

## Personal Life and Pastoral Commitment

*When I first came here, I thought, "This is my first church, and I am not going to say 'no' to anything"—a big mistake! There were times when people called me to do all sorts of things, join all kinds of groups; I immediately accepted. I let them govern my life. I began to feel put upon. But I blame myself for that because I allowed it to happen. Now I am starting to say to myself "Wait!" before I agree to do something, and I am starting to claim some time for myself. But it has taken me five years to do this! . . . I also discovered that if I make plans to do something on my day off with other people, I am more likely to actually take the day off, than if I just say to myself, "Well, why don't I go off into the woods today?"—SINGLE CLERGYWOMAN*

*Women intending to be pastors have got to be more aware of the real difficulties in handling family and parish demands. I think a lot of women pastors who are trying to handle both family and ministry are fooling themselves and their parishes on how much is possible—like having a baby in the parish and assuming they are going to be able to carry on full-time right away. Such an assumption is especially unrealistic when it is the first church and baby! . . . I think the church is afraid to face up to some of the hard problems of family and profession for ordained women because they are afraid they are going to look anti-feminist.—SEMINARY FACULTY WOMAN*

*We are in separate churches. Although mine is a part-time position (since there are only forty adults in the congregation), it is some distance away from his church and where we live; and I am "it" at this church—so it can take up a good deal of my time. With two young children, we are kind of running a relay race. Scheduling is always a problem. "I've got a meeting this night, when is yours? . . . I wonder if we can get a babysitter? What are we going to do? . . . I'll be home at 12:15. If you can hang*

*on and not leave 'till 12:30. . . .'* Life gets terribly, terribly cluttered, particularly when one of you has to commute in addition. It might be easier if our parishes were side by side. For us, one of the really major drawbacks to being in different parishes is that we are not together on Sunday morning. We find that fragmenting. . . . We are very well acquainted now with the problems of having separate churches and are hoping we can be together in the same church as ministers eventually. But we are not naive enough to think there will be no problems from being in the same church.—CLERGYWOMAN (Part of a Clergy Couple)

In the last chapter we described relations clergy have with different types of people with whom they interact in their status or position as ordained ministers. These people make up their "role set" with reference to ministry. But clergy are also other's close friends, spouses, children, parents, or other relatives, as well as being their "own" person. These other statuses that clergy occupy also have their role sets or others with whom the clergyperson interacts as father or mother, relative, or friend. Not only may people in the role set attached to their status of minister make onerous or sometimes conflicting demands on them, but also their demands may conflict with those of the people who are part of the role set attached to their other statuses as family member or tennis partner, for example.<sup>1</sup> Clergy may experience feelings of anxiety, stress, or frustration if obligations put on them by members of one role set, or from different role sets, are overdemanding in terms of their available time. Consider this scenario, for example. It is a pastor's day off. She or he has planned a game of golf with a friend. The phone rings. A parishioner has entered the hospital for emergency surgery. And to cap it off, the school calls to say that the pastor's child is ill and needs to come home. The spouse has already left home for the day. How will the pastor cope? Such "role strain" potentially can be reduced for individuals if they can manage to arrange their personal and professional lives so that demands on them and on their time will not be too onerous or conflicting in content or scheduling.<sup>2</sup> Issues to be considered in this chapter are the ways clergy attempt to reduce role strain, their success in actually minimizing overwork and conflicting demands on their time, and the effects that their efforts at reducing strain have on clergy's satisfaction with their present position and their commitment to parish ministry.

