<p>Prayer</p>				

Spiritual Discipline	Description of Key Concepts	Benefits	What You Are Doing Now	What You Would Like to Do? Why?
Worship				
Evangelism				
Serving				

Spiritual Discipline	Description of Key Concepts	Benefits	What You Are Doing Now	What You Would Like to Do? Why?
Stewardship				
Fasting				
Silence and Solitude				

Spiritual Discipline	Description of Key Concepts	Benefits	What You Are Doing Now	What You Would Like to Do? Why?
Journaling				
Learning				

Session 3

CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HER HUSBAND: ENCOURAGING ONENESS IN HOW SHE RESPONDS TO AND SUPPORTS HIM

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session we will consider biblical models for our marriages. We will look at what opportunities they give us to reflect God and to build up each other as husband and wife, as well as the members of our church. We will also discuss maintaining a healthy, vibrant marriage in the face of the often demanding ministry life.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: John 17: 5, 25; Matthew 19:5-6; Genesis 2-3; Ephesians 5; Galatians 2:20; Titus 2:4; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Colossians 3:18; John 14:10-13; Luke 22:42

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 7, 8

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

Part 2: APPLICATION QUESTIONS BANK

for personal reflection and small group discussion

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. Mrs. Somerville describes the marriage of John and Molly Wesley (pp.110-111). She describes them as being separated from their fourth year of marriage and frequently being apart three-fourths of every year. She mentions how Molly's commitments to children kept her from accompanying except for infrequently. Apparently, these extensive times apart were very difficult for Molly. Her attitude towards John became embittered. John later chides Molly for her attitude saying "that if she were to live a thousand years, she could not undo the mischief she had done." While Somerville does mention that perhaps John could have done something differently, she asks what Molly could have done differently to make the marriage a success.

- a. How is the example of John and Molly a poor example of what the wife should have done differently in ministry? How is it a better example of how John did not put his responsibilities to care well for his family (as an attribute for pastor's/elders) in right priority, but instead put "ministry first" and kept doing what he wanted to do? Is a fruitful ministry at the cost of a ruined marriage right in God's eyes?
- b. Who could have helped the Wesleys? How? Which of the nine ways to maintain marriages did the Wesleys fail to practice? How could they have done these more? Would it have meant a ministry change for John? Why or why not?

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What challenges do you and your husband face now, in your particular season of life? What have you done to face these? What has worked? What hasn't?
2. Who do you go to for encouragement and advice about these challenges?
3. Have you had a hard time building unity with your husband while talking about these challenges with him? Do you have suggestions to give other wives as to how to be gracious while talking with their husbands about them or as you go through them as a couple?
4. Which of the models mentioned help you to respond graciously to your husband during your present season?
5. How has your marriage been an encouragement to others in your present season? How would you like it to be more of an encouragement to others?
6. What are the joys you've seen from biblical submission in your present season?
7. Are there ways that husband particularly benefits from your respect during this season?

8. Which of Somerville's nine ways to maintain your marriage have been particular helpful during your present season? Which have been particularly difficult to cultivate? What have you done to try to cultivate them further?

9. When do you spend unity-building time together during this season? What do you do?

10. How can we best pray for you during this season?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. What challenges do you and your husband face now in your particular ministry situation? What have you done to face these? What has worked? What hasn't?

2. How has the congregation been sensitive or insensitive to your marital needs? How can you encourage them for how they have been sensitive? How can you help them better understand the important priority of your marriage where they are insensitive?

3. Who do you go to for encouragement and advice about these challenges?

4. Have you had a hard time building unity with your husband while talking about these challenges with him? Do you have suggestions to give other wives as to how to be gracious while talking with their husbands about them or as you go through them as a couple?

5. Which of the models mentioned help you in responding graciously to your husband during your present situation?

6. How has your marriage been an encouragement to others in your present situation? How would you like it to be more of an encouragement to others?

7. What are the joys you've seen from biblical submission in your present situation?

8. Are there ways that husband particularly benefits from your respect during this situation?

9. Which of Mrs. Somerville's nine ways to maintain your marriage have been particular helpful during your present situation? Which have been particularly difficult to cultivate? What have you done to try to cultivate them further?

10. When do you spend unity-building time together in your current situation? What do you do?

11. How can we best pray for you in your situation?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. What heart issues are most often behind the marital struggles you have? What Scripture has been encouraging to you? What words of wisdom?

2. How have you struggled to have a heart that is willing to submit to your husband? What sin(s) do you think might be part of it? Have you confessed these things to God? To your husband?

3. How have you had to “take the log out of your own eye” as you’ve supported your husband?

4. How have you had to “take the log out of your own eye” when thinking about ways the church may be insensitive to your needs as a couple?

5. What heart issues have been behind your failure to maintain your marriage in any of the nine ways Somerville mentions?

6. Who do you talk to about the heart issues behind the struggles you and your husband have? Why has this a good person/good people to talk to?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. What are some of the best ways that your husband has felt helped by you?

2. What are some practical ways that you consistently connect with your husband to cultivate unity, good communication, and sharing with one another in the midst of a busy ministry life?

3. Being that your husband’s ministry’s effectiveness is dependent in part upon his marriage’s healthiness, in what ways have you felt your marriage under spiritual attack as you have been in the ministry?

4. What are some practical ways that you've had the opportunity to support your husband in a Philippians 2 kind of way?

5. What are some practical ways that you've been successful in respecting your husband?

6. What is a time when it was very hard to submit to your husband but you later saw the benefit of it?

7. What have you found to be helpful in bringing up areas of concern in your marriage, in his ministry, or in his life in a gracious, respectful manner? Can you tell us about one of those times when you did this?

8. What struggles have you had in being submissive, respectful, and gracious to your husband? What has helped you in these struggles?

9. How have you seen answered prayer in your marriage?

10. How do you and your husband balance ministry and rest?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Share times you (wife) have been blessed by submitting to your husband and you (husband) have been blessed by her submission.
2. What are ways that you (husband) feel respected by me (wife)? How can I respect you better?
3. What are ways that I (wife) am well led by you (husband)? What are ways I would love you to lead me even more/better?
4. What things have each of you said or done that have been most helpful in maintaining your marriage?
5. What are the greatest struggles in your marriage you face during your current season? Situation? What are you doing to combat them? How can you encourage each other in them? What more might you be able to do?
6. Share ways that your marriage has been an encouragement to each other, to your children, to non-Christians, to the church.
7. Of all the aspects that the author addressed in Chapter 8 (committing to close communication, sharing ourselves, listening, building up our husbands, keeping confidences, building a flourishing friendship, fanning the flames of romance, committing to faithfulness, and resolving conflict lovingly), which ones do you think we do best? Which ones do you think we need to work on together? How can we best do that, given our season, situation, etc.? Use the chart for discussion.
8. Are there any sins that we need to confess to each other regarding our marriage?
9. Share ways you have each been built up in shows of love and affection for each other. Share ways you that you feel spouse's love and affection best.
10. How can I best be praying for you in our marriage?
11. Spend time praying for God to bring you to greater oneness, bringing to light and changing hardness of heart and selfishness. Ask Him to make you a better encourager of your spouse. Ask Him to grow your attraction, your commitment, your faithfulness and graciousness to each other. Ask Him to use your marriage to multiply the fruit in the ministry He has called you to.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 7 QUESTIONS

1. What does Mrs. Somerville identify as the crux of why she wrote her book? Why is this so important to ministry? (p.96)

2. What are the four models for understanding God's design for your marriage? (p.96)

The Mystery of Oneness

3. What was Adam and Eve's union like before the Fall? Who did this mirror? How? (pp.96-97)

4. How should the oneness within the Trinity encourage us in our marriage?

5. Why isn't the oneness we have as couples the same as what Adam and Eve first experienced? (p.97)

6. What difference does the Holy Spirit in the husband's and wife's heart make in their marriage? (p.98)

7. What happens as a husband and wife each grow closer to God? (p.98)

8. Who particularly should wives look to as a model of encouraging oneness within our marriages? (p.98)

The Love of Christ for the Church

1. How does marriage mirror the unity of oneness between Christ and the Church? (p.98)

2. How does the health of our own relationship with God help or hinder the unity and health of our marriage? (p.98)

3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. Make a list of these gracious responses to less than gracious actions. Which of these responses do you find yourself most needing? Most lacking? With your husband? Which ones does your husband most need with you?

4. How do we react to each others failings to meet our desires? Do we mirror 1 Corinthians 13's gracious responses or Adam and Eve's blame shifting?

5. "Your marriage is more important than your ministry. If that fails, all else crumbles with it," Somerville states (p.101). Do you think this is true? Why or why not?

6. What does a busy ministry look like in which the pastor and his wife's marriage takes priority over ministry?

Christ's Dependency and Submission

1. Read John 14:10,13. Who was Jesus dependent upon? To do what?

2. Whose glory did Jesus seek? (p.101)

3. How does depending upon and seeking the other's glory work toward promoting oneness? (p.101)

4. Read Ephesians 5:21

Whose voluntary submission are we called to reflect in our marriages? (p.102)

5. What does it mean to submit? (p.102)

6. Why is submission so hard? (pp.103)

7. What does Mrs. Somerville see Abigail Adams as a good example of? (pp.104-105)

8. Read Philippians 2:5-11

a. What role of submission did Christ chose to take? (pp.106-107)

b. What was so important about that? What did He accomplish through His submission?

c. How is this a good model for us as submissive wives? (p.107)

9. What does submission seem distasteful, frightening and even humiliating to some?

10. What special opportunities for growth in our relationship with God are ours because of our submissive role?

11. What special opportunities for glorifying God are ours because of our submissive role?

Christ's Respect

1. Read John 15:10; Matthew 6:9-13; John 17:4. How did Christ honor His Father?

2. Read Ephesians 5:33 Amplified versions from the book. (pp.107-108)

a. Write down the phrases used as synonyms for "respect and reverence".

b. Reflect over your past week. Can you think of times you did these things? Times you did not?

c. Think over the next week. What opportunities to honor your husband like this lie ahead? How can you prepare yourself to use them to honor him?

d. What are ways you took your husband for granted this week? How could you honor him better in these situations?

3. Read Galatians 6:11; Matthew 7:1-5; 18:15-20

a. What two things should we do when we see a pattern of hypocrisy between our husband's public life and his private life? His preaching and his living?

b. What should we do if he doesn't repent of this pattern?

c. What would humble and gracious conversation about this pattern look like?

5. What can God use the unity in our marriage to reflect?

6. Why is how we respond to and support our husband so important in being closely connected, even one, with our husbands? How does this unity in our marriage affect our relationship with God, with each other, with our children, with our ministry to our brothers and sisters in Christ? How does this foster fruitful ministry? How does this glorify God?

7. How does a unified, loving marriage help in our husband's ministry?

CHAPTER 8 QUESTIONS

1. Who is our example of maintaining unity in our marriages? (pp.111-112)

2. Use the charts on the following pages to think through each of Somerville’s nine ways to maintain your marriage

Ways to Maintain Marriage	What Is This?	How Doing This Has Brought / Brings Unity	Obstacles You Face to Doing This More	How You Might Do This More
Committing to Close Communication				
Sharing Ourselves				
Listening				
Building Him Up				

Ways to Maintain Marriage	What Is This?	How Doing This Has Brought / Brings Unity	Obstacles You Face to Doing This More	How You Might Do This More
<p style="text-align: center;">Keeping Confidences</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Building a Flourishing Friendship</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Fanning the Flames of Romance</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Committing to Faithfulness</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">Resolving Conflict Lovingly</p>				

Session 4

CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HER FAMILY: LOVING THEM AND DRAWING THEM TOGETHER

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session, we will discuss the opportunities and challenges of raising children in ministry families. in ministry. We will take a special look at caring for a rebellious child.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6; Ephesians 4:29; Deuteronomy 6:5-7; John 15:5; Hebrews 4:16; James 1:5; Proverbs 29:15; Ephesians 6:24; Colossians 3:23; Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; James 1:2-5

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 9, 10

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:4,5; Titus 1:6

Mrs. Somerville states that “our mothering comes under greater scrutiny because if our children are not faithful and submissive, our husbands could be disqualified from ministry.”

- a. How do these verses support her statement?

- b. What do you think these passages describe as fruit we should see in our children in order for our husbands to be qualified to be pastors and elders?

- c. Why CANNOT the conversion of our children be what these passages are referring to?

2. Mrs. Somerville encourages us to include our children in evangelism and in missions (pp.149-153). How must we be careful about how we including our children in evangelism and missions, considering that some of all of them might not be converted?

3. “The more we teach our children about God and His love for them, the more they will love Him.” (p.130)

- a. Why is this not necessarily the case? Who is the one who converts our children? Who gives us love for God?

- b. How does it bring glory to God to teach our children about His love for His people, whether they ever come to know and love Him or not?

- c. What good thing does Mrs. Somerville want to encourage parents to do?

4. Mrs. Somerville encourages us to help our children memorize Scripture “so that our children can love God. As they hide God’s Word in their hearts, it will be there for the rest of their lives for God to bring to mind for guidance in all the challenges they will face. It will keep them from idolatrous living. The Israelites were taught about the one living, eternal God... This truth would help keep them from worshiping the false gods of the heathen around them. Isn’t that comforting when evil seems to be so strong in our society!” (p.131)

- a. Does she mean that our children must memorize Scripture to be able to love God? Does she mean that our children will love God if they memorize Scripture? Or, does she mean that God can use Scripture memory to help our children know what God is like, and by His Spirit, may use it to know, love and obey Him?

- b. Did knowing that God was the one, living, eternal God keep the Israelites from idolatrous living? Or, was it the case that most of them turned away from Him to idolatry? Was it knowing the truth or being converted (and given a heart to know, love and obey God and His Word) that kept the few faithful ones, faithful?

