

Ministry Hurts

I just finished reading The Painful Side of Leadership: Moving Forward Even When It Hurts by Jeff Iorg. Pastors, you need to read this book!

Most of you know by experience that ministry hurts. It doesn't always hurt, but it does *often* hurt. Sometimes the hurts are self-inflicted. Sometimes they are inflicted by others. Sometimes they just happen. Whatever the source, the bottom line is that the call of God to ministry leadership is in part a call to endure significant hurts. If you don't have a way of understanding, dealing with, and moving beyond ministry hurts, then there is a good chance you won't be in ministry leadership much longer.

There is ample evidence that we ministry leaders are experiencing significant pain. Anne Jackson, in her recent book, Mad Church Disease, reports that 52% of ministry leaders experience physical symptoms of stress at least once a week. Nearly one in four of us experience such symptoms three or more times a week! In Pastors at Greater Risk, London and Wiseman reported that

- 66% of pastors reported their congregations experienced a conflict in the past two years.
- 75% reported a significant stress-related crisis at least once in their ministry.
- 40% reported a serious conflict with a parishioner at least once a month.
- 40% considered leaving their current pastorates in the last three months.
- 48% think being in ministry is hazardous to family well-being.

If you wonder how widespread the problem is, just Google "ministry burnout statistics" and see how much reading material you get!

Dr. Iorg (sounds like "George" without the first "g") has done us ministry leaders a service by writing this book. He is quite transparent about his own mistakes and hurts in ministry. I promise that you won't feel "preached to" by someone from an "ivory tower." The Painful Side of Leadership will help you as a ministry leader in the following ways.

- It will help you understand and "unpack" your painful experiences both biblically and practically.
- It will encourage your heart.
- It will help make you wiser for the next ministry hurt that comes along.
- It will help turn the areas of your greatest pain into areas of profound ministry.

Brothers and sisters, it's a privilege to be in ministry with you – even when it hurts!