### **Balancing Parish and Private Life**

A problem in varying degrees for most clergy is maintaining some degree of separation between their ministerial duties and their private lives; however, this problem seems generally more acute for clergy-

women. For example, only 47 percent of the women pastors in our study said they were "usually" able to maintain a separation between their ministerial duties and their private lives; and 10 percent more women than men said they could "never" accomplish this feat. Although some of the older single clergywomen said they did not even try to make this separation—that the parish was their life—most of the women wished that they could better manage their time in order to have more of a life of their own. The reason that many clergywomen report greater difficulty than men in juggling their schedules to create some time for themselves may be that women have had less experience in parish ministry than most of the men in our sample. As one of the clergywomen quoted at the beginning of this chapter remarked, it had taken her five years to learn to say "no" to overdemanding parishioners.

There is some debate about whether it is "easier" to be a parish minister if one is single or married—at least if the parish minister is a woman. There seems to be little doubt in Protestant circles that an ordained man who wishes to be a pastor is better off if he is married. The fact that 94 percent of the men compared to only 55 percent of the women pastors in this study are presently married may be taken as support for the near necessity in the eyes of pastoral search committees for a clergyman to be married. Although clergywomen in this study are far more likely to be younger than the men (46 percent of the women are under 35 years of age compared to only 16 percent of the men), their relative youth does not seem a very valid explanation for the greater likelihood of the women to be unmarried. It is probably true most of the men were likely to have married during or prior to attending seminary. Bock, using 1960 census data, discovered that "age for age," clergywomen are less likely to be married than clergymen. He accounts for the discrepancy as resulting from the greater conflict women experience in combining clergy and marriage roles.<sup>3</sup> Another explanation for the greater propensity that still exists for women pastors to be single *may* be that, unlike women who have never worked, or who have worked in relatively low-paying or low-prestige jobs, clergywomen have higher expectations of the kind of equitable marriage relationship they wish to enter. Data for women in a range of occupations suggests that clergywomen are far from unique in this regard. A study by Elizabeth Havens, also using 1960 census data, disclosed that among the working female population, the higher a woman's income, the more likely she was to be single. Havens attributes this result to the lesser willingness of the higher income women to enter into or maintain marital relationships they find confining or unhappy.<sup>4</sup>

There is, at any rate, no relationship in our data between the marital

status of clergywomen and how easy or difficult they find balancing their personal and private lives. Neither is there a relationship between marital status and other general factors indicating satisfaction with life and ministry, such as feelings of boredom and frustration by the limits of the particular parish situation, or whether the clergyperson was considering leaving the parish ministry. While the total amount of difficulty or anxiety clergywomen may experience is not strictly dependent on whether they are married or to whom, nevertheless married clergywomen may encounter different kinds of problems than do single clergywomen. In the 1980s, perhaps the most striking phenomenon about clergywomen's marital status is that they tend to be married to other clergy. As reported in an earlier chapter, of the married clergy, 60 percent of the clergywomen in our sample, as compared with only 4 percent of the clergymen, have a spouse who is also ordained. When this situation is compared to other women professionals, clergywomen do not seem to be unique. Cynthia Fuchs Epstein reports that nearly one-half of women lawyers are married to other lawyers. She adds:

*The favored marriage pattern for women attorneys, like other women in male-dominated professions, seems to be what sociologists call homogamy—"like marrying like"—in this case, along professional lines. A similar pattern is seen among women in other male-dominated professions such as medicine, science, and engineering.<sup>5</sup>*

Again, our data show no difference between women pastors who are single, married to clergy spouses, or married to those in other occupations in ability to manage time effectively or in satisfaction with life and ministry. Clergywomen in these various types of marital statuses may have equal difficulty in balancing parish and private time effectively, but their difficulty results from somewhat different causes.

Single clergywomen, for example, do not have the "legitimate" excuse of a husband or children to use in keeping overdemanding parishioners at bay. One single woman pastor reported having developed a clever escape by taking her day off at her vacation home, for which the church does not have the telephone number! Apart from such measures as this to protect one's private time, single clergywomen may need to take special precautions to have a private social life, since with *whom* they spend their free time may be a topic of intense interest to some of their parishioners. The single clergywomen in rural areas or small towns, on the other hand, may have difficulty finding any congenial individuals to socialize with on an intimate basis in their free time.

