

Seasons of a Pastor's Wife

-by Robyn Buhl, First Baptist Church, Whitehall, WI

This past year has been a whirlwind of emotions. I've experienced the highest of highs and lowest of lows.

Last fall my family and I moved all the way across the country with two weeks' notice when my husband accepted a Lead Pastor position in Whitehall, Wisconsin. It had been nearly three years since he had held a pastoral position and our whole family was ready and excited to once again step into a ministry role.

However, I must say that I returned to the role of pastor's wife a little less gracefully than I had imagined I would. I envisioned coming to a new church at 34 years old ready to serve and encourage others with far more maturity than when I first stepped into the role of being a youth pastor's wife as a 20 year old college student.

Instead, I arrived at my new temporary home in someone's basement apartment more than a little tattered and worn. I was 28 weeks pregnant with a 10 year old and 13 year old in tow who had just said goodbye to the only home they'd ever known. I developed gestational diabetes and spent the first several weeks as a Wisconsinite trying to get insurance and navigate the seemingly endless doctor's appointments that were all an hour away. Due to some physical complications I could barely walk and had a hard time sitting or standing for any lengthy period of time—and that was before I sprained my ankle completely immobilizing me just days before moving into our new home. Other people literally had to do almost everything for me. I couldn't stand, let alone lift a box. I was putting anything but my best foot forward in my new community.

It was humbling.

More than 3 weeks before we were anticipating our little miracle rainbow baby (a baby born after loss), our sweet little one made his grand entrance into the world via emergency c-section. We were so in love! Life did not slow down however. Before I could even confidently walk again our daughter was diagnosed with a life-long autoimmune disease and we jumped head first into trying to treat it via a very restrictive and specific diet (*read: extremely time consuming as nearly everything she eats is made from scratch*). Oh, and have I neglected to mention that during all of this my husband was working toward his Master's degree and I was homeschooling?

We were all so exhausted.

One day I found myself sitting next to a very sweet older woman from our church. She asked how I was doing and I confessed that I was having a hard time with the fact that we had been here for months already and had hardly been able to lift our heads above water, let alone minister to others outside of Sunday morning services.

She looked at me and said, "You know, I think it's actually a good thing. It's easy to put too much pressure on a pastor's wife, and I think the fact that you've been unable to step in and do all of those pastor's wife types of things is a good reminder that those really are unrealistic expectations to put on just one person. You need to take care of your family first. The rest of us need to not neglect our own responsibilities to take care of the church just because we finally have a pastor."

Those words were like honey to my soul—sweetly spoken at a time I desperately needed to hear them.

She gave me grace. And she gave me permission to give myself grace.

The book of Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a season for everything under heaven. I have to assume that includes a season to serve and a season to be served. A season to thrive and a season to survive. A season to receive grace and a season to bestow it upon others.

Embrace your season.

Robyn is a wife, a mother, and an avid baker. She's just a real life pastor's wife trying to find her place in this world. More of her writings can be found at www.reallifepastorswife.blogspot.com