

**Creating Space for Senior Pastors’ Wives**

A senior pastor’s wife fulfills so many important roles, including serving their congregation and supporting their family and spouse in ministry. In the last year a monthly fellowship for senior pastors’ wives was created to provide opportunities to meet, share, build relationships, and pray for one another. Tasha Rogers, wife of CMBA Associational Missions Strategist Jamie Rogers, is a former senior pastor’s wife and knows the value of this kind of regular connection.

“It’s a unique calling and commitment that comes with being married to a senior pastor, just as there is in his call to pastoring,” Rogers explains. “A senior pastor’s wife shares their husband’s burden for the church in addition to caring for her husband and family. It is a blessing to serve alongside their husband, but it can come with a variety of pressures. I want to give senior pastors’ wives a safe space to develop friendships with other women who are also living this unique role.”

According to SC Baptist Convention’s Relational Evangelism Director Melanie Ratcliffe, this kind of offering to pastors’ wives builds cooperation and is something she hopes will be duplicated in other associations. “My vision is to see every association adopt, love, and support pastors’ wives. I love that God is using Tasha to lead this and that the ladies are gathering and finding that encouragement and support through the association. I think it’s beautiful,” she says.

On the second Tuesday of each month, the women enjoy a simple meal served in North Trenholm’s Student Center while they introduce themselves and the church they serve, talk, and then end their time together with prayer. The group is a mix of women in different stages of life and ministry which has helped them connect over things in common and provide the opportunity to learn from each other. Rogers shared that during a recent fellowship they also discussed ways they could encourage their husbands, then reported throughout the week in their group text on how they’d incorporated the ideas.

Alberta Stewart refers to herself as “new at the game” of being a senior pastor’s wife because she and her husband Ed Stewart planted New Creation Church in January 2024. The fellowship has brought comfort to have met local women with wisdom in these shared experiences. “The community is special because, as senior pastors’ wives, we may not have access to friendships like others might,” she says. “Any time we get together, we know it’s a safe space.”

That sense of safety is exactly what Rogers desired for this group. She celebrates the friendships that have already developed along with some special moments of vulnerability. During a couple of fellowship nights, the women prayed over some who were experiencing difficult things and regularly speak words of encouragement to each other. “This group has been so life-giving,” Rogers says.

Stewart agrees, adding “we all leave reminded that we need each other. There is also a need for people to walk alongside of young pastors’ families who are being raised in somewhat of a ‘fishbowl.’ Our prayer times have been sweet, and we have been able to carry those burdened with a heavy heart.”

But these fellowships are about more than providing a place for shared confidences, they are also meant to offer the chance to connect with those doing ministry in neighboring communities. According to Rogers, pastors’ wives often “hear about the meetings our husbands have. In our early fellowships it was fun to realize whose husbands knew and would meet with each other. It helped us realize connections that already existed among us.”

The fellowship has steadily grown but Rogers acknowledges there are still other senior pastors’ wives who might not have heard about this group. She encourages church members to let their pastor’s wife know this exists and to personally do a few things to support this valuable member of their congregation.

“Let her know that she’s seen, valued, and appreciated. So often she’s doing many behind-the-scenes things that people don’t even think about, so encouraging these women is an important way to fill her tank in that way,” Rogers says. “And give her permission to be a real person. Please don’t place unrealistic expectations on her of what your personal view of a pastor’s wife should be, which might be different from who God has called her to be. The role of a pastor’s wife 20 years ago looks different from today; our world is different.”

Ratcliffe agrees, adding that it’s a sign of church health when pastors’ wives are “supported, encouraged, and loved well by church members. Her family will be healthier, too.” Ratcliffe reminds churches that the SC Baptist Convention observes May as Pastor’s Wife Appreciation Month.

Also this May, the CMBA senior pastors’ wives fellowship will include cookie decorating and will be held at Kilbourne Park Baptist on Tuesday, May 14, from 6-7:30 p.m. This will be the last meeting before the group takes a break for the summer, but monthly fellowships will resume in the fall. If you are a CMBA senior pastor’s wife and would like more information, contact Rogers by email at Office@ColumbiaMetro.org