Married clergywomen are likely to have problems in juggling ministerial duties and their private lives. Married clergywomen, almost by

definition, are more likely to be in "dual-career" families than are clergymen, who are more likely to have wives who do not work outside the home or who work only part-time. The married clergywomen, who, as previously indicated, are younger than the clergymen, are also more likely currently to have children under ten years of age than their male counterparts. While we speculate that clergywomen may well be in more equitable marriages in terms of allocation of household duties between spouses than the clergymen in our sample, just the sheer difficulties of scheduling time in two-career families creates problems. This is especially true when there are young children as well, and little money for household help. Such a situation is bound to create problems in time-management for the clergywoman, as illustrated by the quote from one young married woman pastor cited at the beginning of this chapter. Among those who had children under ten when they were also engaging full-time in ministry, clergywomen in each of the nine denominations were more likely than men to say they had a very difficult time when their children were this young. Overall, 29 percent of the clergywomen reported that it was "relatively easy" to do this compared to 64 percent of the clergymen.

In balancing church and home demands when there are young children, the difference for clergywomen seems not to be in whether or not they are married to an ordained man. Rather, the location of the husband's job seems to be the more important factor. Clergywomen whose clergy husbands are in the *same* church are more likely to say they had/have a "relatively easy" time carrying on a full-time ministry when their children are ten and under than clergywomen whose husbands are pastor of a different church (35 percent to 19 percent respectively). That more equitable child-rearing practices are expected in clergy couple marriages may partly be indicated in this study by the fact that clergymen with ordained wives (though they constitute only 4 percent of the married male clergy) are more likely than those whose wives are not ordained (and also typically not working full-time) to report difficulty in carrying on a full-time ministry when their children are under ten. To be sure, some young clergymen may look forward to the responsibility of caring for their children, no matter how difficult this may be in combination with full-time ministry. However, some clergy couples are in the situation of attempting to resolve both the strain of full-time ministry and child-rearing by sharing a single salary as co-pastors of a church. They do so partly in order for both to participate equally and fully in combining ministry and parenthood, and probably partly as well so they can be together in the same parish.

How well clergy are able to cope in carrying on a full-time ministry with young children not surprisingly has some consequences for the

marital relationship. Both men and women pastors who said it was relatively easy to carry on a full-time ministry while their children were young were also most likely to say that their spouse was "never or rarely resentful" of the time and energy they invested in their ministerial work.

As far as this last indicator of marital harmony is concerned, it appears generally to be the case that clergywomen are more likely to have spouses who are understanding and supportive of their careers than are the clergymen. About two-thirds (68 percent) of the married clergywomen say that their spouses are "never or rarely resentful" compared to only about a half (48 percent) of the clergymen. A good part of the reason clergywomen have more understanding spouses is that they are far more likely to be part of a clergy couple than clergymen. And, as can be observed in Table 8.1, women married to ordained men are 18 percent more likely than women married to non-ordained men to report that they have very understanding husbands who were "never or rarely resentful of the time and energy" they put into ministerial work. Whether or not clergymen have an ordained wife apparently has no effect on whether they perceive their wives as resentful of the time they devote to their ministry; however, the numbers of men with clergy wives in the sample are really too few to make statistically reliable judgments. Among the clergy married to a nonordained spouse, women are only slightly more likely than clergymen to believe their spouses are almost never resentful of the time they devote to ministerial work. It is clear that marital homogamy, choosing a spouse with the same profession, is beneficial to clergywomen in terms of alleviating some role strain and conflict. This is not, however, to infer that clergy couple marriages are without conflict or scheduling difficulties.