5. "Children sense hypocrisy. It is helpful to pray daily that the fruit of the Spirit would be produced in your lives as you yield to the Spirit. If your inner life or home life doesn't measure up to your profession—your children sense that this doesn't ring true and it may turn them away from Christ." (p.135)

a. This may be true; yet, we are all sinners. What is the difference between being a hypocrite and a sinner?

b. How can we use the sin our children see in us to point them to Christ rather than turn them away? (pp.135-136)

6. "The wonderful news is, as your child learns to respect and obey you, he will also learn to respect and obey God and share in His holiness. (Hebrews 12:3-11). So if we want our children to share in His holiness and carry on the work of the gospel, we must discipline them earnestly." (p.138)

a. Who is this passage in Hebrews directed to? Parents raising their children or believers who are being transformed by God as He disciplines them? Why is this not a good "proof text" for her point? How is the fact that children may not be converted make this passage not necessarily true for the outcome of our discipline for our children? Why is this not a promise that our discipline will mean that our children will share in God's holiness and carry on the work of the gospel if we discipline them earnestly?

b. What are the good fruits of disciplining our children earnestly? How does consistent, good discipline help our children to understand the goodness, justice and mercy of God to sinners?

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What season(s) are you in with your children? (no children, pregnant, infant, toddler, preschooler, elementary, pre-teen, teenager, college, married, married with children)?

2. How has the way you've shown love, affirmation, affection differ from child to child, developmental stage to stage, etc.?

3. In what context do you and your husband each "connect" best with each of your children?

4. How does the way you discipline vary from child to child, from stage to stage?

5. How much of your day is spent caring for your children? How does this affect how much time you spend in church activities?

8. What difficulties in balancing ministry and parenting do you face during this season?
9. What are the parenting strengths and weaknesses you face during this time?
10. What do you pray for your children in their particular developmental stage(s)?
11. What are your children's areas of struggles and encouragement as they interact with the congregation as P.K.'s?
12. How does your husband maintain consistent time with the children in this season, given his ministry schedule?
13. Is your husband given to distraction or absence with the children in your present season? How have you/how can you work to draw them together?
14. Who do you have the best opportunity to build up or be a model for others during this season (given constraints of your family's needs"? What opportunities might particularly clash with your present season?
15. What special opportunities to share the gospel with non-Christians do you have during your present season with children?
16. As a pastor's wife, what expectation for your children do you notice from others in the church? Are these biblical or unbiblical? How do you deal with them? How do you help your children deal with them?
17. How has God helped you and your children through prayer during this season?
18. What prayer, family devotions, Scripture study, family activities, etc. are your family taking part in during this season?
19. What schooling decisions have you made? Why? What benefits? What drawbacks have you seen? Does it clash or complement your family's season?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. How has your situation shaped your children's environment? (suburbs, urban, mission field, church plant, etc.)? How has this been hard? What benefits/blessings have you seen or do you hope will come from their growing up in the situation?
2. What in your situation makes parenting especially difficult? What makes it easier?
3. What in your situation encourages your children spiritually, personally? What discourages them?
4. What characteristics of your husband's ministry make spending time with the children difficult? What changes could be made?
5. Do people in your situation typically treat your children different than other children? Is this helpful or unhelpful? Why?
6. Who do you/your husband go to for support and advice about parenting? Why have these people been helpful?
7. What is helpful about the schooling and activity decisions you've made in coordinating your husband's ministry schedule and family time? What is difficult?
8. Is there anything in your present situation that exasperates your children? Is there anything you can do to make that less exasperating?
9. Are there circumstances/issues in your situation that causes your husband to be more distracted or absent with the children? How have you/how can you work to draw them together in this situation?
10. What schooling decisions have you made? Why? What benefits? What drawbacks have you seen? Does it clash or complement your ministry situation?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. Do you feel pressure to be more involved in church activities than you really should be, in order to keep mothering at the right priority? Where do these pressures come from? How do you react to them?

2. What expectations for you as a parent or for your children do you feel from the congregation? Has this put pressure on you? What heart issues are behind that? Has any Scripture been helpful in dealing with these heart issues?

3. When your child struggles with being a P.K., how do you comfort them, but also point them to their own heart issues? How do you help them avoid bitterness, an unforgiving spirit, anger, etc?

4. What heart issues do your children see in how you react to times when church members treat you unkindly/unfairly because you are the pastor's wife? Do they see you recognize them and bring Scripture to bear upon them? How can this be such a great model for them?

5. If you have a rebellious child, what heart issues do you identify behind your child's rebellion? How could you help them see these?

6. If you have a rebellious child, what heart issues have surfaced in you as you dealt with your own emotions, your concerns for your child, your family, your husband's ministry, etc? Has any Scripture been especially helpful to you in dealing with these heart issues? Is there any sin you need to confess and ask forgiveness for?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. How have you coped with your rebellious child?

2. If you have a rebellious child, as you evaluate your situation, are there any changes you would make in how you did things? Any words of wisdom to share with others?

3. If you could change anything about how you raised your children what would you change? What, if any, extra sensitivities would you have put into practice in raising them as P.K's?

4. What opportunities do you wish you had taken advantage of with your children, both in the church and without?

5. What have been some of the ways you feel you've parented well?

6. How have you helped your husband's relationship with the children?
7. How has your husband helped your relationship with the children?
8. How has being a ministry family been hard for your family?
9. How has it been beneficial?
10. If you could give your congregation any tips on how best to treat a pastor's family, what would you say?
11. How has prayer been important to you as a mother?
12. What effect has prayer had upon your family?
13. What are some of your favorite books, resources for devotions, etc. you've used?
14. How do you feel you've been most effective in training your children?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Review where you think each child is, spiritually, personally, and socially, etc.? Do you see any special discipline issues? Any heart issues that need more attention? Any matters for more prayer? How do you each best connect with each of your children? Are you each getting time to spend with each child? What could you do to make that possible, if it is not? What evidences of grace do you see and could encourage your children with?
2. Share ways you've been encouraged by your spouse's parenting of the children.
3. Share ways you feel weak in parenting; ways you feel strong.
4. Consider how you can use each other's strengths and how you can bolster up each other's weaknesses more effectively as a team.
5. Assess how you are spiritually feeding your children and what changes might need to be made.
6. Assess how much time each of you has with the children. Are you balancing ministry and family time well? What changes could you make?
7. Discuss expectations you feel from the congregation that you struggle with and how to best contend with them, in yourselves and in your children.
8. With your rebellious child:
 - a. How can you be more unified in your marriage?
 - b. How can you be more unified in your approach to your child?
 - c. What do you pray for yourselves and your child?
9. Pray for your family. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit that you would be full of His fruit as you care for your children. Ask Him for wisdom in how to best raise your children and power to carry out what He wants you to do. Thank Him for your children and for each other. Pray for their conversion and growing love and obedience to God.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 9 QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 Timothy 3:4,5; Titus 1:6

Mrs. Somerville states that “our mothering comes under greater scrutiny because if our children are not faithful and submissive, our husbands could be disqualified from ministry.”

- a. How do these verses support her statement?

- b. What do you think these passages describe as fruit we should see in our children in order for our husbands to be qualified to be pastors and elders?

- c. Why CANNOT the conversion of our children be what these passages are referring to?

Expressing Love, Affection and Affirmation

1. Read Ephesians 4:29

a. What does this verse say we should use our words to do?

b. How can we apply this truth to our children?

2. C.J. Mahaney talks of praising each other with evidences of grace, that is, ways we see others reflect God’s character in what they say and do. Think about your children.

a. What evidences of grace do you see in them? Do you tell them what you see?

b. How could encouraging them in these evidences of grace be powerful affirmation?

3. How do you demonstrate your love and affection towards your children?

4. How do your children differ in how receive love and affirmation? What ways could you better reach them using these “love languages,” as they have been called?

Training in the Word of God

1. Read Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

a. What is the first and greatest command?

b. How are we instructed to teach our children to do this? (p.129)

2. What is beneficial about reading chronologically through the Bible? (p.130)

3. What is beneficial about reading the Old Testament? The New Testament? (p.130)

4. Why would it be important to not be overbearing with choosing Scripture to memorize according to character attribute (solely)? How could this be discouraging instead of encouraging? How can we use Scripture to encourage them in God's forgiveness and grace and the power of the Holy Spirit in a believer's heart when dealing with their shortcomings and sins?

5. What suggestions does the author give for family devotions? (pp.132-133)

6. What does your family do to learn God's Word together? What benefits have you seen? What obstacles do you face in having family devotions? What tips would you give others?

7. What is beneficial about reading chronologically through the Bible? (p.130)

8. What is beneficial about reading the Old Testament? The New Testament? (p.130)

9. What is beneficial about Scripture memory? What are two ways Mrs. Somerville suggests for ordering your Scripture memory with your children? (p.131)

10. What suggestions does the author give for family devotions? (pp.132-133)

11. What does your family do to learn God's Word together? What benefits have you seen? What obstacles do you face in having family devotions? What tips would you give others?

Training in Prayer

1. Read John 15:5

- a. What does this verse teach us we must do if we want to bear fruit?

- b. How is prayer part of abiding in Christ?

- c. How can the truth of this verse be applied to godly parenting?

2. Read Hebrews 4:16; James 1:5. What can we expect from God in answer to our prayers?

3. How does Mrs. Somerville say a child's prayer life develops? (p.133)

4. How can we use discipline times as prayer times? (p.134)

5. Why does Mrs. Somerville encourage a family prayer time at the end of the day? (p.134)

6 How should we use prayer through the day with our children? (p.135)

7. What does your family do to learn God's Word together? What benefits have you seen? What obstacles do you face in having family devotions? What tips would you give others?

Walking Our Talk

1. What should we pray for to combat hypocrisy? (p.135)

2. What struggles with sin do your children most notice in you? What are you doing to turn away from those sins and avoid hypocrisy? Do your children see you trying to turn away from these sins?

Disciplining Consistently

1. What unrealistic expectations do you put on your children's behavior, especially at church, because they are pastor's kids? What is the root of these expectations?

2. Read Proverbs 29:15.

a. What is the rod?

b. What is reproof?

c. What does using them together teach? (p.137)

3. What were Susanna Wesley's views of child-rearing? Are her principles reflective of biblical principles? How or how not? (p.137)

4. What were Sarah Edwards' views of child-rearing? Are her principles reflective of biblical principles? How or how not? (p.138)

5. Read Ephesians 6:24. What must we be careful NOT to do as we discipline our children? (p.139)

6. What must our discipline flow out of? (p.139) Do you struggle with disciplining out of anger rather than love? When? What do you do to combat this?

7. What adaptations should we make from child to child, developmental stage to stage?

8. Why is it important to discipline after the first offense? (p.139)

9. What differences in our discipline should we make because our children are P.K.'s? (p.139)

10. What wisdom do children receive from loving, consistent use of the rod and reproof? (p.140)

11. Why is it so important that we do not leave all the disciplining to our husbands when they come home? Are you tempted to do this? (p.141)

12. Read Appendix C "A Plan for Disciplining a Young Child".

- a. How does this plan reflect love?

- b. How does this plan reflect development understanding?

- c. How does this plan establish your authority and God's authority?

- d. How does this plan look like what you do? Not like what you do? What are the differences? Why?

- e. How does this plan need to change for older children? For teenagers?

Active in Education

1. What worldview do we want to instill in our children as they learn? How do we do this? (p.142)

2. What work ethic do we want to instill in our children based on Colossians 3:23? How might "excellence" vary from child to child? (p.142)

3. How can we be examples of learners for our children? (p.142)

4. What educational opportunities and school choices are there where you live? What have you done with your family? Why have you chosen to do the things you've done? What benefits, what drawbacks have you experienced?

Encouraging Physical Activity

1. What are the benefits of family physical activity, beyond just better health? (p.143)

2. What are some physical activities you do/you've done as a family? What benefits have you seen?

Family Traditions

1. How do family traditions build up our family? (pp.144-145)

2. What are some of your family's traditions? What benefits have you seen in doing them?

Promoting the Arts and a Christian Worldview

1. What suggestion does Mrs. Somerville make for promoting the arts with our children? To what benefit? (pp.146-147)

2. How can we use the arts not only to beautify and enjoy but also to develop a Christian worldview? (pp.147-148)

3. How can the media (TV, movies, music) be a way to develop Christian worldview? (pp.148-149)

4. What rule of thumb does Mrs. Somerville give for making decisions about media? (pp.148-149)

5. How does your family enjoy the arts?

6. How have you used media to develop Christian worldview? Do you have a "rule of thumb" you use to decide what your family watches or listens to? How well has this worked? What would you change?

Having a Zeal for Serving and Evangelism

1. How can we use the opportunities we have to serve and share the gospel to grow our children in these, too? (pp.149-150)

2. Why is it important that we do not just fill our children's minds about God but include them in serving and sharing the gospel?

3. How do you include your family in serving? What benefits have you seen?

4. How do you include your family in sharing the gospel? What benefits have you seen?

5. How must we be careful about how we include our children in evangelism, considering that some or all of them might not be converted?

Training Them for Missions

1. How can we build in our children a greater consciousness of fulfilling the Great Commission?

2. How have you encouraged your children to think about missions?

3. How must we be careful about how we include our children in missions, considering that some or all of them might not be converted?

Releasing Them

1. What does it look like to idolize your children? Why is this wrong? (p.154)

2. How does God want us to view our children? (p.154)

3. Where does the strength come to NOT idolize our children? (p.154)

4. What ways do you struggle with idolizing your children?

5. How have you learned to release your children?

CHAPTER 10 QUESTIONS

1. In reading the Somervilles' story of dealing with their son Daniel's rebellion, what was your reaction? What do you think would be especially hard for you to cope with, if it had been you? Why?

Self-Evaluation and Forgiveness

1. Answer Mrs. Somerville's questions found on the bottom of p. 160 as regards your parenting now:

a. Is gaining my child's approval or friendship an idol of my heart?

b. Am I seeking to please my child above God by overlooking bad behavior that needs to be disciplined?

c. Do I faithfully set standards and carry out discipline, or am I permissive?

d. Given your answers to the questions, what changes do you and husband need to make?

