



Life Actually

By Kari Kampakis

The woman who loves her people well

I have a friend who hopes to start a ministry. She's equipped to do it and her life story is pointing that way, but currently she's in a season where she is waiting for God to reveal His plan and provide more direction.

She's a great mom to her kids and other people's kids, too. My children love her and look up to her. She's also a dear friend, the kind who will drop everything to help you.

Here's an example: A while back when I had an unexpected doctor's visit, I called to see if she'd pick up my child from MDO. I spoke quickly because my cell phone was dying. She said she'd pick up Camille and bring me a phone charger to the doctor's office after she finished lunch with a friend.

I never thought to ask for that favor, and the fact that she did speaks volumes about her nature.

Recently, she and I talked about the ministry she hopes to start. I could tell she's a little restless in this period of waiting, and I can relate to that. As I left I told her, "What you're doing right now, being really available for your family and friends, is just as important as what you hope to be doing two years from now. I want you to remember that."

She smiled shyly and shook her head, as if her current contributions aren't that big a deal. But they are, and the truth is, what she's doing now is far more important than what she hopes to be doing in two years.

Because what she's doing now is loving her people well. She's avoiding the mistake that too many of us make, the mistake of spreading ourselves too thin and not leaving room in our calendars for the people we love most.

It's interesting now that I'm in ministry because I have a fresh perspective of what this world needs. I can look back with new eyes on the days when I was in my friends' shoes, waiting for more clarity from God and fighting the restlessness to do more than raise a family and be a good wife and friend.

I never planned to go into ministry, but somehow it happened when my passion for writing collided with my passion for God and I wrote a book that led to speaking engagements and other events. It's been an awesome journey, and I'm grateful for every opportunity to connect with moms and daughters.

At the same time, I've grown more aware of how valuable my work was before my ministry ever started. Back when I was "just" a stay-at-home mom and all I could do was love my people well because caring for little ones left little time for outside interests, I gave myself too little credit.

While I loved staying home with my girls and was grateful to have the option, I often felt like I should do more. I couldn't fully recognize how I was already fulfilling my greatest call. I was doing work far more important than what I hoped to do in the next season of motherhood.

Mother Teresa once said, "What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family." This message deserves more attention, because in our world, we're often pushed to do

more and think bigger. We're encouraged to reach the masses and spread goodness far and wide.

And while I'm certainly on board with this mission, I'd like to point out how we can get so caught up in having a wide influence that we fail to have a deep influence. We can spend so much time growing an audience around the world that we miss the best opportunity of all with the small audience inside and around our home.

Because as much as the world needs us, our families and loved ones need us more. They always have and always will. What ministry has taught me is the importance of striking a balance. My work life should complement my personal life, not take away from it. My soul should be fed, not depleted.

What this world needs has become clear to me through the emails I receive, feedback I hear and people I meet. All around us, people are really struggling with something. They're wanting advice and insight on how to find it. When I'm asked to speak, it's the most commonly requested topic. It's particularly important to females because deep in our heart, we hunger for this We want it on a level that's true, genuine, and real.

What is it? Friendship. Good, solid and loyal relationships. In an age where we're highly connected online, people are lonely in real life. They're surrounded by faces, yet they still feel invisible. In many ways, friendship is becoming a lost art. People who make others feel seen, loved and valued are a rarity.

So before we act globally, maybe we should love better locally. Maybe we should remember the value in quiet acts of service — like picking up our friend's child from MDO, or taking a cell phone charger to her doctor's visit — that don't get posted on social media or draw fanfare but that express love to someone in a deep, meaningful way.

If you're in a season of life where all you can do is love your people well, or if that's your primary life goal, please know that you are a gem. Don't think you're letting God down as you wait for more important work because your current work is more important than any purpose you may discover later. What our world needs most are more people who understand real love, real connection and real community.

A woman who loves her people well is loved well in return. Her relationships stand the test of time. Those who know her adore her, and those who don't are missing out because what a joy it is to be loved by an unsung hero who treasures her relationships and makes those around her feel seen, loved and valued.

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