Dual-career families, whether clergy couples or not, have economic, scheduling, and other problems having to do with balancing career and

**Table 8.1 Spouse Resentment of Ministry**

<i>"Overall, how resentful is your spouse of the time and energy you invest in your ministerial work?"</i>	<i>Spouse Not Ordained</i>		<i>Spouse Ordained (Clergy Couple)</i>	
	<i>Women</i> %	<i>Men</i> %	<i>Women</i> %	<i>Men</i> %
Never or rarely resentful	57	49	75	48
Sometimes resentful	39	47	22	47
Frequently resentful	4	4	3	5
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100
(N)	(134)	(488)	(199)	(19)

family life that do not exist to the same degree and kind in the more traditional marriages where the wife remains in the home. Role strain from sheer overload of time commitments, and from conflicts in obligations arising from career, family, or both has been reported as endemic in many dual career families involved in secular occupations.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, dual-career marriages may be as happy and stable as more traditional marriages. Since clergy couples are such a recent phenomenon in any significant numbers, there is insufficient history as yet to say whether generally, or in particular denominations, these marriages are more or less stable than when one of the partners is not working or working in a secular occupation. This study provides no evidence that clergy couple marriages are less happy and stable than other clergy marriages. Only 14 percent of the total sample had been divorced, 91 clergywomen and 80 clergymen. A number of women volunteered that they had been divorced before they began seminary, and this may well be the case for most of the divorced clergywomen. For example, of those divorced, 73 percent of the clergywomen and 51 percent of the clergymen said their divorce was not at all related to their work as ministers, either to the time that it requires or the nature of the job. Whatever the cause of the divorce, the consequences of divorce are felt by about a third of the divorced clergy to have been detrimental, especially in their ability to get another parish call or appointment. Divorced clergy who have custody of young children may find parishes particularly resistant to hiring them. As an indication that this is not solely a problem for women, one divorced clergyman, who had custody of his eight-year-old son, complained that his "refusal to put in 100 hours a week, so I could be home with my kid, led twelve families to leave the church!"

In addition to clergy's satisfaction with their own ways of working out marriage, family, and career relationships, we were interested in how parishioners viewed these relationships (as perceived by the clergy). Among clergy with working spouses, clergywomen are more likely to have spouses who are top professionals and business executives than is true for clergymen, whose spouses are more likely to be lower status professionals and clerical workers. Also, clergywomen, as we have noted, are far more likely to have spouses who are ordained than are clergymen. It is perhaps for these reasons that clergywomen are more likely than the men to believe that their parishioners respect them more because of their spouse's occupation (57 percent of the women to 37 percent of the men). Clergymen, on the other hand, are more likely to say their spouse's occupation does not affect their parishioner's opinion of them (60 percent of the men to 33 percent of the women). The spouses of clergywomen tend to be less active in their churches than the

spouses of clergymen; for example, 27 percent of the women's spouses are "rather inactive" in their churches compared to only 4 percent of the spouses of the men. However, overall, clergywomen were only slightly less likely to report that parishioners are satisfied with the degree of their spouse's participation in their church than were clergymen.

From comments made by the clergy, it seems that generally clergy see parishioners as expecting more from the spouse who is a wife than one who is a husband. Also, about a third of the clergywomen's husbands were pastors of a different church from their wife, which no doubt makes their non-attendance at their wives' Sunday services understandable. One of the women quoted at the beginning of this chapter commented on the fact that she and her husband did not like their inability to be together on Sunday mornings and at other church affairs because they were serving different congregations. This sentiment was echoed by other clergy couples included in this study. Clergywomen whose husbands had responsibilities in another church frequently also volunteered that, not only did they tend to be more active in their husbands' churches than their husbands were in theirs, but their participation in their husbands' churches was more expected of them by the parishioners there than vice versa. The following comments of two clergywomen reflect this:

*My husband is a minister in another church, and although he is relatively inactive in my church, my parishioners do not seem to mind. They relate to me as a single person overall, but are glad to see him when he comes to non-Sunday activities. He has more negative response from his church about my not being involved there!*

