

# **Houston church believes ministry begins at home, particularly among the church staff** **32204**

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## **Houston church believes ministry begins at home, particularly among the church staff**

**By George Henson**

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HOUSTON-When Lisa Archinal started seeking a ministry project for her Sunday school department, she realized she didn't have to look beyond the households of her church's staff.

Her father, Clois Smith, was a minister more than 45 years, 27 of those as an associate pastor at Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston.

When she sought a ministry project that would force her department of young married couples to look past their own needs, the wives of staff members seemed a natural choice.

"As the child of a staff wife, I saw that many times they give a lot of ministry, much of it behind the scenes, and often it goes unnoticed," she

said.

While she moved away for a time, she has returned to Tallowood, which has 11 staff wives.

As a part of the ministry, the Sunday school department gives a bit of special attention to each of the staff wives at Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, wedding anniversaries and birthdays.

The ministry also has grown to include an annual appreciation dinner, and for the first time this year, a girls' night out at a local hotel.

"A businessman in our church donated some 'hotel points' he had accumulated, and we were able to treat them to a dinner and a movie, and put them up in a downtown hotel for a kind of slumber party, where they could just enjoy time together," Archinal said.

"We're just trying to do whatever we can to show them how much we love and appreciate them."

Laura Rogers, one of the members of the department who plays a key role in the ministry, believes it is time well spent.

"I think this is an important ministry, because our ministers do so much, and their wives are always there to support them. Their wives are the ones that are left home alone many nights, and I think it is important to support them as well," she said.

Archinal devotes Thursdays each week primarily to prayer for the wives of the Tallowood staff.

"I call them every few weeks to get any confidential prayer requests they might have, and I don't share those with anyone," she said.

Melanie Brooks, wife of Pastor Duane Brooks, said the ministry not only is

greatly appreciated, but also fills a real need.

"It's just a wonderful experience. They remember our birthdays and anniversaries and send us simple things and a note. It's just really nice," she said.

"Also, they allow the staff wives to get together as a group. Our husbands get to do that at staff meetings and quarterly retreats, but because we are involved in different ministries in the church, we don't really have any other times that we are all together, and that makes it really special."

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