2. For what must you be careful to evaluate your rules for teenagers? (p.161)

3. Mrs. Somerville says "parents can't legislate righteousness. It comes from within. But it is sometimes necessary to put the forms in place so that the habits are there when the heart is right. It is often necessary to require our children to do what they do not want to do simply because it is good for them. That is not teaching hypocrisy, but duty."

a. What do you think?

b. What rules have you put in place as part of duty?

4. What is Mrs. Somerville's ultimate test for any activity? (p.162)

5. What example are you setting in the areas where you have made rules? Are you upholding or veering from what you want your children's actions and attitudes to be?

6. When should we ask for our child's forgiveness? (p.163-164) If you have a rebellious child, what kinds of things have you asked him/her forgiveness for?

Staying United

1. What dangers does Somerville warn about in our marriages when dealing with a rebellious child? (p.164)

2. What specific advice does she give to preserve unity with your spouse, when dealing with a rebellious child? (pp.164-165)

Stepping Back from the Ministry, if Necessary

1. Read Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 3:4-5

a. What behavior in children disqualifies a man from serving as elder/pastor?

b. Who should your husband/the two of you seek counsel from in regards to these qualifications, if you have a rebellious child?

2. Why did the elders decide that Bob Somerville did NOT need to step down? (pp.165-166)

3. Under what circumstances would it be good to step down? Under what circumstance would it be needful to step down? (p.166)

4. What does it mean to support and enable your child to continue in unrepentant sin? What would be an example of this? (p.166)

Crying Out to God

1. How did Bob Somerville use Scripture in prayers for his son? (p.168)

2. What did the Somervilles' pray for themselves? For their son? (p.167-168)

Thanking God for This Trial

1. Read James 1:2-5.

a. What should our attitude be towards trials, even that of a rebellious child?

b. What does God intend to do through this trial?

2. What fruit can we expect in our lives? (pp.168-169)

3. How did God use this trial in the Somervilles' ministry? (p.169)

4. If you have a rebellious child, how has God used this trial to change you? What fruit have you seen in your ministry as a result of it? What other things do you have to thank God for, as a result of this trial?

5. Why is it so important that we work to keep our family closely connected? What affect on our families, our marriages, our husband's ministry, etc does it have if we are not? If we do? How does this glorify God if we do?

Session 5

CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HER HUSBAND'S CALLING: COMPLEMENTING HIM IN CHURCH AND AT HOME

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session we will consider what it means for a pastor's wife to be her husband's helper, in light of his calling as a pastor. We will look at the biblical responsibilities of a pastor and think how we can support our husbands in each of these, both at church and in our homes.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 5:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; John 13:35; Galatians 6:9-10; 1 Peter 4:9; John 13:20; Matthew 10:40-42

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 11, 12

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. "That is true of God's flock. They need constant care. The life of the pastor or shepherd is a life totally devoted to meeting the needs of the sheep. We must be one with that purpose as wives." How does this statement need tempering by a pastor's God-given, clear responsibility to care for his wife and family? Does total devotion to the sheep always mean that the sheep's needs take top priority over the family? Why or why not? How does this fit with the biblical requirements that a pastor must rule his house well to be qualified? (pp.173-174)

2. Mrs. Somerville writes of her husband needing to know and meet with the other elders in order to shape the direction they lead and use their gifts. (p.178) She says "without the relationship of respect and trust, your husband will not be able to lead in ways in which he believes God wants. Your husband needs to know his fellow elders individually and corporately. The pastor exerts leadership in encouraging the use of different elders particular gifts for the benefit of the church. Is it a biblical concept that the senior pastor-elder has a special role of shepherding the other elders? How does the senior have a special responsibility to "lead in ways in which he believes God wants"? How does this contrast with God leading the elders together in ways in which they believe God wants?

3. "Our husbands have the awesome privilege and responsibility of weekly feeding the flock through their sermons. They also feed the sheep through leading in worship, teaching the youth, equipping leaders, visiting the sick, counseling members, and many other avenues of ministry." This sounds like the pastor does just about everything. Is he the only one to do these things? How can other elders be a part of doing these things? Other church members? Why is it so important for the church –as well as himself and his family--that the pastor raise up a church full of people helping people, rather than relying solely or primarily upon him? (p.180)

4. Mrs. Somerville tells of four men who have joined her husband on staff, saying there are now “five equippers”. (pp.181-182) Do only pastors and staff equip the saints? What allows pastors and staff to spend more time equipping the saints? What is the place of lay elders or other godly men and women in the church in this great task?

5. Mrs. Somerville suggests that we should “willingly release him when he gets called out at any time of day or night to the hospital or home of an especially needy member of the flock...accompany him when possible” (pp.189-190)

a. What constraints for the godly shepherding of his family should affect each of these decisions?

b. How could our decision to accompany our husbands as much as possible set an unrealistic example to or expectation of others? How does our primary role as supporter of our husband in the home and with the children constrain how much we accompany our husbands?

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Given the demands and priorities of your current season, what are the best ways you can support your husband in his calling?

2. What group(s) of people are you most effective in helping your husband minister to during your current season? Why?

3. What sacrifices do you and your family most commonly make during this season?

4. What sacrifices have you found to be ones to make only occasionally during this season? Why?

5. How is the way you show hospitality affected by your season?

6. Who do you usually show hospitality to during this season? Why?

7. What are some of the barriers/obstacles you have faced in offering hospitality during different seasons of life? How have you been successful in offering hospitality during these different times?

8. Have your kids found it easy to welcome guests? If not, how have you handled it?

9. How have family needs during different seasons changed how much or how you have shown hospitality to others? Why?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. How do the meeting of the sheep's needs and the meeting of the family's needs work out in your situation? How do you and your husband balance the two sets of needs?

2. Which of the roles mentioned does your husband spend the most time doing? How do you support him in these?

3. Which of the roles mentioned does your husband struggle with the most? How have you best support him in these?

4. How frequently is your husband out in the evenings or weekends, tending to sheep? How do you deal with his absence? What guidelines have you come up with to know when he is gone too much for the good of your marriage and your family?

5. Does your husband have other godly men (elders, etc) who help him in shepherding roles? If so, how has this helped your family as well as the ministry to the sheep?

6. Who do you usually show hospitality to? Why?

7. What blessings have you seen in showing hospitality?

8. What has been hard about showing hospitality?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. If you are a season with lots of demands at home (with small children, etc), do you struggle with feeling unimportant because you cannot take what seems like a more active role in ministry with your husband? What is wrong about this perspective? What heart issues does this reveal? What Scripture truth can help you with your struggle?

2. Do you feel overwhelmed by all the ways there are to support your husband? What makes you feel that way? What Scripture can help us not feel so overwhelmed?

3. What is your husband's vision for the local church where he ministers? Are you "one in purpose" with this vision? If you are not, why? Are there heart issues involved? What are they? How could you work towards unity with your husband?

4. Have you struggled with a complaining heart when offering hospitality? How have you been able to overcome complaining with joy?

5. How have you overcome the desire to want to be the perfect hostess? Has this interfered with you showing hospitality?

6. Are you tempted to be more like Mary or Martha? How have you struggled with these heart issues?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. Share what a usual amount of sacrifice has looked like for your family in ministry. How did you know what was the right amount?

2. Share a time of unusual sacrifice for your family in ministry. How long did it last? How did your family do during that time?

3. What advice would you give to others to help them through times of unusual sacrifice?

4. How has your role of supporting your husband changed through the seasons? What advice would you give to women in each of those seasons? Things you would do, things you would not do....and why.

5. How has your role of supporting your husband changed through different situations? What advice would you give to women in each of those situations? Things you would do, things you would not do....and why.

6. What practical tips can you give for keeping hospitality welcoming and simple?
7. Who do you usual show hospitality to? Has this changed through different seasons or situations? Why?
8. What have been some of the blessings you've seen over the years from supporting your husband in his ministry? In being hospitable? Have you seen his ministry helped? How?
9. How have you balanced making your home a place of rest away from ministry for your husband and family with making it a welcoming place of hospitality?
10. How have you dealt with people coming to your house unannounced for help? Has this been a frequent occurrence? When do you turn them away? When do you welcome them in?
11. Share specific ways you have supported your husband in the various biblical roles we've discussed.
12. Did you/have you/do you pursue theological studies, counselling, etc.? Did you do this when he was at seminary or since then? If so, has this training been helpful in complementing him, in supporting him , encouraing him? If you did not, do you wish that you had?
13. Has it been hard for you to offer hospitality to people in different walks of life, generations, and backgrounds? How have you been successful in reaching out to lots of different groups?
14. Do you have any hospitality horror stories?
15. Have there ever been times where people have not been receptive to your hospitality? Why do you think that is? How did you respond?
16. How have you been able to use hospitality for evangelism?
- 17, How has it been difficult to be flexible in offering hospitality?
18. Do you have any practical tips that have made hospitality easier? (Especially on short notice)

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Share your vision for ministry at your local church with your wife. Tell her ways that she has supported you in fulfilling this vision. Share how you especially need her support.

2. Talk about your balance of ministry demands and the needs of your family. Do you feel good about where you are? What would you change? How?

3. Share the prayer lists that you made for your husband and for yourself. What additions, what changes would he make?

4. In your situation, do you tend to want to say “no” too much or “yes” too much? How much of this tendency comes from your situation? Your season? Your personality? From unrealistic expectations about the priorities you should hold to as a ministry family? Share your perspectives on these questions and try to come with a healthy balance.

5. Think about how you show hospitality to others. Who is it most frequently? Who might be good to try to reach out to?

6. Pray that God would make you one in purpose in the calling He has given to you. Pray that He would give you wisdom to know how best to balance all the demands of ministry as well as the needs of the family. Pray through the prayer lists that you made as a part of your study. Ask that God would give you joy in serving Him however He wants you to serve Him.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 11 QUESTIONS

1. What is the most popular avenue to encourage wives to pursue fulfillment in our culture? (p.172)
2. Read Genesis 2:18. What pattern of fulfilling service does God set up for women? (p.172)
3. What is the difference between being a helper and a co-pastor? (p.173)

The Shepherd's Role Demands Sacrifice

1. Sometimes as pastor's families, we are called to unusual times of great sacrifice. Frequently, even daily, we are called to sacrifice to a lesser extent for others. How do you and your husband weigh how frequent these times of unusual sacrifice are healthy? How do you know what a healthy daily amount of sacrifice upon your family looks like? What are examples of each in your life?

The Shepherd Needs Our Prayers

1. What are the eight ways Mrs. Somerville suggests to pray for your husband? Make a list of them, place it in your Bible and use it as a daily reminder. Ask your husband regularly for other suggestions to add to these. Add to this list yourself as you read the Bible and see other attributes that godly leaders possess. (p.175)

The Shepherd Leads by Example

1 Read 1 Peter 5:1-4.

a. What exhortations does Paul give to the elders? (p.176)

b. What example does this kind of leading provide for the sheep?

2. What are the seven ways Mrs. Somerville suggests we can support our husband's in leading by example? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer list for yourself. (p.177)

The Shepherd Organizes the Flock

1. How does a pastor's vision and working out of that vision organize the flock around God-centered, biblical precepts? (pp.177-178)

2. What three things does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband's in their leading through organizing the sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer list for yourself. (p.179)

The Shepherd Feeds the Flock

1. Read 2 Timothy 4:1-3. How does a pastor feed his flock? (p.179)

2. What seven things does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband's in their leading through feeding the sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer list for yourself. (180-181)

The Shepherd Equips for Service

1. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. What job are pastors and teachers to do? To what end?

2. What 5 things does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband's in their leading through organizing the sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer list for yourself. (p.182)

The Shepherd Counsels for Life Application

1. What is the purpose of counseling? (pp.182-183)

2. What five things does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband's in their leading through counseling the sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer list for yourself. (pp.183-184)

The Shepherd Guards the Flock

1. How kind of things does a pastor warn and protect his flock from?

2. How does he do this?

3. What three ways does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband's in their leading through guarding the sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer list for yourself. (p.185)

The Shepherd Disciplines the Flock

1. What is the purpose of disciplining the flock?

2. What is the pastor's role in disciplining the flock?

3. What four things does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband's in their leading through disciplining the sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer list for yourself. (p.186)

The Shepherd Goes after the Lost Sheep

1. What ways does a pastor seek out “lost sheep?” Does he do this all himself? (p.187)
2. What two ways does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband’s in their leading through going after the lost sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer lists for your husband and yourself. (p.179)

The Shepherd Cares for the Hurting

1. How does a pastor help hurting members?

Making Visits, Calling on the Phone, Writing

1. Why is it good for a pastor to make visits, make phone calls, and write to church members? On what occasions? (pp.188-189)

2. What is the basis for all advice given? (p.188)

3. What do these things tangibly show others? (p.188)

4. What three ways does Mrs. Somerville suggest we do to help our husband’s in their leading through caring for the hurting sheep? Assess how well you do these. Add these to your prayer lists for your husband and yourself. (pp.189-190)

CHAPTER 12 QUESTIONS

Read 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8.

1. What do these verses tell us about a shepherd's responsibility to be hospitable?
2. What do we demonstrate when we are hospitable? (p.193)

The Shepherd and Sheep Must Know Each Other

1. What is the aim for our homes as places of hospitality? (p.193)
2. What do we demonstrate when we are hospitable? (pp.193)

The World Is Watching

Read John 13:35

1. How does this verse apply to hospitality?
2. How can inviting non-Christians into our homes be such a great witness?

Our Sheep Are Following

1. Who is our hospitality a model for? (p.196)

Angels May be Visiting

Read Galatians 6:9-10

1. How does this apply to a life of hospitality? (p.198)
2. Why do we know that our hours spent serving others in hospitality are not wasted? (p.198-199)

How Do We Improve Our Hospitality?