*Before we got this church together, he was a minister of one church and I another. He was inactive in my church; they seldom saw him. I was more active in his church, and I resented that. My parishioners didn't think about it—they did not seem to care. It was more of an issue for me.*

Some of the problems for clergy couples of being together in the same church are often financial, especially if they are sharing one or one and a half positions. Also there is at least the potential difficulty that one of the "team," namely the woman pastor, will be seen as the lesser minister, as illustrated in the following clergywoman's comment:

*Part of the danger of clergy couples answering one call as we did, is that people will think of the woman as the "pastor's wife." I am pregnant, and I know that a question in some of the people's minds is "How can she be a mother and a pastor?" Most respect and approve of my husband, but some question his judgment for allowing me to be co-pastor.*



Difficulties of this nature, plus potential conflict over whose ideas should prevail in particular aspects of parish planning, and also the possibility of too much "togetherness" sometimes arise for clergy couples who function as co-pastors of the same parish. However, they seem to handle these problems without undue stress. A clergywoman suggests that she is better able now to handle these particular problems of a co-pastorate than she was when she and her spouse were new to the ordained ministry:

*There was a time when . . . I would have gotten very brusque and very upset with people calling the house wanting to "talk to Father, please." That really would make me angry. But I think that over the past few years, I have learned a lot about how people respond to their clergy. Different people respond in different ways, different people have different needs, and that is one of the strengths of having more than one ordained person on the staff of a church anyway. . . . We enjoy different aspects of parish life, we have different approaches, different ways of thinking about things . . . instead of putting a lot of effort and energy into what we don't like to do, we can divide it. . . . We don't agree about everything either, so there will be times when we will be fighting with each other . . . but we can also share. . . .*

*People project a whole lot of stuff on you just because you happen to be ordained. Most of us walk around with a little cloud of stuff that doesn't belong to us at all. . . . What is essential is that you hold on to your own identity. . . . But if you are somebody who has a hard time dealing with other people's images and projections, one of the things that would make it easier, I would expect, would be to make sure never to work in the same parish with your spouse, because if you start to believe what other people perceive you to be or your spouse to be, then you get in terrible difficulties.*

As one woman seminary professor put it, the important thing for clergy couples is that they not "go off idealistically into the sunset of team ministry, not understanding or ready for possible conflicts, resistances, and low income." Whether married or single, clergywomen need to beware that they not fall victim to a "superwoman complex" which, as a United Methodist study of clergywomen described it "is an insidious, creeping kind of phenomenon that often invades personalities without one being aware of it."<sup>7</sup>

It seems to be especially important for clergywomen to be able to maintain a separation between their ministerial duties and their private lives, even if, on the whole, they experience more difficulty in doing this than clergymen. For clergywomen, but not for men, there is a significant correlation between difficulty in making this separation and

feelings of loneliness and isolation. Furthermore, for clergywomen, this relationship holds regardless of whether they are single, married to a man who has a secular job, or part of a clergy couple. It holds also whether the clergywomen live in a rural area, town, small city, large metropolitan suburb, or a large city. Women clergy, being so relatively new and unique to the congregational scene, are probably observed more closely than their male counterparts, and they are aware of being in the "fishbowl." Erving Goffman describes people in a variety of occupations as being performers. They manipulate their "appearance" and "manner" consistent with how they believe ideally they are expected to behave, especially when they are being observed by their clients or other publics.<sup>8</sup> Being always "on stage" can be tiring and very isolating. The woman pastor who has difficulty making a separation between her ministerial duties and personal life may well feel as if she is always "on stage," that she must constantly behave as a pastor is expected to, and cannot really be herself.

There are other correlates and causes of feelings of isolation and loneliness expressed by clergywomen. To these we now turn.

