



Ramah's Voice

Ministry Solitaire: Thriving in the Aloneness of Ministry Life

The life of a pregnancy care/post-abortion worker holds a unique place in ministry history. As many who are called by God this responsibility can be filled with "alone" feelings. When people see you they are reminded of the "abortion" issue. Many do not see the human side of abortion – the pain of women experiencing PAS, the fear of teens when facing an unplanned pregnancy or the loss of a small child. They only see a controversial "issue." Simply the word abortion causes discomfort for many and they associate those emotions with you. It is as if you are one-dimensional and ONLY have abortion in your life. People avoid you while others overwhelm you with various needs. It's easy to see how we often feel lonely or blue.

The feelings of being separated from normal society are normal on God's twisted path to heaven. Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV) relays, "*Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.*" Isn't it wonderful to know that we are never truly "alone" when God is with us?

Set Apart

Jeremiah 1:5 – "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.*"

Jeremiah was told that God had called him before he was born to give a message at a

crucial time in history. The word "**knew**" means Jerry had an intimate knowledge that comes from relationship and personal commitment with God. In being "**sanctified,**" Jerry was made holy for the work. He would serve the Lord for over 40 years yet the people of Judah never listened to his warnings. His message was "politically incorrect" and he was rejected by most and stood alone in calling people to repent and turn to God.

God spoke plainly to Jeremiah saying in vs. 1:5 that He had set him apart from birth for this task. When officially called by God to serve, Jerry argued that God was mistaken in choosing him. First he says he's unqualified for the job (vs. 1:6a), "*Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak for I am a youth!*" Knowing Jerry's humanness, God took the pressure off him and said (vs. 9), "*behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms. To root out and pull down, to destroy and throw down, to build and to plant.*"

The life of Jeremiah from that point on is hard to imagine. He gave his life to the Lord and went through a myriad of tough times in his 40 years of ministry service. These experiences included: prison, being thrown into a well, taken to foreign lands against his will, rejection from everyone, and never being allowed a wife or family. A lot of what Jerry prophesied came true during his ministry yet he was continually ignored. The one incredible thing about Jerry is that he was faithful to the Lord through it all.

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Can you relate to Jeremiah? There have been times I argued with God about His selection of myself as His spokesperson. Many of us have had our name/reputation scrutinized by those who seek to discredit our work. While the pro-abortion forces are always against us, attacks can come from “our own side” — those supposed to be Christians or pro-life. It is during these times that I beg the Lord to be released and allow me to go back to a “normal” life. It is by Jeremiah’s example that I remember I am to be faithful to the Lord no matter what the cost.

Godly Fear

Obedying the Lord’s call can be like carrying a cross. It’s heavy and it hurts the backbone and adjoining muscles. Publicly confessing to taking the life of our firstborn is emotionally difficult yet it is also our greatest joy. Inspiration along God’s twisted path called “ministry” has come from many biblical figures including a man called Jonah. It is from his example that we know that disobeying God’s call means we could end up in the belly of a whale!

The “fear of the Lord” is our main motivation and it provides indestructible spiritual covering. Funny, but this fear allows us to be fearless! All we have to do is hear and obey the Lord’s leading. If He is with us, who can be against us? With God’s spirit and help we can do incredible things for Him that might not be revealed until the second coming of Jesus.

Lack of Harvest Workers

Another part of “ministry solitaire” is that we are often lonely. There are only a few who are actively involved in this ministry and some years more can leave our work than join! We search for new volunteers and feel like the whole issue of abortion has been placed on our shoulders. We often feel abandoned by God and question Him with thoughts like, “Why have you brought this evil into the world? When will He come forward and avenge this blood? Where are the workers to help?” Did you know that many prophets of the bible felt the same way?

When I feel this way, I go back to Judges 6-7 verses. One of the biblical characters I can truly identify with is Gideon. In Judges 6, God sent an angel to speak directly to Gideon about the task He was calling him to do. God’s message was that he could win the battle with the “strength you have.” What does Gideon do? He ignores the direct statement that God will be with him and argues saying he doesn’t have the correct genetic code (his clan is the weakest) and is too young (the least in his family) to win the battle. The Lord continues to be **patient** reminding Gideon that He will be with him in battle. Later, after giving him several signs, God reduces the number of Gideon’s fight men to just 300. Why? **Because God wanted everyone to know that He was responsible for the future victory.**

I wonder about those 300 men who were allowed to participate in such a miracle. What was going through their minds as they waited for Gideon’s signal? They hadn’t met the angel of the Lord or had a prophetic dream. They were just being obedient to Gideon’s orders. When Gideon handed them a trumpet and an empty jar, what did they think was going to happen? They didn’t have swords or shields – just a

Managing as an “Oddball”

musical instrument and a piece of kitchen pottery. Were they intimidated or afraid approaching the enormous enemy camp? Imagine the emotions they must have felt in blowing their horn and breaking their jar and then watching all the enemies turn on each other! What an incredible miracle to witness! Their hands didn't get bloodied but they won the battle because God did all the work. Their only role was to be obedient no matter how ludicrous the situation must have seemed.

Do you ever feel like you are in a ludicrous situation in this ministry? The number of abortions that occur each year around our world – 60,000,000 – could easily be related to the amount of men and camels Gideon's 300 men faced that day. Instead of multiplying, our forces have dwindled away to nearly nothing and financial support is scarce. The tools we have are pretty pathetic (i.e., trumpets and jars) in relation to fighting a well-funded/well-armed opponents (i.e., Planned Parenthood). But this battle has already been won because God has made that promise to “defend the widows and the fatherless.”

