

# MINISTERING AS A COUPLE

by Linda Rahardjo

When I got married in 1985, I never dreamed of becoming the wife of a church elder. At that time I only knew I was going to marry a doctor and then I would become a businesswoman. To see their daughter become a businesswoman was my parents' dream since I was a little girl.



Linda

They had always wanted me to grow into an independent woman. Being the firstborn and the only daughter of three children, I was showered with much love by my parents, especially my dad. I love my parents so much that I would never crush their dreams

As the daughter of merchants, during our daily activities, I was taught how to do business since I was a child. Although at that time my parents were not following Christ, they taught me virtue and planted good morals into my life. My childhood was a series of wonderful moments, although we lived modestly.

My family and I lived a very private life. We did not want to meddle with anyone's affairs and in return, no one meddled in ours. I enjoyed this quiet and peaceful life. I was so content with my parents' generous love that I didn't need others' love. Without my realizing it, I was growing into an antisocial young woman. I discovered later on that being antisocial was a negative trait.

At age sixteen, while I was in high school, I met Paulus, my future husband. We fell in love, and it was our first and only love. At that time, neither of us were believers, although we went to many church services together.

When I was 19, we both graduated from high school, but we were not able to see each other anymore. I continued my studies in Canada, while, Paulus went to a university in Indonesia to study medicine.

During my first year in Canada, I accepted Christ after being evangelized by an Indonesian doctor and his wife who lived there. That same year, Paulus was also born again. The contents of our love letters shifted to witnessing about our changed lives. Paulus had a dream that someday, after we got married, we would serve in a church in family ministry. I did not really pay attention to his dream. Being a private person, I did not give it another thought until after we got married.



Paulus

Paulus' life calling to be an elder or pastor came after the birth of our first son in 1989. It was certainly a great surprise for us, especially for me. As I said, I had never dreamed of becoming a minister's wife. I didn't have special training for this task.

I didn't have a clue about the role of minister's wife. I did not know how to greet the congregation, how to smile at them, how to witness, and even worse, I didn't even know how to pray for people.

For several years I remained passive. In my thinking, it would be better for me to keep silent than to risk making mistakes. In many people's minds, I was seen as indifferent. And I was labeled as arrogant too. During those hard times when I was depressed, many times I asked my husband to separate ourselves, to

move to a peaceful village where nobody would know us. We would just have a piece of land to cultivate, tend a bunch of ducks, chickens, and cows, while raising and taking care of our sons.

However, deep down in my heart, I knew this was not right. There was no use of yelling, crying, throwing tantrums, or protesting while shaking my fist at God. I knew I needed to go out of my comfort zone, starting to grow like Him. His Word said that after we had victory, we would have the mind of Christ.

Running away like Jonah would not be the answer. The important thing was that I needed to be willing to experience a life transformation, like a caterpillar that needed to be changed into a cocoon before it could become a beautiful butterfly. I needed to be more beautiful each day. Again, I asked the Lord, "How could I become more beautiful each day?" I needed a mentor who would be able to teach me some practical ways. I did not have time to enter a university where I could earn a degree on how to be a minister's wife.

God answered. It flashed through my mind: why did I not have a humble heart to learn from my own husband? It had been two years since my husband tried to help me out of my frustration, but I had hardened my heart, reasoning that I would never be able to become a minister's wife as long as I lived. I was not able to change the antisocial characteristics within myself. Finally I gave up my stubbornness to God's hand so that He could crush it, I came to my husband and asked him to disciple me.

Slowly I learned from my husband how to dig in the Word, how to pray, and how to keep a journal. I was so grateful that he was a good and long-suffering teacher that God had prepared for me. He had never laughed at my foolishness. He did not criticize when I was not able to pray eloquently. He taught me to pray for other people by asking me to partner with him when any congregation member came for prayer. He would give me a chance to open the prayer and he would close.

Now we minister together. I realize that the process of learning for me still has a long way to go. I am far from perfect. I am still learning to learn and to grow in Him. I intend to finish my race victorious until the end to receive an eternal crown which does not fade away.

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