### **The Problems of Loneliness**

Feelings of loneliness and isolation are at least an occasional problem for slightly over half of all clergy in the study. Sixty-one percent of the women and 55 percent of the men indicate that they were at least "sometimes" lonely and felt isolated during the last year. While this was a regular state of affairs for only 14 percent of the clergywomen and 6 percent of the men, this leaves a slight majority who are sometimes lonely. Such an experience may have negative consequences for their ministry. As we note below, feelings of loneliness—especially if accompanied by depression about the particular congregation being served—can lead the clergyman or woman to think seriously not only of leaving his or her present parish, but also the parish ministry altogether.

Unfortunately, the structural panacea most frequently used to deal with clergy isolation—the formation of clergy study-support groups and interactions with other clergy on an informal basis—appears to have little effect on whether or not these pastors felt lonely and isolated. Of course, the number of clergy one interacts with regularly each month, or whether one belongs to a regularly meeting clergy group, says nothing about the quality of the support provided through these relationships. There may be certain kinds of clergy colleague groups or study groups that indeed assist in reducing isolation and loneliness for their members; however, our broad measures of these groups did not show them to be very effective. Similarly, neither the total number of women clergy of one's denomination in the regional judicatory, nor the

number of women clergy talked with each month, nor whether the clergywomen were members of an ongoing group composed predominantly of women, had any significant effect in reducing women pastors' sense of isolation. These are areas needing further study in greater depth than we have been able to provide.

Clergywomen, who are still more rare in pastorates than clergymen, will have greater visibility than the men and feel greater pressure (from themselves or from others) to "perform" well as parish ministers. The rarity of clergywomen gives them a "token" status in many judiciaries. As Rosabeth Moss Kanter argues for "token" women in general, this status may lead other clergy to set them apart by exaggerating the differences between clergywomen and clergymen, applying all manner of stereotypes, which Kanter theorizes leads to isolation of the "token" woman.<sup>9</sup> Of course, the number of other clergywomen of the particular denomination in any judiciary never approaches the roughly 40 percent of women necessary to be a "tilted" group in Kanter's theory, in which the negative effects of tokenism are reduced. However, there may also be a flaw in Kanter's hypothesis that the negative effects of tokenism can be reduced by an increase in numbers of those in the "token status." Cynthia Fuchs Epstein suggests that increasing numbers of women in male-dominated professions may simply lead to greater toleration of women by the male establishment, but not true acceptance of them, especially not acceptance into the power positions within the particular profession.<sup>10</sup> This interpretation helps to explain why the numbers of clergywomen in the judiciary had no relationship to other effects of "tokenism" that we suspected might be the case, including: how easy or difficult it was for the clergywomen to maintain a separation between their ministerial duties and private life; whether or not women were satisfied with their present position; whether or not they felt they were really accomplishing things in their ministry; or whether or not they felt lonely and isolated. The number of women in the judiciary made no real difference in relieving any of these concerns.

Clergy loneliness and feelings of isolation were dependent in part on three very concrete factors: where clergy lived, whether or not they were married, and their age (or how recently they had been ordained). Both older male and female pastors were significantly less likely to feel lonely and isolated than the younger pastors of either gender, regardless of marital status. Part of this is probably the greater experience of older clergy in finding supportive friends and effectively managing their professional and personal lives. Single clergy who have never been married are the loneliest clergy of all, lonelier even than the widowed and the divorced. They tend to be the youngest clergy, as well. Younger age and singleness reinforce each other in producing loneliness. Marriage

per se is not as important in reducing loneliness as the amount of spouse support. For both men and women, the loneliest among the married clergy were those whose spouses tended to resent the amount of time they devoted to their pastoral work. Whether or not their spouse was ordained had no effect on how lonely clergywomen were.

