



(This is an excerpt from my book, **CHURCH HAPPENS** - *What Your Pastor Needs From The People They Lead*. **If you are a Pastor you can receive a FREE PDF Copy of this book sent to your email address.** Visit www.churchhappens.com/general/ and fill in your name and email address and we will send you the book in its entirety along with a bulk ordering discount chart).

Chapter One

Smitten Shepherds & Scattered Sheep

Jesus quoted in **Matthew 26:31** from **Zechariah 13:7**, *Then Jesus said to them, You will all be offended and stumble and fall away because of Me this night [distrusting and deserting Me], for it is written, **I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.*** (Amplified Bible).

Have you considered how the *gates of hell* will try to *prevail against the church*? Satan's #1 job is to strike your pastor, his family and staff. The devil recognizes that if he is successful at hitting them, the result will be the sheep scattering. There is safety for the sheep in the fold, but if they are scattered they will become food for the wolves.

You may have heard the story of the Christian that got stranded on a deserted island for several years. When he was finally rescued the rescuers noticed the man had built three structures. They asked him what they were? The Christian told them that the first building was his home. They then asked him about the second structure? *That is, the church I attend*. Surprised they asked what the third structure was to which the man replied, *Oh! That is, the church I used to attend!*

It would be laughable if it wasn't so true that many Christians change churches like they change their clothes! What we have failed to see is how we have played right into the enemy's plan. The devil has been endeavoring to neutralize the church from having its life changing impact that God established it to have.

Thirty years ago, there were statistics that were released by F.A.S.I.C.L.D., which stands for the *Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development*. This quest started in 1989 as a Fuller Institute project that was picked up by F.A.S.I.C.L.D., in 1998. Some reputable Christian organizations like Barna Group, Focus on the Family and Fuller Seminary picked up these statistics even though they were based on what is termed, **a convenient example** from two different conferences of pastors in California.

It worked out that these stats were suspect and alleged to be unfounded without the use of the science of statistical research. A lot of these startling statistics regarding pastors said their marriages and children were in serious danger and were dealing with depression and needing counseling. It even shared information of spiritual leaders having extra-marital affairs and their marriages ending in divorce.

A significant percentage of pastors were said to be stuck in a ministry position they loathed and were desiring a change in careers but knew of nothing else they could do. It eventually came to light that these statistics were not as bad as initially thought.

The Wesleyan denomination along with LifeWay Research did their own internal surveys. It seemed incomprehensible that those unreliable statistics were reporting that on average 1,700 pastors were quitting the ministry each month! The truth in more recent studies revealed that nearly 250 pastors on average are leaving the ministry for a variety of reasons. Many of which were not due to extra-marital affairs, burnout or depression.

Still concerning but certainly a more hopeful scenario than that which was painted 30 years ago. Today, some pastors and ministers are experiencing a change in their calling and ministry assignments! **Those statistics, made almost 30 years ago, are no longer considered valid or reliable. Among Protestant ministers 93% of Pastors feel privileged to be in the ministry!** (www.LifewayResearch.com).

LifeWay did a survey of 1500 pastors that revealed a more positive perspective on pastors, but also revealed that the ministry was still a serious calling and a difficult vocation.

- 84 percent say they're on call 24 hours a day
- 80 percent expect conflict in their church
- 54 percent finds the role of pastor frequently overwhelming

Thankfully, things have changed and many pastors have a better view of themselves and the ministry they lead. That does not mean that leaders in ministry do not have to deal with personal struggles like you do. Pastors have marital issues and issues with their children like you. They have to deal with both sexual and ethical temptations. Never forget that your pastors are human beings with genuine emotions and they have to deal with the same devil that you have to deal with too!

The results of this LifeWay Research survey remind us that those who are still serving on the front lines of ministry need encouragers to cheer them on. Their ministry race is not over yet;

- 53 percent are often concerned about their family's financial security
- 48 percent often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle
- 21 percent say their church has unrealistic expectations of them

The question arises, ***How can we stem the tide of spiritual, emotional and physical attacks against those who serve us in the ministry?***

That is the function of this book that your Pastor and Staff deemed a resource that would be helpful to you in providing the things that the Lord and His leaders need. Thank you for your teachability in desiring to glean the truths contained in this book.

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