

## **Resources and Evaluation** **Why Am I Still Doing This?**

Anyone who has ever spent any time in ministry service will tell you that there are good days, and there are bad days. There may come a point where you wonder why you are even bothering to continue. Some of the most common reasons leaders suffer from ministry burn out include:

- lack of support from the Pastors or Staff
- lack of effort from the ministry team
- lack of response from the church
- lack of budget or resources to meet the changing needs

The above can also be coupled with the ministry impacting your time with your family, home or work responsibilities, or even just a diminishing of your call.

There are times where it is certainly reasonable, and in fact beneficial, to leave the ministry. If there has been conflict where you have been in sin, if you are neglecting your family or work responsibilities, if God is calling you into another ministry, or even if God is calling you into a season of stillness; leaving ministry work is the right step. However, there may be occasions where leaving is not the correct response and we need to work through it for our own good & the benefit of the ministry.

Simple frustration or overcoming obstacles is not a reason to throw in the towel. Personality conflicts and budget issues are not a reason to take your ball and go home. Low attendance or poor team effort is never a reason to quit. In these particular issues, when a person feels like quitting it is rarely rooted in God calling them to leave the ministry, but instead is an indicative marker that there is trouble in the ministry. This trouble may exist with others and outside factors, it can also fall at the feet of the leader.

When leaders become performance driven, they are looking at results and numbers. They want some sort of evidence that their work is producing results. If they can't produce that result, they quit.

Recently, I got word that an old Pastor of mine had quit and the church had folded. When I reached out to some of my old congregation members to understand what happened, I was shocked to find out the reasoning. The Pastor felt that he wasn't making a difference, because no one was answering the alter call on Sunday mornings. He set a deadline, if just ONE person would come to faith in Christ by this specific date, he would continue as Pastor. However, if there was no response, he was going to retire.

Oh Pastor, what you didn't know! You didn't know that there was someone who was wrestling with faith, attending every Sunday faithfully but uncertain if today was the day to slip up his hand. You didn't know about the girl who came to Christ as the funeral service you led for a member of the body. She didn't raise her hand on Sunday, but you touched her heart with your message. As you spoke about the man, praying for his family... she was accepting Christ into her heart. You do not know the number of people who are quoting you, to this very day, because of the wisdom you imparted upon them. You may not be aware of the number of believers whom you helped deepen their belief, understand the scriptures, and influenced their relationship with God. Oh Pastor, you didn't know.

If it can happen to a Pastor, it can happen to a ministry leader. We may not see the results we are looking for or expecting, but that doesn't mean that God isn't moving in the lives of the women we encounter. In fact, when we are looking for results... we are looking for the results of OUR own

efforts. We have allowed our programs, events, studies, and ministry become about what WE can do and accomplish in the church and for the kingdom.

When we look for those results, we are seeking to receive some sort of affirmation that our works are good, that we are successful in what the Lord is asking of us. It can become our “pat on the back” of a job well done. It becomes about us, over God.

*Acts 20:35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way, we must help the weak remember the works of the Lord Jesus; how He himself said: “It is more blessed to give than receive.”*

When we lead a ministry, it isn't about us, or even the women we are serving. It is all about Christ, it is all about God and HIS will for the ministry. We are to continue pouring out into these women, even if we never receive an ounce of recognition for it. We continue serving, even if we ourselves never see the results we hoped for.

*Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

When a leader finds herself making the decision to continue in ministry based on the results, it can quickly become a situation of pride. Therefore, when these feelings start to arise, we must enter into prayer for God to reveal the true nature of our heart on the issue. We want God to take our eyes off of ourselves and instead focus them on Himself, so that everything we do is for HIM and HIS glory.

*Psalm 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him; and He will act.*

When we trust that God will take the ministry in His desired direction, and trust Him to do the work in the hearts of our guests, we are allowing Him to act. We are just the facilitators that bring the women to the right place and at the right time. I have always believed that with every event we plan, if two or two hundred women show up.... each one God called to be there for a very specific reason.

We can begin to change our intentions from performance based to gospel centered, by dying to self and yielding to His purposes instead of our own.

*Psalm 138:8 The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; your steadfast love, Oh Lord, endures for ever.*

If God hasn't called you to serve elsewhere, then He is most likely not prompting you to leave. You are still doing this job, because there is still work for you to do. It may be something as simple as finding your replacement, because God will be moving you in the future. It could also be because you have a great lesson to learn through this difficulty season, or that God is preparing the ministry for something greater. You will not be “successful” in this ministry, however, if you can't allow yourself to get out of the way.

There is sometimes a false belief that because we are doing “God's work” that our ministry service will be easy, there will be no hurdles, the finances will always be there, etc. We forget that we do have an enemy working against us; that wants us to feel defeated, dissatisfied, disappointed, and who is actively seeking to divide and destroy ministry. This is why so often throughout this course presentation we address the need for prayer. We need God's protection just as much as His guidance and provision.

It is important to understand that:

- We will all experience difficulty in ministry service one time or another.
- When disappointment or uncertainty plagues us, we must pray for discernment.
- Keep pushing through the difficult times, unless God is calling you to move elsewhere.
- Refocus yourself and your team on God's work in the ministry, above your own.
- We may not always see the results of our service, but God sees them and is using them.
- God works at a different pace, and in different ways, than we do. His timing, not our own.

I met with a woman from a women's ministry team that was going through difficult times. The team wanted to do so much more, but they felt held back. The woman lamented:

*“With our current events, I could do this on my own. We don't need a team for this, we are wasting talent.”*

*“If they would just let me, I could fix this. I could structure the team, I could build a calendar, I could put together great events.”*

*“I don't understand why they won't let me, I have the skills, experience, and knowledge. I could do this.”*

The woman wasn't being arrogant. Her gifts and talents were definitely being under utilized by her church. However, she had allowed her view of the ministry to become about what she could do. It wasn't about God's plan, or the church's overall vision, it wasn't even about what the women in the church wanted.... it was all about what she thought was right, what she felt she could do, and how she felt she was being held back.

She was fighting for what she wanted the ministry to be. She had lost focus.

Women's Ministry isn't about us, it is and always should be about God.