Marriage is, however, a more important buffer in itself against clergy feelings of isolation in different types of locations. Clergy in rural areas were lonelier than in any other place, and least lonely if their churches were located in a large city. However, further analysis showed that there was almost no difference between married clergy in rural churches and those in city churches in loneliness and feelings of isolation. For both, marriage reduced the isolation. Church location was of primary importance for the never-married clergy, especially the younger ones. These young, unmarried women and men were considerably (25 to 28 percent) more likely to feel lonely and isolated if their congregations were located in rural rather than urban areas. This situation was especially true for the young unmarried clergywomen in this study. One can infer from the data that it is better to send older widows or young married clergywomen (particularly those who are part of clergy couples) to the rural pastorate, than to send young single women. Not only is the young woman likely to find it difficult to escape close scrutiny in all aspects of her professional and private life, but her social life will be restricted because of a greater difficulty of finding close, supportive friends with whom she can be herself.

It is still possible for clergy to be lonely and isolated in their parishes, regardless of marital status, age, or location, depending in great part on how satisfied they are with their ministry in the particular parish. Using multiple regression analysis, we examined the relative effects of a number of factors associated with feelings of isolation among clergy. The analysis reveals that those factors discussed above are of some importance in either fostering or reducing isolation, particularly for clergywomen; however, of greatest importance is the degree of boredom and frustration with the limits of one's particular parish job. Young, single clergywomen who are bored and dissatisfied with the present parish are especially likely to feel lonely and isolated if they also anticipate that their judicatory executive will not help them to find another position.

Whether loneliness comes before, after, or develops in conjunction with frustration and dissatisfaction with present pastoral position cannot be clearly determined from our data. However, an additional regression analysis shows that loneliness, feelings of non-accomplishment in ministry, boredom and frustration with the limits of one's particular parish, and difficulty in getting one's ideas supported by the

church's governing board, are among the most important factors contributing to clergy dissatisfaction with their present ministerial position. There is no difference for men and women. Ease of maintaining a separation between their ministerial duties and private lives is not significantly related to satisfaction with the particular parish. It is only when an inability to make this separation results in, or is associated with, loneliness that clergy—especially women—are dissatisfied with their present parish. Any one or combination of these reasons that leads clergy to be dissatisfied also leads them to want to leave the present parish for another, or to leave the parish ministry altogether.<sup>11</sup>

### **Satisfaction with Ministry in the Particular Congregation and Commitment to the Parish Ministry**

Given the rather limited possibilities for mobility that clergy presently experience in several Protestant denominations, it is perhaps fortunate that a majority of clergy are generally satisfied with their present positions. Overall a few more men than women expressed relative satisfaction (67 percent of the men and 59 percent of the women). However, clergywomen were more likely than the men to say that last year they "usually" felt they were accomplishing things in their ministry (64 percent of the women to 53 percent of the men). At the same time, they were less likely than men to say it was "definitely" true that their present position offered them maximum opportunities for expression of their talents for ministry (40 percent of the women to 50 percent of the men). As we indicated in Chapter 5, clergywomen do not tend to be in as prestigious churches or positions as are clergymen of comparable experience. Therefore, their lower evaluation of the opportunities provided by their present parish is understandable. Further, 64 percent of the women and 70 percent of the men said they never really thought seriously in the last year about leaving the parish ministry for some other kind of work. There are no significant differences among denominations or between men and women pastors in each of the nine denominations in commitment to the parish ministry.

Younger clergy are more likely to consider seriously the possibility of leaving the parish ministry than older clergy. For example, among those clergy born before 1941, only 25 percent of the women and 28 percent of the men had, during the previous year, thought seriously about leaving the parish ministry; however, 41 percent of the women and 38 percent of the men born in 1941 and later had considered leaving. As indicated, clergy who seldom or never feel lonely and isolated, who believe they have maximum opportunity to use their talents for ministry in their present situation, and who find a sense of accomplishment in their ministry, are unlikely to have thought seriously in the

preceding year about leaving the parish ministry. For clergymen, but not for women, there is a significant relationship between believing that they will have a relatively easy time getting another parish and their commitment to the parish ministry.

