



Women's Wisdom

"The gender issue will always be present. It is interesting to see how God changes hearts and minds when they feel serviced and loved." — *Janet Brown*

"I wrote an article called *There's a Pastor in the Women's Restroom*. That shouldn't still be funny, but it is!" — *Sandra Drescher Lehman*

"Beware of being the bringer of a hostile agenda; live to love your congregation; in so doing, they will know your calling." — *Jessica Schrock Ringenberg*

"This is a rewarding profession/calling for women. Women are uniquely suited to be great ministers. The church is not fully served if pastors are all one gender. Caution: great gains have been made but there is still a good bit of hostility to women pastors out there. Surround yourself with the support of good women colleagues and mentors." — *Sylvia Shirke Charles*

"Pastoral ministry is a natural outgrowth of nurturing personalities. However, women need to be politically wise in the community life of the congregation and astute in their understanding of how structures work. This is the growing edge for young pastors, I believe. If you do well controlling your anger regarding injustices against women in the church, many doors are open to you." — *Anne Stuckey*

"If you love the church and feel a passion for serving it, consider pastoral ministry. Tend to your spiritual life; listen to the nudging of the Spirit. Know that there are many who would welcome you and some who will be difficult. Focus on the first; deal gently with the latter." — *Anita Yoder Kebr*

"Women pastors need a wife!" — *Pauline Kennel*

"My experience has been that even folks who are against women in ministry in principle, will grow to respect an individual woman in ministry; so don't allow opposition to deter you. If you are called by God and affirmed by the community, you can do nothing else but serve to the best of your ability." — *Susan Janzen*

"Women, the same as men, need to define their gifts and calling and pursue the vocation they feel called to and in which their gifts support. I would caution seeking leadership simply to prove a point or because it's the 'in thing.' Ministry needs to be a calling. When the calling is genuine, I believe the person will also enjoy the involvement." — *Elena Yoder*

"Pastor as though all the little children are seeing you as their model; they are!" — *Donella Clemens*

"Congregations learn to appreciate women in pastoral ministry primarily through experiencing them in ministry. Even the most reluctant parishioner, once they receive care and teaching from

a woman, can begin to understand that God gives gifts as God wills, with no regards to gender. A gentle but strong spirit wins! At some point, many of us (women pastors) have decided not to join in the battle about women in ministry. We go where we are welcomed. Pastoral ministry energy is misspent in the argument.” —*Shirley Yoder Brubaker*

“You will never be so aware of your own gifts and failings. The variety of work, the chances to touch people’s lives, heal and engage them on many social, emotional and spiritual levels is fantastic. The opportunity to see God alive, present and real in many, many lives and places is amazing. You also can work yourself to death in a year and people will cheer you on as you do it. You may also let your own spiritual life wither because you see it as ‘work’ or professional time, not as personal necessity.” —*Erin Morash*

“Pastoral ministry is a wonderful and high calling to which women bring some unique and wonderful gifts that are needed in the church alongside those of men. At the same time, we dare not put ourselves and our contributions on a pedestal any more than those of our male colleagues. We need to recognize that as white, heterosexual, North American women, we are part of a privileged group. We are both “oppressed” and “oppressor.” We need that awareness to minister and live with integrity.” —*Muriel Bechtel*

“I believe we are at our best when we live out our calling with humble confidence, trust that through our best efforts, God will accomplish more than we can ask or imagine.”—*Muriel Bechtel*

“We need to be alert to the blurring of emotional boundaries that sometimes complicates our collegial relationships and/or pastoral ministry. When professional roles get blurred with our own personal needs for connection, there is much potential for hurt. Women need places and people with whom to process these issues, perhaps even more than men. For men, this gets acted out sexually. For women, it shows up in other ways, perhaps in competition for pastoral care roles or over-involvement in people’s lives.” —*Muriel Bechtel*

“Accept conflict as a normal part of human relationships; learn more about it and be ‘non-anxious’ in response. Take your anxiety outside the situation for help.”—*Mary Mae Schwartzentruber*