1. What should we consider prayerfully about our hospitality? (p.199)
2. What are some practical ways to be hospitable that Mrs. Somerville mentions? (pp.200-202)
Have you done any of these? Do you have any other to add? What ways have you seen God bless your hospitality as you did them? Do you have any tips to give others in how you did them?

Do it Without Complaining

Read 1 Peter 4:9

1. What are you most tempted to complain about, in regards to being hospitable?
2. Where must our preparations to be hospitable start? (p.202)
3. Do you have any tips on keeping hospitality simple to share with others?

Let Others Help

1. Who should we consider asking to help us? What benefits come from asking these people? (pp.203-204)

2. Can you share a time when God blessed the conversations you had with others as they helped you prepare?

Be Flexible

1. What is a good rule for you and your husband to have about inviting people over? (p.205)

2. What practical ways can you be prepared for the unexpected? (p.205)

3. What does a willingness to welcome people in a flexible, spontaneous way show? (p.206)

Do It in a Manner Worthy of God

Read John 13:20; Matthew 10:40-42

1. What application does this have for our hospitable care for others? (p.206)

2. What is a godly response to those who do not reciprocate our hospitality? (p.207-208)

3. How is complementing our husband different in attitude, and sometimes in activity, from other members who are actively involved in our church? How does this keep us closely connected? How does this bring fruitful ministry? Glory to God?

Session 6

CLOSELY CONNECTED WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST: ONE AMONG MANY BROTHER AND SISTERS

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session we will think about how we can help to build up our church to God's glory through discipling and counseling others. We will consider ways our roles are no different than other women in the congregation; yet often give us special opportunities to build up and encourage others because we are pastor's wives.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Philippians 4:1; Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; Ephesians 1:15-21; 5:17; Philippians 1:3-6,9-11; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:2;2:13;5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Galatians 6:1-2; Proverbs 27:5-6; Proverbs 28:23; 1 John 5:14-15; Matthew 18:15-20

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 14,15

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

Part 2: APPLICATION QUESTIONS BANK

for personal reflection and small group discussion

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. Mrs. Somerville tells how the Holy Spirit worked wonders in the first disciples, then she writes of Peter as a super-Christian because of how the Holy Spirit worked in him. (p.235)
 - a. Why is describing someone a super-Christian because of the Holy Spirit's work in their life not a helpful or even true description?

 - b. What good thing is Mrs. Somerville wanting to convey about the work of the Holy Spirit in each of our lives, as believers?

2. Who does Mrs. Somerville call the "first disciples of every mother"? (p.237) She refers only to daughters in this section. Do you think that we disciple only our daughters? How might the discipling of daughters be different/be the same from discipling of our sons?

3. Mrs. Somerville cites a poem called "She Follows Me." Included within it are these phrases: "I do not dare to go astray for fear she'll go the self-same way...." "I cannot once escape her eyes. What e'er she sees me do she tries. Like me, she says she's going to be....I must remember as I go...I am building for the years to be—that little girl that follows me." (p.237)
 - a. What truth is there in these phrases of the poem? What lack of grace and lack of trust in God's sovereignty might be unintentionally reflected in them that is not true to the gospel? How can ways we fail in the witness of our lives be used by God to commend the gospel and encourage our daughters in their own discipleship?

 - b. What does discipleship of our children look like (who may or may not be converted) as opposed to that of other women believers?

3. "Let's not in any way neglect our most natural and first disciples. If we do not do a good job with them eventually no one else will want to follow us either." (p.237) What truth is there in this statement? What lack of grace and lack of trust in God's sovereignty might this statement be unintentionally reflecting that is not true to the gospel? How can ways we fail in our witness, in our lives be used by God to commend the gospel and encourage others in their own discipleship?

4. "There may be young women who attend the schools where our children attend—some with tattoos or given to drug use. They may be Goths or homosexuals. They may be in prison. We can't give up on such people. The need is too great." (p.238)
 - a. Why would Mrs. Somerville particularly name women with these behaviors or in these situations as opposed to women with other ones? Would you find it particularly difficult to reach out to

women with these behaviors/situations? Would you be more likely to give up on someone like these women? Why or why not? Are there women with other behaviors/in other situations than these mentioned that you might be tempted to shy away from? Why?

b. Read through the list of behaviors/situations in the quote. Are you tempted to think of people with these behaviors/in these situations as “big ticket’ sinners? Is the need greater for unbelievers with these behaviors/in these situations? Why or why not? Why might it be unhelpful way to categorize unbelieving women with these behaviors/situations as in greater need than others who might look or act more like us?

c. Should we assume someone we see with tattoos, who dresses Goth, who is in prison or struggles with drug abuse is a non-Christian? Why or why not?

d. How can we be aware of typical heart issues that women with these struggles might have, but not assume them by looking at them?

e. What is Mrs. Somerville encouraging us to do in discipling by mentioning women with these struggles?

6. Mrs. Somerville mentions looking for the brightest, eagerest, the leaders to mentor as future leaders? Why do you think she suggests these? Are these always the best women to choose? Are they always the best women to choose? Why or why not? (p.239)

7. Mrs. Somerville states, “If you are discipling someone you led to the Lord last week or an old believer, your job is not done until she knows how to obey all that Christ has commanded.... If you give her the Bible, you give her all she needs.” (p.239)

a. What key point is Mrs. Somerville driving home about the goal of discipling? What key point is she making about the use of the Bible in achieving this goal?

b. How could the phrases “your job is not done until she knows how to obey all;” and “God will show you when your disciple needs you less and is ready to continue her maturing more independently. Until then keep pointing her to Scripture” be misconstrued to mean you, personally, are responsible to disciple until the other person reaches the point of knowing-- and even more--OBEYING all that Christ commands... or ready to do it more on her own? Why is this not true? What part do you play in fulfilling this command as a discipler? How do you know when your season of discipling someone is over? How do you share this with others? Why is it important to see what part you play as discipler in connection with the preaching ministry and the ministry of the body of Christ together in a local church? Why must we not see ourselves as alone responsible for discipling a particular woman or women? Why is God ultimately responsible for these things in His people?

8. Mrs. Somerville lists five simple questions to use in studying Scripture inductively: "(1) What stands out to you? (2) What is the key verse or theme? (3) What did you learn about Jesus? God? (4) What does He want you to do? And (5) What don't you understand?" (p.241)

a. How do these differ from the steps of Observation (What does the passage say?), Interpretation (What does the passage mean?) and Application (What does the passage mean to me?). Where do each of her questions fall within these categories?

b. What key aspects of observing and understanding a particular passage might be missed by using her questions, leading to misapplication? What questions could be added to hers to avoid these difficulties?

9. Mrs. Somerville tells of her daughter Michele tackling a particularly difficult counselling situation, saying to her mother: "Things like this sound so out of my league but I'm so glad that you have taught me how sufficient Scripture is so that I won't turn down an opportunity to see God do great things despite my inexperience." (p.252)

a. How can we be encouraged by Michelle's confidence in Scripture?

b. Why might it be good to seek the advice of more experienced, trained counselors in situations like the one in which Michele was being asked to give counsel "out of her league"? What could be the downfall of not seeking experienced counsel in particularly tough situations like these? Is there a role for pastoral oversight that would be good and helpful to both counselor and counselee? What might that look like?

10. Mrs. Somerville rightly speaks of the power of the gospel, of Scripture and the Holy Spirit to help us to help each other in many of life's struggles. (p.253)

a. Why is it so important to understand the great power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word in counselling? How is this so often not reflected in much secular and even some Christian counselling, to the harm of many?

b. When are professionals needed for advice or to even take over counseling? When should drugs be considered in addition to, but not in replacement of, heart issues addressed by Scripture? Can you think of circumstances in which professional help and/or drugs have been/might be good or even necessary?

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. Who would be particularly good women for you to disciple, to counsel considering your season of life? Who would be better disciplined,/counseled by others?
2. What discipling and counseling role do you have with your children during this season?
3. What limits does your season put upon how much time you should spend on discipling, counseling others?
4. Are you discipling/counseling anyone now? What about your current season helps you in your efforts? What makes it difficult? How could you overcome these difficulties?
5. What special opportunities as a pastor's wife have you had to disciple or counsel women in your season of life?
6. How has your discipleship of other women look different at different stages of your life? At different stages of the other woman's life?
7. Have there been ways that you've been able to disciple women by letting them come along side you in busy seasons of life rather than setting aside set one-on-one times? What has that looked like? How were you able to make it effective?
8. How have you seen more of the sufficiency of the gospel in counseling women who are in all different seasons?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. Who would be particularly good women for you to disciple/ counsel considering your situation?
2. What are the age demographics of your congregation? Do you have an even spread of all ages or are there higher concentrations of women of particular ages? Do you see common areas of need or difficulty based on these age groups? Who might be most helpful in encouraging these women?
3. Are there many other women in the congregation who are well-equipped to disciple? Counsel? If not, how could more be trained?
4. Are you discipling/counseling anyone now? What about your current situation helps you in your efforts? What makes it difficult? How could you overcome these difficulties?

5. What encouraging fruit have you seen in your present situation as you have disciplined/counselled others?

6. What special opportunities as a pastor's wife have you had to disciple/counsel women in your situation?

7. How have you seen more of the sufficiency of the gospel in counseling women who are in all different circumstances and life situations?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. Do you struggle with feeling inadequate to disciple/counsel others? Why? Is it merely a lack of training; or is part of it a lack of trust in God's adequacy to equip you? What Scripture could you meditate on to help you overcome this lack of trust?

2. Have you been in a situation where you needed to confront someone about sin in their life and did not do it? Why? What heart issue does this reveal? What Scripture can you turn to aid you in this struggle?

3. Do you struggle with not wanting to get involved in the mess of someone else's life, even if you have time? What heart issues does this reveal? What Scripture can you turn to aid you in this struggle?

4. Do you struggle with not wanting to get into discipling/counseling situations for fear of jealousy of other women who want to get close to you? How do you deal with that?

5. Have you been tempted to withdraw from discipling/counseling situations for fear of your personal struggles becoming a topic of gossip? How have you dealt with this?

6. In your weaknesses, how have you found the Word to be sufficient to disciple/counsel?

7. How do you get to the heart issues of the woman you're discipling/counseling?

8. What are some examples you've seen of how the Lord has used His Word to transform the lives of women and turn their hearts back to Him or had victory over difficult situations?

9. Have you been tempted to lose hope and joy in the midst of circumstances in others' lives that seemed hopeless? How have you trusted in the Lord during these times?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. What advice do you have for others as they disciple/counsel other women? Any particular things you have done that bore good fruit? Any particular things you would avoid doing?
2. What has it been like to disciple your children? How did you do it differently with children who showed signs of conversion and those who did not?
3. How did you know when someone needed professional help in counseling? How did you handle that situation?
4. Who have you/do you/would you go to for discipling or counseling? Someone within your church or outside? How did you choose who to go to? Why?
5. How have you chosen how much to disciple/counsel others and still maintained a good balance with your callings as wife and mother?
6. Have personal struggles you shared with someone you in a counseling/discipling relationship spread to others in gossip? How did you deal with it? Do you have advice about who to “trust” and who not to? How do you decide how much to share or not share?
7. Have you had times when you’ve shared with others your own weaknesses/fears and that has been helpful to other members of the congregation? Why were they so helpful? Did it have to do with the fact that you were a pastor’s wife? Would you share them again? Why or why not? Under what circumstances?
8. Have you experienced jealousy from women over discipling/counseling relationships with other women? How did you deal with that? What would you do differently, if anything?
9. How have you seen prayer at work in your discipleship of other women?
10. How have you built friendships with unbelievers in your community?
11. In the midst of caring for your husband and family, and trying to best serve as a church member, it is hard to participate in a mentoring program, the PTA, volunteer for a sports team, etc in order to reach out to unbelievers? How do you find the time?

12. How have you been blessed to see spiritual fruit in a woman you're discipling?

13. Have you ever been deeply disappointed by someone you've discipled? How so? How did you respond?

14. How have you been blessed by Scripture memory?

15. Discipleship is a lot about modeling – how have you found this to be true?

16. Have you had the opportunity to counsel women who were older than you? What were some of the unique blessings and challenges that this opportunity presented?

17. Have you been tempted to try to counsel with "worldly wisdom" rather than the Bible alone? How have you seen that the Bible is fully sufficient to meet all of our counseling needs?

18. Mrs. Somerville says "blame shifting needs to stop." How do you gently encourage a hurting person to examine their own life for sin and repent?

19. How have you responded when someone you are counseling returns to their sinful ways? How do you know when to stop pursuing them? How have you been successful in not letting that drain you emotionally?

20. Have you seen similar counseling situations come up again and again? What kinds of situations have you seen? And what advice can you give on handling these situations?

21. How has it been hard to be intimately aware of some of the pains and hurts that church members are carrying? How have you dealt with those burdens/?

22. Have you seen see the Lord comfort, heal, and change church members through His Spirit and His Word? How?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Wives, share with your husbands who you are discipling/counseling. Share how these relationships are going. Husbands share with your wives who you are disciplining. (Husbands may not be able to share with wives who they are counseling because of privacy policies).
2. Share with each other areas the strengths and weaknesses you feel as disciplers/counselors. Encourage each other in ways you have seen each other's strengths bear good fruit in others. Help each other think through how you could improve where you are weak.
3. Think about how much time you (the wife) spend discipling/counseling others and how this affects the balance of time needed for the family. Do you feel like it is a good balance? Is it too much? Is there room for more? Is it just right?
4. Think through your situation. Is there anyone it would be particularly good to be training in discipling/counseling other women? Should you (or someone else) spend time training them?
5. Spend time praying for the Holy Spirit to give you His wisdom, love and compassion for those you are in discipling/counseling relationships. Pray for wisdom to know who/how much time you should spend in these relationships that they would be fruitful, yet not take over your priorities in leading your wife and children/supporting your husband and caring for your children. Ask God to raise up more able, godly disciplers and counselors in your church.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 14 QUESTIONS

1. Who is looking to us for leadership? (pp.233-234)
2. What kinds of women need to be disciplined? (pp.233-234)
3. Do you usually disciple those who know less than you? (p.233) Is that an integral component of discipling?