These findings from this study generally parallel those obtained by Hoge, Dyble, and Polk in a 1978 study of clergy from seven Protestant denominations in the Chicago metropolitan area. In that study, too, it was seen that ministers were committed to their own pastorates, but even more strongly committed to the pastoral ministry as a career. Also, the authors concluded that, "Among younger ministers especially, career development is a concern, and when it is impaired, vocational commitment will weaken." They suggest that if denominational officials cannot improve the opportunities for changing to (better) positions, they should try to help young ministers enhance their present positions to make them more "challenging and absorbing."<sup>12</sup>

While our data suggest that clergywomen presently are less likely than men to have their commitment to parish ministry affected by their perceptions of ease of finding a better parish position, this by no means indicates they are not concerned with career development. It is probably more the case that clergywomen, despite their shorter experience as parish ministers, feel sufficiently personally competent, satisfied, and challenged by their success in being pastors and meeting difficulties well, and that their commitment to the parish ministry is strengthened in the process.

### Summary

Demands made on clergy time and energies are great, both in professional and personal relationships. Many pastors experience some role strain and stress in balancing these often competing demands. Women pastors seem to have slightly more difficulty than men in negotiating these role demands on their time and activity, partly because they have had less experience in the pastoral ministry than the vast majority of men, and no doubt also because the expectations of how women ministers should balance their professional and private lives are less clear than for men in pastoral ministry.

The sheer amount of difficulty clergywomen experience in juggling such role demands is not related to their marital status; however, it seems that single clergywomen, women married to nonordained spouses, and those who are part of clergy couples have different kinds of problems in accomplishing this balancing act effectively. Single women pastors may have more difficulty in convincing parishioners they have the right to a private life outside of their pastoral duties than married clergywomen do. Married clergywomen, who almost by defini-

tion are in dual-career families, have more difficulty in scheduling their home and parish responsibilities so that neither suffers unduly and they have some time left for themselves. This scheduling may be easier in many cases if the clergywoman has opted for marital homogeneity in terms of marrying a clergyman. Certainly, a major reason why clergywomen report less resentment from their spouses than do clergymen with reference to their ministerial work is because over half the married clergywomen (compared to a tiny proportion of clergymen) are part of a clergy couple. This is not to say that clergy couple marriages do not have problems of scheduling, competition, and other strains, particularly when there are young children and little money for household help. It seems a little easier in terms of time management if the clergy couple serve the same church. However, there is no evidence in this study that clergy couple marriages are less stable than marriages where only one spouse is ordained.

Clergywomen are still relatively unique to the congregational scene, and this token status in parish ministry makes their actions very visible. Constantly being observed in their pastoral role makes it more difficult for clergywomen to relax, be themselves, and perhaps find close friends. This type of experience is isolating, and, for many clergywomen, a feeling of loneliness ensues.

Clergymen also experience loneliness. For both women and men, feelings of isolation and loneliness were exacerbated if they were young, unmarried, and in rural pastorates. Young single women are clearly better able to avoid feelings of loneliness if they work in metropolitan churches. Loneliness and isolation were also accompanied or intensified by the feeling of being ineffective ministers in their parishes, or being bored and frustrated in attempts to do something worthwhile. If such feelings become too prolonged or intense, our analysis suggests that the man or woman is likely to think seriously of dropping out of parish ministry altogether.

Fortunately, the clear majority of both women and men pastors are satisfied with their parishes, feel competent and challenged in their ministerial work, and are highly committed to remaining in the parish ministry. Women's commitment to the parish ministry is less tied to their perceptions of ease of career mobility than are those of young clergymen. Instead, their commitment to the parish ministry seems more closely related to feeling challenged and effective in their parish work and not overly bored or isolated. Thus, in coordinating the conflicting demands made on them, women pastors seem to be managing their professional and private lives, perhaps with some difficulty, but nonetheless relatively well; and their commitment to their parishes and to parish ministry is strong and solid.