Take HEART! You have been selected to be part of the modern-day three hundred that God will use to end abortion one life at a time! What an incredible honor to be counted among those that God wants to use! Our numbers may grow smaller in the days to come and our finances reduced but God knows how much it costs for the trumpets and jars He will use in the upcoming battle to end abortion. And in the end He will claim the victory. Only God can end abortion in our world and He has selected you to help that miracle happen! Go on in the strength that He has given you and remain faithful.

Each of us feels like an oddball or a misfit at times. We don't live “normal” lives like others who never talk about abortion but enjoy chatting about our children, sharing recipes, or outlining the latest decorating fad. There are times when we indulge in such things and feel guilty. Maybe the weight of the ministry is too much and we need to allow ourselves a little escape time. When ministry solitaire overwhelms you, here are some coping mechanisms:

Take comfort in other oddballs—Always be sure to gather friends “inside” the movement who can relate to your unique set of circumstances. Since I really don't have anyone locally, I rely on e-mail and telephone correspondence with other misfits. Seeking fellowship at yearly pro-life events is also gratifying and reinforces our understanding that we are not alone in this work.

Keep friends “outside” the movement—Your close friends are going to share your views and encourage you. Friends don't have to know the inner workings of your ministry any more than you need to know how to build a computer if your friend happens to be a computer geek! Your work is “unique” because you “take it home” every night. It's on your heart and in your head every time you see the news or read a book. You must make a conscious decision to take steps to keep balance and perspective in your life by associating with other folks.

Review the work God has accomplished through you—I keep files of letters and e-mails from individuals whom God has touched through this ministry. When I become particularly disheartened, these messages remind me of the audience God has given me. It renews my faith and encourages my soul to know my efforts are bearing fruit. While our work is rarely called a “bed of roses,” it IS rewarding to know others are praying for you.

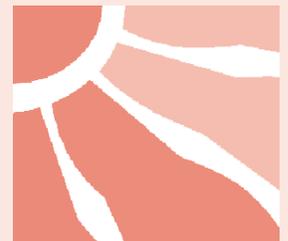
Know that God is protecting you and understands!—It's normal in this work to be overwhelmed and wonder if you will be able to survive. Keep in mind that God is now, and always will be, your hiding place in times of trouble as relayed in Psalm 32:7-10 (NKJV)—*“Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him. You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance....”*

Take a vacation!—Vacations are not negotiable. You must maintain your relationship with the Lord first, your family second, and your ministry third. When it gets out of alignment, straighten it or get out. You are no good to the Lord or your family if you are not rested. Vacation is not for you—it's for everyone around you and for the longevity of the work.

Ask myself if I really want to be “normal”—Well, what is normal? Is the grass greener for anyone? True, many people are not woken up in the middle of the night with suicidal post-abortive women but isn't it exciting to be able to help? God knew the desires of our hearts to be His instrument when he created us. It's just like other callings—the joys and blessings are “un-normal” circles of friends far outweigh the troubles.

Remember God is selective in choosing His workers—In Luke 13:24, Jesus tells us to “strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.” The Bible is clear that our path isn't an easy one and God only lets a few of us through the gate. How blessed you are to be one of those few!

Ask God for strength and perseverance—The God who gave life to you knows exactly what you need to persevere. Find quiet moments to sit with Him and hear His voice. The greatest comfort of all is talking to the Lord and understanding that He has taken a great deal of time and effort to put us together. He alone knows exactly the encouragement we need, and when we need it.





If you just smile

“When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them.” Job 29:24

“You can’t smile for two weeks,” my oral surgeon told me after dental surgery a few years ago. I have had a false front tooth since I was six years old. In order to obtain a beautiful smile, I had elected to undergo an implant procedure. But though these instructions seemed simple, I soon discovered what life is like without a smile.

The first few days were very difficult for everyone because I was still working at Focus on the Family. People initially asked if I was okay, thinking I must be sick or depressed. Sometimes I would forget, but the pain of smiling jolted me back to somberness. Most friends took pity on me and tried not to joke or make me laugh because anything funny was painful. But I disliked not being able to physically express what I was feeling inside.

In trying to put this experience into perspective, I searched for a verse with the word “smile.” Did you know that this word is not used in most general translations – only in the NIV’s chapter of Job? Jesus must have smiled but He never spoke directly about utilizing this expression. Interesting. While the Bible specifically records His tears, it omits His smiles.

Women in crisis seldom smile. But a smile from you is an important ministry tool because it conveys assurance, hope and love. Job 29:24 reads, *“When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them.”* And a verse from Charlie Chaplin’s song “Smile” relays, they’ll “find that life is still worthwhile if you’ll just smile.”

Sydna A. Massé

Ramah's Resource Corner:

One-Day Seminars!

Since so many are overwhelmed with ministry needs, Ramah is now offering a new option for training – one-day seminars. The Ramah team is available to come to your city and facilitate your individual training needs. These include the basics of post-abortion ministry and any of our new 13 booklet subjects — Shattering Sexual Soul Ties, Ministering to Teens, The Power of Regret: PAS and the Abortion-Minded, When They Abort Anyway, Sharing the Secret of Abortion, and many others.

For more information, call Sydna at 941-473-2188 or visit our website at: www.ramahinternational.org. We've kept the cost low to encourage greater attendance!

From the Word of God:

“For behold, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar, and bronze wall against the whole land ... They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you....”

Jeremiah 1: 18-19