Why Make Disciples?

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20. Why should we make disciples?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Philippians 4:1. What does Paul say his disciples are? What does that mean? (pp.234-235)

How Do We Make Disciples?

Rely on the Holy Spirit

1. Why must we rely on the Holy Spirit in disciple-making? What does He give us? (pp.235-235)
2. Mrs. Somerville cites a quote stating that more capable people tend to rely on themselves rather than on God's grace? Is this true? How can this get in the way of discipling others? What can be done to work against this tendency? (p.235)

Pray

1. What should we pray for ourselves and those who we disciple? (pp.236)
2. How can we use Paul's prayers to pray for ourselves and those we disciple?

3. Read Romans 1:9; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9; Ephesians 1:15-21; 5:17; Philippians 1:3-6,9-11; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 1:2;2:13;5:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.

What kinds of things is Paul praying for his disciples?

Start at Home

1. Why are children the “first disciples of every mother”? (p.237) What special opportunities or challenges do we have in discipling our sons and daughters, as opposed to others?

Reach Out to the Lost

1. How can we develop relationships with non-Christians, in hopes not just of being their friend, but leading them to Christ? (p.238)

2. Can you share the gospel and your testimony easily? What might you do to learn to share these better?

Invest in the Future Leaders

1. Why is it so good to disciple the next younger generation of women? (p.239)

2. Who is the next younger generation of women for you?

Point Her to the Scriptures

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Why must discipleship involve knowing the Scriptures?

2. How does the Bible equip us for situations that we have never experienced and may seem overwhelming? (p.240)

3. What is so effective about one-on-one discipleship? (p.241)Point Her to the Scriptures

4. What simple questions can you use for any Bible study? (p.241)

CHAPTER 15 QUESTIONS

1. What does psychology mean? Why is the Bible uniquely sufficient to address problems with the human soul? (p.250)
2. What is biblical counseling? (p.250)
3. Why do we all need biblical counseling? (p.250)
4. Where can we get biblical counseling from? (p.251)
5. Who is competent to counsel? (pp.251-252)
6. What role does the Holy Spirit play in counseling? (p.253)
7. Why can biblical counseling be so powerful where secular counseling and drug therapy fail? (p.255)

Biblical Counseling Methods

You Gather Information

1. Why must we be careful listeners before we can apply God's Word to someone's specific problems? (p.255)
2. What questions does Mrs. Somerville suggest asking? (p.256)

You Give Hope

1. Why does the person we are helping need to hear the gospel first of all? (p.256)
2. Of what use are God's promises in giving hope? (p.257)

You Go to the Word

1. What do we usually see when we “look into the mirror of Scripture”? Why is this so helpful as counselors? (pp.257-258)

2. We want our counselees to see their sin, stop and change, but this is very hard. How does God’s help this happen? (pp.258-259)

You Rely on the Power of the Holy Spirit for Change

1. What is the goal of biblical counseling? Why is the Holy Spirit crucial to doing this? (p.259)

You Hold Her Accountable

1. Why is accountability so important? (p.259)

2. How does Mrs. Somerville suggest we hold someone accountable? (pp.259-260)

You Celebrate Victories; You Leave the Results with God

1. Why do we praise God when we see changes? (p.261)

2. How does knowing that the results are up to God free us not to worry but trust Him when things don’t go as we hope for our counselees? (p.261)

What if the Counselee Has Been Sinned Against by Another Church Member?

The Process of Church Discipline

1. Read Matthew 18:15-20.

What are the three steps in confronting a fellow member about unrepentant sin? (p.262)

2. What is so good about church discipline? (p.263)

3. Why are we so reluctant to want to obey this command of Christ’s? Does your church practice church discipline?

4. How does seeing ourselves as one among many brothers and sisters change the way we are closely connected with them? How does this foster fruitful ministry? How does this glorify God?

Session 7

CLOSELY CONNECTED TO GOD'S GRACE: FIGHTING FOR JOY AMIDST THE PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF MINISTRY

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session we will consider how to be wise stewards of the energy and money that God has given us. We will think about how we can fight for joy and contentment even in the face of physical and financial strain.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; Acts 16:14,40; Romans 12:4-8;
1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40; Psalm 24:1; Luke 14:33; Philippians 4:19; Psalm 78:4b,7;
Philippians 4:6; Matthew 6:33; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Philippians 4:11b-13; Luke 12:15

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 2,13

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. "Whatever your spiritual giftedness, work on developing it to the greatest extent. Many wives attend leadership and counseling conferences and take courses to further equip themselves for ministry. My seminary training was a huge blessing as Bob and I entered the ministry together and I used it in my support role as a pastor's wife. Many godly women, through their counsel and others through the books they've written, have also mentored me." (p.15)

a. What good thing is Mrs. Somerville intending to encourage pastor's wives to do? What parameters should be put on the phrase "to the greatest extent"? How does your season of life, the needs of your husband, home, children temper what "greatest extent" might be for you? Why would it be important to seek and follow your husband's wise counsel as to what is your spiritual giftedness and how you should work on developing it?

b. How can we make the most of the gifts God has given us without adding it to a to-do list of things I must do before God can use me as effectively as possible?

2. Contrast and compare the statement made on page 14 about "focusing in on your area of giftedness. Do not expend your energies elsewhere" with "if we serve in our area of giftedness, does this mean we should automatically turn down other opportunities that do not involve the use of our gifts? Not always. We are instructed, "...let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." (page 16).

a. What good reasons are there to trying to serve in our areas of giftedness?

b. What danger is there in using a spiritual gift inventory as the test for whether you should do something or not, given that there are many needful ways to serve each other that do not even appear on these inventories? Why would it be most important to seek and follow your husband's wise counsel as to how best to serve rather than just looking at certain, identifiable spiritual gifts?

3. Read Mary Somerville's schedule excerpt on page 28. Every day but Friday she is busy in ministry.

a. How is this schedule reflective of her season of life, as a godly, older woman with no children at home, making the most of her days for the Lord?

b. Why might it be important for eager, hard-working women, busy in ministry, to sit down with her husband and regularly examine their schedules to make sure that they are still spending enough time with their husbands, taking care of her household responsibilities, and staying within their physical limits?

c. How have you /you and your husband decided upon how much personal ministry you should be doing? What factors do you take into consideration?

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What physical demands typify your present season? How do these play into how you support your husband and minister to other members of the church?

2. Do you often feel like you are pushed beyond your physical limits? What could you change in your present season to help you live within your means?

3. How do you take care of your body during this season?

4. What are some times that you've had to say "no" to ministry opportunities because you didn't believe that serving in that capacity was the right thing for you to do at the time? What were the implications of these decisions?

5. Have you found it hard to have a consistent sleep schedule in your current schedule? If so, how have you adjusted? How has this affected what kind/how much ministry you are involved in directly?

6. What have you done to make time for the most important things in the midst of all of the numerous other things demanding your attention?

7. What special ministry opportunities does this season bring to you as you let others help you?

8. What kinds of vacations are restful and enjoyable for your family during this season?

9. How is your husband's day off spent as part of this season? What is helpful about how he spends it? What might be helpful to work on?

10. What are the financial issues that you frequently face during this season? How are you coping with them?

11. What do you most often wind up overspending on, in this season?

12. Any financial tips for others who are in the same season and are on a tight budget?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. What physical demands typify your present situation? Are there others who face the same physical demands as you? Do you talk to them about them?

2. Do you often feel like you are pushed beyond your physical limits in your situation? What could you change to help you live within your physical means?

3. Who could you get to help you, in your present situation? How might this be a way to minister to them as well as for them to help you?

4. What are Sundays like in your present situation? Do they act as a day of rest for your family? If not, what alternative do you use as a weekly day of rest?

5. Do you have other staff/pastor's/elders at your church? Do you do anything to help support each other? What could you do?

6. How has it been challenging to keep your family first in your present situation? What tips do you have for others in similar situations?

7. How have you been tempted to add to your husband's load in your present situation? How have you learned to discern what to say and what not to say?

8. Do you feel well-provided for by your congregation? If not, why? Is there anyone you could talk to about improving your financial situation?

9. How much do you share your financial needs with church members? What does this look like in a new church, an unhealthy church, a healthy church?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. Do you tend to do too little or too much? Why? What heart issues might be behind your doing too little? Doing too much? What Scripture could encourage you about these heart issues?

2. Most people's ability to control their emotions and thoughts decreases when they are overtired. How are yours affected when you are overtired? How do they affect your treatment of your husband? Your family? Others? Is there sin related to your overtiredness that you need to confess in how you have treated them?

3. Do you have difficulty letting others help you? What heart issues do you see behind this tendency? What Scripture could encourage you about these heart issues?

4. When are you tempted to worry about financial matters? What heart issues lie behind this worry? What Scripture could encourage you? How have you been successful in fighting anxiety over your financial and material needs?

5. What expectations to serve in the church do you feel? Are they realistic or unrealistic? What affect do these expectations have upon your heart? How do you deal with them?

6. When you see others in the congregation doing things or having things you cannot afford to have, do you struggle? What heart issues do these struggles reveal? What sins do you need to confess? How does God's Word promise to help us with these struggles?

7. What heart issues can grow out of discontentment with money? What Scripture helps/has helped you deal with this discontentment? How have you seen success as you have sought to fight discontent, greed, and covetousness in your life?

8. Has your husband ever asked you to make significant financial or material sacrifices? How was it difficult for you? What heart issues did you face?

9. Have you ever dealt with bitterness as you compared your husband's ministry salary to what others have and desired more? How did you overcome this heart issue?

10. Have you ever been in "transition" times where you haven't been able to stay at home full-time as you desired? What heart issues did you struggle with during this time and how did the Lord bring it all together for your good and His glory?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. Share a time(s) when you were called to an overwhelming service and how God gave you grace to complete it.
2. How do you know when it is right to agree to a temporary time of overwhelming service and when you are being a bad steward by agreeing to it?
3. How have you determined your spiritual giftedness? What are some ways that you've been able to use those gifts to the glory of God?
4. What blessings have you seen in allowing others to serve you?
5. What are some times that you've said yes to ministry opportunities in which you didn't feel particularly gifted, but you felt that you needed to meet an unmet need? What were the implications of these decisions?
6. How have you learned to be discerning in what ministry opportunities you say "yes" to and what you say "no" to?
7. How have you been successful in transitioning ministry roles to those who are better suited? What are some of the challenges you've faced in these transitions?
8. Mrs. Somerville states "you do not need to live, eat, breathe, and sleep his ministry." Have you found this to be a temptation for you and your family? How have you found the right balance?
9. How have you been tempted to pile unnecessary ministry needs and requests onto your husband? How have you been successful in not doing this?
10. How have you and your husband refreshed yourselves, weekly, on vacations, on mini-breaks, etc? How important have these times been to avoiding burn-out?
11. Have you ever burned out? How did you get there and how did you get out?
12. How have you learned to keep within your physical bounds?
13. How have you helped your husband to keep within his physical bounds?

14. How have you helped the congregation understand your need for healthy limits?
15. Has your family been able to find a day of rest each week? If so, how have you implemented this and what are the benefits? If not, do you think it's a good thing to expect this of your husband?
16. Have you been able to take regular vacations as a family? How has this been a fruitful time? What tips do you have for making vacations work on a really tight budget?
17. Have you been able to bear one another's burdens as pastor's/elder's/staff wives? What has this looked like for you? How have you cultivated fruitful relationships with other pastor's/elder's/staff wives in the midst of busy life?
18. Do you have set budget that you stick to? How did you and your husband come up with it? What have been the blessings and challenges of following it?
19. Have you dealt with covetous, envy and bitterness springing from a lack of money? How have you dealt with them?
20. Have you experienced "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord?" How has the Lord worked in your heart to be able to have this godly response to loss?
21. How has the Lord been faithful to provide for your needs over the years?
22. How have you been encouraged to see how church members have stepped up to meet needs that you have had over the years?
23. How have you specifically seen the Lord provide for you as you have been faithful to pray?
24. Has your husband been faithful to pray with you for financial and material needs that you have? How have you encouraged him in this?
25. Have you ever wanted your husband to be more concerned with the financial needs your family struggles with than he seems to be? How have you dealt with that?
26. Do you believe that bi-vocational ministry is a wise thing to pursue? How is possible to be a full-time husband, father, pastor, and secular employee well?

27. What do you do in church situations where the congregation does not value paying the pastor generously, but thinking “to keep them poor is to keep them humble and trustin gin the Lord?”?

28. When discerning where to serve as a pastor, how do you and your husband together consider your financial needs?

29. Have you been successful in saving money for your kids to go to college? If so, how have you done this? How have you trusted the Lord in this regard?

30. How have you been able to show generosity with your finances in times that were tight and in times that you had plenty?

