



# When serving at church

A large, reflective sphere, possibly a globe or a decorative object, is the central focus. The word "Church" is engraved in a serif font across its middle. The sphere is highly reflective, mirroring the sunset sky and the surrounding landscape. The background features a dramatic sunset with orange and yellow clouds, and a dark, silhouetted landscape in the distance. The foreground shows some dry grass or straw.

Church

# becomes a burden

By John W. Kennedy

**E**arlier in his ministry Mark Wootton quickly discovered an imbalance in a church that had hired him as pastor. As Wootton asked his secretary which people held lay leadership positions in the church, the secretary gave the same man's name for Sunday School superintendent, Royal Rangers commander, children's church director and Men's Ministries leader. Wootton realized that the man, who also served on the deacon board, couldn't keep up the pace without compromising his health and the health of the church.

"He had an excellent servant's heart, but he primarily was doing all these ministries because others weren't stepping up," Wootton says.

"Sometimes, just because others don't accept doesn't mean you need to do it. It may be an indication that the ministry needs a rest until additional workers step up."

Wootton, who earned his doctorate from Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in 2003, could be a burnout candidate if not for maintaining multitasking balance.

He is an associate professor with a full load at Central Bible College;



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a senior pastor — typically preaching two sermons and leading a Bible study each week at Peace Chapel Assembly of God in Fair Grove, Mo.; Sunday School teacher; husband; father of four; and sectional officer for the Southern Missouri District.

Yet, Wootton says being surrounded by a capable and trustworthy support team at home, school and church, where he has three part-time associates, enables him to delegate enough responsibilities to keep his priorities in order. "If a Christian neglects his relationship with God or family he will lose his ministry," Wootton says.

Wootton encourages congregants to be involved in one ongoing ministry as well as one occasional ministry. He notes that 1 Corinthians 12 teaches that all church members are valuable, although some ministries aren't as prestigious as others.

Gary R. Allen, national coordinator for Ministerial Enrichment for the AG, says some volunteers become overburdened with church duties for the wrong reason: guilt.

"Pastors tend to call on people who are busy because those people get the job done," Allen says. "But some insecure volunteers put too much pressure on themselves because they feel the need for approval. Then they risk burnout when they feel unappreciated or taken for granted."

Allen says parents are at risk of church burnout if they are involved in church ministries on certain nights and bring children to other church events on different nights. City and suburban residents are burnout candidates because of longer work hours and commute times. Rural dwellers are susceptible because there are fewer workers in the congregation.

"People have to pace themselves," Allen says. "You can't do everything. You can't be in everything."

Like Wootton, Wallace Phillips, senior pastor of The Carpenter's Shop church (AG) in Ahoskie, N.C., is comfortable delegating responsibilities. Phillips typically has someone else preach half the Sunday morning services while he is speaking in other churches.

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# ABCs

## OF SALVATION

church and mow the grass," Phillips says. "Being too insecure to release ministry to others leads to exhaustion, bitterness and anger."

Just as church members sometimes give in to pastoral demands to serve, pastors sometimes are in bondage to congregational expectations. Lay ministry in the proper perspective means that members are willingly and cheerfully serving in practical areas (Acts 6:1-7) and leaving the role of spiritually building up believers to pastors. Ministers might fail to relinquish training and service roles because of their insecurities, according to Phillips.

"As pastor I don't have to make every hospital visit because people in the congregation are already way ahead of me," Phillips says. ■

*John W. Kennedy is news editor of Today's Pentecostal Evangel.*

*E-mail your comments to [pe@ag.org](mailto:pe@ag.org).*

**To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:**

**A. Admit you are a sinner.**

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

**Ask God's forgiveness.**

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

**B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.** "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

**Become a child of God by receiving Christ.**

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

**C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.**

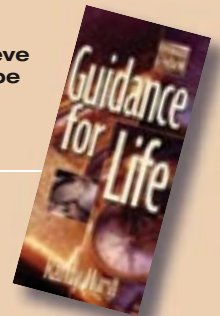
"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

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