31. Have you ever felt like you were really in need and needs were going unmet? How did the Lord deliver you and how did you respond in trust?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Share ways that help you feel most refreshed.
2. Talk about your day of rest. How do you spend it? Does it include family time? How could you use it better?
3. Talk about the season of life you are in and the limits it places on other opportunities.
4. Share pressures that you feel and pray about them.
5. Encourage your spouse in ways you think he/she has modelled good stewardship of the finances.
6. Assess where you are financially. Where are there the greatest stresses? Where are you doing well? What would you change? Who could you ask for help, if you need help?
7. Talk through what guidelines you think are good for deciding if you bring up a church issue with your husband. Talk about the best/worst times to do this.
8. Evaluate how much of time together as a family, a couple, or on your own, is spent talking about, thining about, or being distracted by church matters. Does this seem to be a good amount? too much? too little? What effect does the amount of time spent like this have upon youor your family? What could you do to make changes for the better?
9. Share with each other who you go to, to help share the ministry burdens you feel.
10. Talk about guidelines you set for knowing how much is the right amount for sharing ministry burdens with each other or others.
11. Share ways you have helped each other bear ministry burdens. Assess wheterh you are sharing them too much, just right, too little.
12. Pray that God would make you good stewards of both your bodies and the money God gives you. Ask Him to give you wisdom to know the limits in which He wants you to live. Ask Him to give you strength to do what He is calling you to.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 2 QUESTIONS

1. On page 13, Mrs. Somerville describes different jobs pastor's wives often do. Which of these describe what you do?
2. Do you feel like you are basically living a balanced life, usually living within your physical limits ; or, do you feel weighed down and stressed out most of the time?

Twelve Ways to Lessen the Physical Demands of Ministry

Focusing on Your Role in the Body of Christ

Read 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Timothy 2:9-15; Acts 16:14,40; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-14:40.

1. What do these passages teach us about what we should do/can do as women in the church? (pp.14-15)
2. What are your special spiritual gifts? How are you able to use them in supporting your husband and building up the congregation?
3. How can knowing your spiritual gifts be helpful in lessening the physical demands of the ministry? (p.15)
4. What are ways we can develop our areas of giftedness? Why should we work to develop them? (p.15)
5. Why is it so important to ask our husbands about how they want us to develop the gifts we have?
6. Who must give us strength to do whatever we are called to do, even in times of unusually overwhelming service? (p.16-17)

Recruiting and Training Other

1. When does Mrs. Somerville encourage us to recruit and train someone else to take our place in a particular area of service? (p.17)

2. Why would it be good to recruit and train someone else in our area(s) of giftedness as well as areas of non-giftedness?

Prioritizing and Organizing

1. How would you prioritize these things: your relationship with Christ, ministry in the church, your role as wife, your role as mother, your role as homemaker? How does your life reflect these priorities? How does it fail to? Why?

2. What does Mrs. Somerville suggest doing with your weekly schedule? (p.18)

Keeping Family First

1. What does Mrs. Somerville caution our families from focusing on all the time? (p.18)

2. How do we include our children in ministry but not make them feel like they are less important than ministry? (p.18-19)

3. Focusing on ministry shows up not just in our actions, but also in our thoughts, our emotions and our conversation. How much time do you spend doing, thinking about, being emotional/distracted about, and/or talking about ministry at home? Do you think this is a good amount or should it be less/more?

Not Adding to Your Husband's Load

1. How can we add to our husband's load? (p.19)

2. How can we help lighten their load? (pp.19-20)

3. What guidelines do you set for yourself in bringing up a church issue with your husband or not? (p.20)

Accepting Help from Others

1. How would you answer Mrs. Somerville's question: "Do we sometimes stifle people's desire to minister to us by not letting anyone know about our needs?" If you do this, why do you think you do?

2. What ministry opportunities are there in letting others help us?

Resting One Day in Seven

1. Why is Sunday not usually a good day of rest for a pastor's family? (p.21)

2. How can you make Sunday a better day of rest; or, is there another day that you can use?

3. What are some of Mrs. Somerville's goals for her husband's day off? Why? (p.22)

4. Is your husband's day off the same as the children's day off, or are they at school? What difference does this make in how he shares in their lives?

5. What dangers are there if the husband is always working on the children's day off? What can you do to aid family time, if this is the case? How could schooling decisions (home school or regular school) help or hinder family time and the husband's day off?

6. Does your husband take a day off? How should you encourage him about taking one, if he doesn't? (p.23)

Caring for Your Body

1. How does taking care of our bodies multiply our availability for service?

2. How well do you and your husband take care of your bodies? What do you need to change? How can we help our husbands make any changes that they need to make?

Taking Vacations

1. Why are vacations more than just extravagances? (p.24-25)

2. What are some inexpensive vacations Somerville suggests? (pp.25-26)

3. What are some inexpensive vacation tips you have?

4. How are vacations important to family time? (p.26)

Taking Mini-Breaks

1. What is a mini-break?
2. Of what benefit is a mini-break with your husband? What can you use it to do? (pp.26-27)
3. Of what benefit is a mini-break by yourself? What can you use it to do?
4. Have you taken mini-breaks before? How have they been helpful to you?

Bearing One Another's Burdens as a Staff

1. Of what benefit is meeting with other pastor's/staff wives? (p.27)
2. Do you meet with other pastor's wives? What do you do during that time to build unity and encourage one another?

Recognizing the Different Seasons of Life

1. How do the different seasons of life necessitate different ministry opportunities? Different amounts of time spent in "direct" ministry to others outside your family?
2. Do you see your season as a burden that keeps you from doing things you want to do; or as a special, God-ordained time set aside for focused purposes and certain opportunities?

CHAPTER 13 QUESTIONS

1. Financial matters are an opportunity for what troubles and what blessings? (p.210)

God Owns It All

1. Read Psalm 24:1; Luke 14:33
Who does everything belong to?
2. What is the difference between being an owner or a steward of our money?
3. What pressure is taken off of us when we realize we are stewards? (p.211)

God Will Provide: All We Need

Read Philippians 4:19

How much does God promise to supply us with?

God Will Provide: Just as He Always Has

1. How does looking back help us fight for joy in our present or future circumstances?

2. Read Psalm 78:4b,7.

How can looking back not just help us, but be an encouragement to others, as well? (p.214)

God Will Provide: As We Pray and Trust Him

Read Philippians 4:6

1. What is God's prescription against worrying about money (and everything else)?

2. How much time do you spend worrying or arguing about your finances? How much time praying together about them?

God Will Provide: As We Seek First His Kingdom

Read Matthew 6:33.

1. How does this verse put in perspective our financial needs?

Read 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

2. How are pastors generally to make money to support their families?

3. While not ideal, nor a good long-term practice, what are the benefits of church-planters working in the community to support their families? (p.217)

God Will Provide: As We Exercise Contentment

Read Philippians 4:11b-13.

1. Who alone can give us contentment, no matter what our financial circumstances?

2. Is contentment something God gives to us passively or is something we must fight for? What does Luke 12:15 say about this?

3. What desires must we be on our guard against so as to avoid losing our passion for ministry? (p.219)

4. How did George Mueller fight for contentment and joy? (p.220)

God Expects Us to Be Examples

An Example of Unity

1. What heart issues can grow out of discontentment with money? (pp.220-221)

2. How can these cause disunity? (pp.220-221)

3. How can we fight for unity? (pp.221-222)

4. What does Mrs. Somerville suggest as a temporary option for getting your family back on financially sound footing? Why do you think she suggests this as only a temporary measure? (p.222)

3. Mrs. Somerville mentions that their church gives them the same salary as the average person they serve, in their case, that would be a public school teacher. On what basis does your congregation come up with salary amounts? What do you think about this basis?

Stewardship through Avoiding Debt

1. What benefits are there to avoiding debt? (pp.227-228)

2. How does God help us to avoid debt? (p.228)

An Example of Generosity

1. How does knowing that God owns everything free us to give generously?

2. What are the benefits of including children in giving? How can we do this? (p.229)

3. Read the David Livingstone quote on p.230.

a. How does this look like your heart and your life?

5. How can we be examples of unity to others?

An Example of Integrity

1. What has Bob Somerville done to use his family's financial strengths and weaknesses as an example of integrity? (pp.222-223) What is good about this? Would you do this in your congregation? Why or why not?

An Example of Good Stewardship

Stewardship through Expert Counsel

1. What resource does Mrs. Somerville mention as good counsel for our finances? (p.225)

2. Where do you go for financial counseling?

Stewardship through Budgeting

1. How does using a budget make meeting financial goals more likely?

2. Does your family use a budget? What system do you use? What have been the difficulties? Any wisdom to give others? What blessings have you seen?

b. How would living by this quote change the way you deal with money?

c. What would be good changes to make in your heart to more closely mirror Livingstone's quote?

God Is All I Need

Mrs. Somerville says "If Jesus is with us, that is enough!" How does this sound like your view of finances? How would you pray God change you?

Stretch

1. Who was "Stretch?" Why did the church choose to use Stretch rather than let people know who was giving, encouraging, etc? How does this bring God glory?

2. Why is depending upon God's grace amidst the physical demands of ministry, not just grace to physically make it through, but grace to have joy? How does this foster fruitful ministry? How does this bring glory to God?

Session 8

CLOSELY CONNECTED TO GOD'S GRACE: FIGHTING FOR JOY AMIDST THE EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL DEMANDS OF MINISTRY

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session we will think about the emotional and spiritual demands of ministry and how we can find contentment in God and persevering love rather than discouragement and bitterness.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:17-18; John 15:7; Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:28-39; Philippians 4:4-8;
1 Corinthians 13:5; Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 21:35; Matthew 5:11-12;
1 Thessalonians 5:18; Matthew 21:42

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 3,5,6

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

Part 2: APPLICATION QUESTIONS BANK

for personal reflection and small group discussion

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. "As the wife of a man in ministry you share the weight of all the trials and tests that the flock is experiencing—everyone's physical and spiritual burdens. This is because the shepherd of the flock is always apprised of the condition of the sheep so he can pray for them... Your husband can't begin to minister to all the needs... However, just knowing those needs for the purpose of prayer is a huge burden." (p.31)

- a. How is this true? What kinds of trials and tests of the church does a pastor know about and share in?
- b. How is this perhaps a bit of an overstatement of the human shepherd/pastor's ability, knowledge and role? How is this really something shared by other elders and hopefully many other members of the church?
- c. How does a pastor's wife share directly in the weight that her husband bears for his congregation? How indirectly?

2. Mrs. Somerville describes Laura Bush's role after 9/11 in comforting Americans. (p.32) She quotes President Bush's description of her as "calm, resolved, almost placid, which was a very reassuring thing." Then, she goes on in the next paragraph to say that "our churches look to their pastors and wives in the same way. We represent unwavering faith, courage, and resolve in the face of tragedies and heartbreaking circumstances." Is Somerville saying that we should not show anything but unwavering faith, courage and resolve in the face of tragedies and heartbreaking circumstances, even when we are shaken ourselves? How can expressing the real struggles in faith and fear and wanting to quit in these situations...and then persevering through actually be more encouraging to our congregations than putting on a face of perfect faith?

3. Mrs. Somerville, in writing of John 15:2, that "if our lives are barren of fruit we will be taken away—judged." (p.36)

- a. Who is Jesus speaking to in John 15:2? Only Christians, or to unbelieving Pharisees as well as Christians? Is He not speaking of judgment for the unbelieving Pharisees, who do not bear good fruit from the vine of the true Israel? These branches of Israel will be thrown away into the fire. They will be judged.
- b. Is it perhaps not that Christians will be judged as non-Christians will, but that God prunes, that is, disciplines them, to bear better fruit for Him.
- c. What important idea is Mrs. Somerville wanting us to take away from this passage?

4. When times are tough we need not plead with our husband to leave the ministry. He has a calling from God. It would be wrong for me to have my husband leave the ministry to please me. God will give me the strength to stay the course." (page 78)

a. Is it always true that a husband should never leave the ministry because of the needs or struggles of his wife? Is the answer always that the wife must grow to bear the situation? How might a husband's responsibility to love his wife well lead him to pull out of the ministry? What might an example of those times be?

b. What is Mrs. Somerville encouraging pastor's wives about God's ability to meet their needs in times of difficulty?

5. Mrs. Somerville quotes John Piper's call for us to have one consuming purpose to "joyfully display God's supreme excellence in all the spheres of life...to make much of Him in every part of our lives." (p.91) Then she speaks of her consuming purpose as a mom and then turning that passion towards a ministry to teen moms. She encourages us to have a consuming purpose beyond ourselves to overcoming loneliness.

a. How is Mrs. Somerville's and Piper's consuming purpose different? How is Somerville's pointed towards a specific ministry in a specific season and Piper's focusing on living for God with all our life, throughout our whole life?

b. Why is it dangerous to have a lesser consuming passion than the one that Piper suggests? Why should women be careful to talk to their husbands about choosing a consuming passion for a season? How might this lead to neglect of her primary responsibilities to her husband and her household? How might this lead to idolatry instead of a God-honoring passion?

c. What good thing is Mrs. Somerville encouraging women to do to combat loneliness?

6. "Relinquish all those you love for the kingdom of God, remembering that any sacrifices you make for Christ will be richly rewarded." What is the difference between relinquishing your husband for Christ and facilitating your husband's abdication of responsibilities and calling with his family? How do you discern between the two? Who might you go to for advice about this? (p.94)

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What hurts are you especially prone to receiving during this season?
2. What good have you seen come out of pain you've experienced in your season?
3. What comfort has God given you in the hurts you've received? Who might you comfort in your present situation, given the hurts you've experienced and the comfort God has given you?
4. Do you struggle with loneliness during this season? Are there particular things about this season that make your struggle worse? What are they? How can you deal with them?
5. What friendships have you made/might you make to help you with loneliness?
6. How have you worked/can you work to treasure your husband during this season?
7. What about your season makes spending enough time together hard? How have your husband and you worked to combat loneliness by finding more time together?
8. Do you feel that you (as a wife/as a couple) have a good sense of how much of your husband's time you should relinquish for the Kingdom and how much is abdication of leadership in the home during your current season? How do you know? Who could you go to for advice?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. What good have you seen come out of pain you've experienced in your situation?
2. What hurts are you especially prone to receiving in your present situation?
3. Have you experienced outright rejection in your situation? How have you dealt with it and the hurts from it?

4. What comfort has God given you in the hurts you've received?

5. Who might you comfort in your present situation, given the hurts you've experienced and the comfort God has given you?

6. What about your situation fosters loneliness? How have you dealt with it?

7. What in your situation makes spending enough time together hard? How have you and your husband worked to combat loneliness by finding more time together?

8. What friendships have you made/do you have a special opportunity to make in your present situation that would also help you fight loneliness?

9. Do you feel that you (as a wife/as a couple) have a good sense of how much of your husband's time you should relinquish for the Kingdom and when does relinquishing him become abdication of leadership in the home during your current situation? How do you know? Who could you go to for advice?

10. How has the enemy tempted you to blame your husband for difficult circumstances? How have you fought this temptation?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. What issues of bitterness, unforgiveness, or other sins are you struggling with right now, as a result of the hurts you received from others? What are you doing/could you do to overcome these?

2. Do you struggle with withdrawing from members of your congregation because of hurts you've received? What heart issues does this reveal? What do you think God wants you to do?

3. How do you take the criticism of others? Defensively? Humbly? With humor? With anger? Why do you respond as you do? Are there any sin issues involved? How has God helped you to improve how you receive criticism?

4. When people have decided to leave the church, how have you responded to them? with humility instead of hurt pride?

5. Have there been times when you've dealt with seemingly constant criticism, gossip, or complaints from church members? How do you best deal with this?

6. Has it been most difficult to receive criticism about your husband, yourself, your children? How have you had to guard your heart in these different circumstances?

7. How have you fought the fear of man when you've been given unsought criticism, gossip, or complaints?

8. How have you learned to guard your tongue in hurtful situations?

9. How have you learned to have a loving heart towards difficult church members?

10. How have you seen bitterness take root in your life as a pastor's wife? How have you fought this sin?

11. How have you cultivated a steady attitude of thanksgiving amidst the ups and downs of ministry?

12. What does Piper's consuming passion look like in your heart? in your life? What heart struggles have you had with keeping lesser passions from wrongly taking the place of greatest importance?

13. Are there any heart issues developing in your struggle with loneliness? What are they? Who should you talk to about them? What can you do about them?

14. Do you come across to others or your husband as if you are relinquishing him for the Kingdom, yet are really harboring bitterness, pity, jealousy, etc? Who should you talk to about this? Why is it so important that you deal with these sinful feelings, for you, your marriage and for the church?

15. How have you found yourself expecting others to fill the needs that only God can fill? How have you turned your heart back to Christ to satisfy these needs in His timing?

16. How have you won the battle of keeping your mind of God rather than lamenting in your circumstances?

17. How have you found Christ sufficient to heal your lonely heart and bring joy when you felt you had only Him to turn to?

18. How does your heart tend to be tempted in times of difficulty? Fear? Unbelief? Discouragement and hopelessness? Self-pity? Prayerlessness? How have you battled these sin issues during the rough seasons?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. How have you known Christ in the power of His resurrection through hard times in years of ministry?

2. How has it been a blessing and a burden to know the needs of the congregation in such a personal way?

3. Are there things that your husband chooses not to share with you? What is appropriate for him to share and what is not? How have you found that right balance?

4. In the book, one pastor's wife describes her greatest challenge as facing the "startling bewilderment of watching people grow worse despite years of prayer, fasting, support, and encouragement." Have you felt this way? How would you encourage other women facing this challenge?

5. The Bible is clear that apart from Christ we can do nothing – what are some circumstances in your own life where you have been amazed as Christ's power in your weakness?

6. What have been the most difficult kinds of emotional/spiritual struggles you have dealt with? Why were these so difficult for you? How did God help you through them? What advice would you give to us to avoid some of these struggles and/or to deal with these struggles ourselves?

7. How has prayer helped you deal with the emotional/spiritual hurts you have experienced?

8. How have your hurts drawn you closer to the Lord?

9. Have you had a hard time forgiving others who have wronged your husband in the ministry? How have you dealt with your unforgiveness?

10. Has it been difficult for you or your husband when people have decided to leave the church? How have you best supported your husband in this circumstance? How has the experience been different in a small church plant vs. a larger established church?

11. What are some examples of times that you've had the opportunity to die to self in the midst of painful experiences? What did you learn about God during these times?

12. What are some practical ways that you've reminded yourself of what you have to rejoice in during difficult times?

13. How have you been disappointed in unmet expectations in other church members? How have you responded well?

14. What are some examples of times that you've had to confront other church members? How have you done this well and how have you messed it up? What advice would you give to younger pastor's wives who are not sure how to go about confronting a church member?

15. Have you had to take a different approach confronting older members vs. younger members?

16. Have you and your husband ever felt so rejected in ministry that you pondered giving it up? What made you decide to stick with it?

17. Have you been tempted to think the grass would be greener somewhere else? Are there good reasons to leave one ministry setting and looking for another? How do you make wise decisions in the midst of painful, emotional circumstances?

18. Have you and your husband ever sought help from another ministry couple during difficult times? How have you been well served by asking for help?

19. How have you been able to uniquely comfort others in ministry because of the hardships that you've faced?

20. . How has the Lord used the hurts in your life to work in your heart and to bring glory to Himself?

21. What promises have been especially helpful to you?

22. Who have been examples of perseverance that have encouraged you?

23. Who have you gone to for help? Someone inside the church? Someone outside the church? Why were they a good choice? How did they help you?
24. When have you decided to confront someone with their hurts against you? Why did you decide to? How did it go? What advice would you give to us about when and how to confront?
25. How have you had to relinquish your husband for the kingdom? Did you do it without bitterness? How did you do that?
26. How have you treasured your husband's friendship and made the most of the time you had together instead of focusing on not having much time, during particularly busy season(s)?
27. How have you dealt with loneliness as a pastor's wife?
28. Are there practical things that you can do to decrease the likeliness of being in a position of feeling cut off from others, left out, ignored, or isolated?
29. What advice do you have for those who tend to be more introverted?
30. Have you ever been burned when you opened up to share with someone? How have you overcome this fear and been faithful to open up with others again?
31. How have you seen the Lord in new ways as you have cast your loneliness upon Him?
32. How have you been faithful in developing a few close friendships with other women? Have you seen resistance to this within the church body? How has it been a blessing?
33. How has your husband really been your best friend through your years together in ministry?
34. What have been some of the loneliest times of ministry for you? How did you deal with them? Would you change anything about how you dealt with them? What? To what purpose?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Share with each other what kinds of struggles have been most difficult for you in ministry. Share how God and your spouse have helped you through them. Pray that God would continue to help you as you face these struggles in the future.
2. Confess the sinful heart issues that you are struggling with as a result of the hurts of others. Pray together about these. Encourage each other in how to overcome these sins.
3. Assess how much “away time” you and your husband have. How does this play into your loneliness? What is the best solution to overcome this loneliness? Pray that God would give you wisdom.
4. Share with each other how you have seen the other persevere through hurts and how that has been an encouragement to you.
5. Think about who you could go to as a couple to get an honest, helpful assessment about how much time you (husband/husband and wife/wife) spent away from each other and your children and in ministry. Plan a time to have that couple/person over and ask their advice.
6. Pray that God would give you wisdom in balancing ministry with family. Pray that He would bring great fruit in the lives of many from any sacrifices He has you make. Pray that you would be joyful in making these sacrifices. Pray that you together would be a model of joy in service for your children and your congregation. Pray that God would protect your children from bitterness about a father/parents that spent too much time in ministry and not enough time with them. Pray that instead He would fill their hearts with a desire to give their lives in His service, too.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 3 QUESTIONS

1. Why does a pastor's wives inevitably share the physical and spiritual burdens of the pastor and the church, even though she is not called to be a pastor, herself? (p.31)
2. What challenge is frequently one of the most difficult for pastor's wives? Have you found this to be the case in your experience? (p.32)
3. In what ways does a pastor and even his wife share the weight of the difficulties that the congregation is experiencing? (p.31)
4. What can a pastor and his wife do for the congregation, even though there are so many needs they cannot meet? (p.31)
4. How can the faith God gives us in times of tragedies and hardships be such a great help to our congregation? (p.32)

Loving and Delighting in the Sovereign God

1. What is ultimately the only way we can cope with disappointments, difficulties and hardships that we or those we minister to face? (pp.32-33)

Knowing Christ Personally

1. Why must we know Christ to trust Him? (p.34)
2. Read Colossians 1:17-18. What position does Christ deserve? How does giving Christ pre-eminence in our lives relate to knowing Him and trusting Him? can we always put a sure hope in what God will do?

Abiding in Christ

1. What does it mean to abide in Christ? (pp.36-37)
2. What are we able to do when we do abide in Christ?

3. What become acts of worship when we set Christ always before us? (pp.37-38)

Living by the Word of God

1. Read John 15:7. How do we nurture oneness with Christ? (p.38)

2. Why is hearing and obeying Jesus through His Word and by His Spirit so very important? (pp.38-39)

3. What are some ways that help us hear God through His Word? (p.39)

Living by Communion with God in Prayer

1. How does prayer nurture our oneness with Christ? (p.40)

2. What does God want us to include in our prayers? (pp.40-41)

3. How is a prayer journal useful? (p.41)

Sharing in Christ's Sufferings

1. How does Christ use trials and suffering to draw us nearer to Him? To change us? (pp.44-45)

Knowing Christ in His Resurrection Power

1. Read Galatians 2:20. Who lives in us? Why is this our great encouragement as we face overwhelming difficulties or hardships? Who does this highlight as the reason we can keep going and even be victorious? (p.45)

Having Hope

1. Read Romans 8:28-39.

a. While there may be many things in this life that we cannot put a sure hope in happening, what can we always put a sure hope in what God will do?

b. How does this help us through all the unknowns, the sufferings, the trials of life?

c. How do we know that God will sustain us? (p.48)

Chapter 5 Study Questions

1. Who are some examples of leaders in the Bible who suffered great hurt from the people they cared for? (pp.63-64)

2. What are the three main ways Somerville mentions that the people we minister to hurt us? (p.64)

The Pain of Church Members Changing Churches

1. What five things does Somerville tell us to do? (pp.66-70)

2. How do we keep our focus on Jesus? (pp.66-67)

3. Read Philippians 4:4-8. What should we do to have peace rule in our hearts? What ways do we pursue this peace actively? Why is it so important that we do this? (pp.67-69)

4. How would Satan like to use these troubles with church members in our marriage? What can we do to combat this? (p.69)

5. Why do unfulfilled expectations/disappointments so easily turn into a pity party? (p.69)
What must we remember in order to avoid this from happening? (p.70)

6. What is the Big Picture that God wants us to keep in mind? Why is this helpful? (p.70)

The Hurt of Criticism, Complaints, and Gossip

1. Why should we count on being the recipients of criticism, complaints; the topic of gossip? (pp.71-72)

2. Why is it wise for a husband to not share all of the criticisms, complaints, gossip with his wife? Who else could he share them with if he needs to? (p.72)

Keep Loving Them

1. Read 1 Corinthians 13:5. What does love tell us to do with wrongs inflicted upon us? (p.72)

2. What will we need to do if we are to live out this kind of love? (p.72)

3. Who do we live to please? How can this help us love? (p.72)

Overcome Evil with Good

1. How can we overcome evil with good? (pp.72-73)

Forgive and Cover It Over

1. Read Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 21:35. Why must we forgive?

Don't Be Defensive

1. What should we do instead of being defensive? (p.74)

2. Are most of the things you and your husband criticized for "unimportant" issues (matters of choice and taste) or are they usually moral issues? How does the type of issue involved affect how you deal with the criticism? (p.74)

Keep a Sense of Humor

1. How have you seen humor help diffuse the affects of criticism?

Praise and Thank God

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:18. What reasons does this passage give us for rejoicing in the face of persecution? (p.75)

2. Practically speaking, how can remembering good things people say keep in perspective the critical things they say?(p.75-76)

If Necessary, Confront

1. Why do we need to confront sometimes? (p.76)

2. How can confrontation bring Christ glory? (p.76)

The Pain of Outright Rejection

Realize that Our Lord Was Rejected

1. Read Matthew 21:42. How was Christ treated by men? How is this comfort to us? (pp.77-78)

Ask God for Perseverance

1. Why is asking God for perseverance through a difficult ministry situation a better first response than begging your husband to quit? (p.78)

2. What does Mrs. Somerville rightly encourage us to remember in tough times? (pp.78-79)

Seek Help

1. Who can we go to for help? (p.79)

2. Who have you gone to for help in tough times?

Comfort Others with the Comfort You Receive

1. "I can't even keep my own church together, how can I minister to [missionaries]," Bob Somerville thought during an especially rough time. Have you ever felt that way? When might this be true? Why is the exact opposite often true? (pp.79-80)

Be Encouraged by Great Examples of Perseverance

1. What was tough about the Edwards situation? (pp.80-81)

2. How can reflecting upon the Edwards' perseverance be comforting to us? (pp.80-81)

Look for the Good that God Is Working in It

1. How did God use the Edwards' situation for the good? (pp.80-81)

2. How have you seen God use tough situations you've experienced for the good?

CHAPTER 6 QUESTIONS

1. Why is loneliness such a common problem among pastor's wives? (pp.83-84)

Make God Your Joy

1. What do you tend to run to for comfort when you are lonely? Are any of these wrong responses? Why are these the wrong responses and why is fellowship with the Lord the right response? (pp.84-85)

Take Delight in God's Promises

1. How can God's promises be comforting to us? How does meditating upon them helpful in bringing their comfort to us? (p.85)

2. What are some of the promises Mrs. Somerville suggests we dwell upon? (pp.85-86)

Go to Jesus in Prayer

1. What should we pray to Jesus about when we struggle with loneliness? (pp.86-97)

Focus on Others and Initiate Friendships

1. What does loneliness come as a focus upon, sometimes? What can we do to change this focus? (p.87)

2. What are some ways Mrs. Somerville suggests changing your focus to others?

3. What are some ways you have changed your focus to others, in times of loneliness?

Have a Consuming Purpose

1. What one consuming purpose does John Piper call Christians to have? How does this work itself out in you and your husband's life and ministry situation? How can this help combat loneliness? (p.91)

Treasure Your Husband's Friendship

1. Do you feel like the ministry has robbed you of your husband? Why?

2. What kind of idolatry should you be on guard of? (p.92)

3. How should we bring up our loneliness due to their absence? (p.92)

4. What can you do to make the most of the time you have with your husband?

Relinquish for the Kingdom

1. Why is it important to relinquish our husbands for ministry?

2. What does relinquishing mean in our hearts? Who helps us to do this?

3. What does it mean to relinquish our loved ones for the kingdom? Who will richly reward us when we do?

4. Have you seen God's rich rewards already as a result of your sacrificial giving up of your husband for ministry? What other ways do you think God will richly reward us?

5. Why is depending upon God's grace amidst the emotional and spiritual demands of ministry, not just asking for grace to not be burned out, but actually to have joy? How does this foster fruitful ministry? How does this bring glory to God?

Session 9

CLOSELY CONNECTED TO HEAVEN: A HEAVEN-BOUND LIFE, PURSUING HEAVENLY REWARDS

SESSION OVERVIEW

In this session we will consider the dangers of seeking worldly success and how to avoid them. We will then look at the true rewards of God for those who faithfully serve Him.

READINGS

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 10:12

BOOK: One with a Shepherd: Chapters 4,16

Part 1: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

questions for small group participants and leaders

ALL SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

1. What were three things you found especially challenging or encouraging from the session readings? Why?

a.

b.

c.

2. How do you hope to apply what you've read...

a. In your own life and relationship to God?

b. In your relationship with your husband as wife and help?

c. In your family?

d. In relation to your local church body?

3. Write down any question or concerns you have, regarding the session topic and readings.

4. Choose a question for possible group discussion from each of the Application Questions Bank sections. Write down any responses you have to the questions.

a. Point of Clarification Question

b. Ministry Situation Question:

c. Seasons of Life Question:

d. Questions of the Heart Question:

e. Words of Wisdom Question:

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS (and seasoned pastor's wives)

1. What key heart issues have you struggled with that relate to our session topic? How did you deal with them? What biblical truths have been helpful in dealing with your heart issues? What advice would you give others? What edifying example(s) could you share?

2. Think back on the different ministry situations you and your husband have been called to over the years. How have these different situations brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same situations? What edifying example(s) could you share?

3. Think back on the different seasons of life you and your family have been through in ministry. How have these different seasons brought different struggles or blessings, in regard to this topic? What encouragements or warnings would you give to others in the same seasons of life? What edifying example(s) could you share?

4. Are there any other words of wisdom you have to share, regarding this topic?

Part 2: APPLICATION QUESTIONS BANK

for personal reflection and small group discussion

POINT OF CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS

1. Mrs. Somerville lists the symptoms of the success syndrome then states: "If these symptoms are left unchecked, your ministry and even your life will be destroyed." (p.50)
 - a. Why is it a bit of an overstatement to say that your life WILL be destroyed by them? What comfort do we have as Christians in knowing the Lord's discipline when we stray away from how God wants us to live, even if we were to be led astray by the success syndrome?
 - b. What warning is Somerville rightly making? How might they destroy your husband's ministry? How might they destroy your life?

2. Talking about her personal battle to desire to have all the women of the church count her as their best friend, Mary Somerville writes, "However, that is just not possible. Does it prevent me from reaching out to each one? No." (p.52)
 - a. Mrs. Somerville sounds like she is contradicting herself by these two statements. What does she mean? What could be the difference between making everyone your best friend and reaching out to each woman in your congregation?
 - b. Is it always possible to reach out to "each one" of the women of your church? Should this be your goal? Why might even this be too high of a goal in many ministry situations and might still be part of striving with the success syndrome?

- 3; Mrs. Somerville quotes Matthew 25:21, using the New American Standard Bible. (p.61) This version uses the word "slave", translated from the Greek word, *doulos*. This same word is translated "servant" in the New International Version. Why might it be better, given our American culture, to use the word "servant" rather than the more Roman word "slave" to make her point?

SEASONS OF LIFE QUESTIONS

1. What does worldly success look like for you during your present season? What does following the way of heavenly rewards look like?

2. Perhaps the Lord has given your husband/you fame, prosperity, acclaim, and worldly success in this season. What have you and your husband done to not be prideful or make those things your goal?

3. What rewards have you seen already in your present season, related to ministry?

4. What about heaven does your present season make you especially long for? Why? How can you make this a point of prayer? How can this add fire to your calling during this season?

MINISTRY SITUATIONS QUESTIONS

1. What in your situation makes the struggle with the success syndrome more difficult? Easier?

2. What aspect(s) of the success syndrome are particularly tempting to you and your husband, given your situation? Why?

3. Are there things about your congregation that make a particular aspect of the success syndrome a struggle? What are they? How might you combat these things and better love your congregation?

4. What rewards have you seen already in your present situation?

5. What about heaven does your present situation make you especially long for? Why? How can you make this a point of prayer about your current situation? How can this add fire to your calling during this situation?

QUESTIONS OF THE HEART

1. Do you see symptoms of the success syndrome in yourself? Which ones? What do you think are the heart issues behind these symptoms for you? What have you found helpful to putting off this worldly passion? What advice would you give to others?

2. Do you/have you struggled with personal achievement and approval for you or your husband? How? How could this passion be destructive to your husband's ministry? What heart issues are involved in this struggle for you? What have you found helpful to putting off this worldly passion? What advice would you give to others?

3. Do you/have you struggled with wanting fame? How? How could this passion be destructive to your husband's ministry? What heart issues are involved in this struggle for you? What have you found helpful to putting off this worldly passion? What advice would you give to others?

4. Do you/have you struggled with a desire for prosperity? How? How could this passion be destructive to your husband's ministry? What heart issues are involved in this struggle for you? What have you found helpful to putting off this worldly passion? What advice would you give to others?

5. Do you/have you struggled with wanting success for you or your husband? How? How could this passion be destructive to your husband's ministry? What heart issues are involved in this struggle for you? What have you found helpful to putting off this worldly passion? What advice would you give to others?

6. How have you struggled with perfectionism? How has God's Word helped you with this struggle?

7. What symptoms have you personally seen in your own life as you have sought success and achievement in an unhealthy way?

8. How have you been most tempted to "please man" instead of God? How have you worked to put to death that desire?

9. How have you become more content in more situations and circumstances? Has it been a challenge to model this to your family?

10. Do you have a greater desire for rewards now than rewards in heaven? What heart issue does that reveal in you? How might you grow to desire the greater rewards of heaven?

WORDS OF WISDOM

1. Have you seen certain symptoms of the success syndrome plague you at different times in your life/your husband's ministry? What helped you during those times? Why did they change, if they did change over the years?

2. What is an example of how you put off a success syndrome symptom? What did you do to put it off and put on a more heavenly, godly perspective?

3. Which symptoms of the success syndrome have you seen your husband struggle with? What did he do about them? Did you play a role in helping him put them off? What did you do?

4. How have you dealt with any wealth, approval, fame, achievements that you and/or your husband have had through ministry? How have you put off pride, etc. as you have received them?

5. Have you been in a church situation where members strongly wanted to push new programs to grow rather than primarily focusing on the preaching and discipleship ministries to produce fruit? How have you dealt with these differences in ministry objectives?

6. Have you ever had any "Job's comforters" while going through difficult circumstances? How were you able to be discerning about the advice you received?

7. Have you been subtly tempted to confuse success with calling? In the midst of long years of hard work, slow growth, and circumstances that don't seem to confirm your calling, how do you persevere and fight doubt?

8. Have you had friends who have encouraged you to look at your circumstances and throw in the towel? How have you sought wise counsel?

9. How have you been blessed as you have developed humility through a lack of apparent success?

10. Have you been tempted to take sinful pride in your own efforts as you've seen good fruit in your ministry? How have you dealt with this?

11. How have you learned the importance of becoming less as Christ becomes more?

12. Are there any biographies that have greatly encouraged you of Christians who persevered in the midst of slow or little success?

13. How have you taught your kids to value humble faithfulness over fame and success?

14. When have been the times when you've most struggled with staying faithful? How did the Lord bring you through those times?

15. How has the ministry been rewarding over the years?

17. What do you most look forward to about heaven?

18. How have you expressed thanksgiving to the Lord for bringing you into a marriage with a man He has chosen for ministry? What has this thankfulness looked like day to day?

19. How do you daily remind yourself of God's grace and power to bring you and your husband to serve Him presently in ministry? Are you tempted to take any credit for yourself? How do you fight this?

20. What are some ways that you've been blessed by church members showing you their love and appreciation?

21. How have you learned to receive compliments and praise well?

22. How would you encourage young pastor's wives with your stories of seeing the Lord produce fruit in people over the course of ten, fifteen, twenty years?

23. How does the thought of spending eternity in the presence of the Lord help you to find joy in the day to day?

24. As many of the rewards of serving the Lord are not realized during our earthly life, how have you trained yourself to seek after the better, heavenly country?

25. What are some ways that you've felt especially blessed to serve as a pastor's wife?

Part 3: FOR YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND

reflecting upon your life together

1. Share what aspects of the success syndrome you are tempted with and how you can help each other. Pray for each other in your struggles.
2. Share ways you have seen your spouse fight against the success syndrome.
3. Share ways you have seen God's rewards upon your ministry already. Thank Him for these.
4. Share ways you struggle with wanting to see more reward now instead of waiting for heavenly reward. Pray together that God would give you a greater vision for heaven and His reward.
5. Share ways you long for heaven and why. Pray that God would grow a greater desire for eternal life with Him in your hearts.
6. Share ways that life in ministry has been a foretaste of heaven. Thank God for these blessings.
7. Spend time praying together, thanking God for the rewards and blessings He has given you already through ministry. Ask Him to give you a deeper joy and clearer eternal perspective in all things, and especially in areas of trial you might be experiencing now. Thank Him for promising you the amazing gift of life with Him forever.

Part 4: DIGGING DEEPLY

optional, in-depth, personal study questions

CHAPTER 4 QUESTIONS

1. What is the success syndrome? What does it stem from? (pp.49-50)

Symptoms of the Success Syndrome

1. What are the symptoms of the success syndrome? (p.50)

2. Do you recognize any of these in you?

3. What does Somerville warn could be the outcome of leaving the symptoms of the success syndrome unchecked? Why are they so detrimental to ministry and to our lives? (p.50)

What Is the Cure for the Success Syndrome?

Put off a Passion for Personal Achievement and Approval, Put on a Passion to Please Christ

1. What does the success syndrome say we must achieve? (p.52)

2. Read 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 4:4. Who do these verses show we are to focus on pleasing? (p.52)

3. How does humility help us fight this aspect of the success syndrome? (p.53)

4. How have you been tempted by this passion for personal achievement? How have you combatted it? How has God disciplined you in this?

Put Off a Passion for Fame, Put on a Passion for Christ's Name

1. What does the success syndrome say we must seek? (p.54)

2. What does 2 Corinthians 10:12 say about these comparisons? (p.54)

3. Who are we to promote? What should we trust God with? (p.57)

4. How does humility help us fight this aspect of the success syndrome? (p.56)

5. How does thinking about greater judgment accompanying greater responsibility help us fight this aspect of the success syndrome? (p.55)

6. How does praying for others help fight a competitive spirit? (p.56)

7. How have you been tempted by this passion for fame? How have you combatted it? How has God disciplined you in this?

Put off a Passion for Prosperity, Put on Passionate Satisfaction with Christ and Emptying of Self

1. What does the success syndrome say we must seek in regards to wealth? (p.57)

2. How can we overcome this? (p.57)

3. What does contentment demonstrate? (p.58)

4. What will we be more willing to do, the more satisfied we are in Christ? How does this affect others? (p.59)

5. What is hidden in Christ that is our contentment? (p.59)

6. How have you been tempted by this passion for prosperity? How have you combatted it? How has God disciplined you in this?

Put Off a Passion for Worldly Success, Put on a Passion for Fruitfulness through Faithfulness

1. What is different from the way the world defines success and the way that God defines success? (p.60)

2. What is our reward? How is this different from the world's reward for success? (pp.60-61)

3. What does God call us to do with what He gives us? (p.61)

5 How have you been tempted by this passion for worldly success? How have you combatted it? How has God disciplined you in this?

CHAPTER 16 QUESTIONS

Honor of the Calling

1. What honor does Mrs. Somerville mention is ours from being the wife of a pastor? (pp.268-269)

2. Read Revelation 4:11. What will we do with the honor that God gives us? (p.270) Why?

Love and Thanks

1. What blessings of love and thanks do most pastors receive? (p.272)

2. What are blessings of love and thanks you and your husband have received?

Lasting Fruit

1. What makes the fruit of ministry so wonderful compared with fruit of any other calling? How is this a great blessing? (p.274)

2. What lasting fruit have you seen in (you and) your husband's ministry?

Community Respect

1. How does being a pastor affect how a community feels about you (usually)? (p.275)
2. How is this a blessing?
3. What blessings have you seen from the respect of the community?

Respect from Our Children

1. Why is the respect of our children an especially great blessing?
2. In what ways have you seen your children's respect for you and your husband because of his ministry?

Reward and Honor from Jesus Christ

1. Why is reward and honor from Jesus Christ the greatest blessing and reward of all? (p.276)

Eternal Life, Rewards in Heaven

1. What will the reward of eternal life be like? (p.278)
2. What are some of the promises that Jesus makes us about His rewards? (p.279)
3. Why is it important to have faith in the God who rewards?
4. How is being one with a shepherd "a foretaste of heaven on earth"?
5. Why is it so important that we live "closely connected to heaven", with an eternal perspective on our lives? How does this foster fruitful ministry? How does this glorify God?

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Mary Somerville, *One with a Shpeherd*, Kress Christian Publications, 2005.

Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Nav Press, 1997.