CTA Presents: Focus on Leadership

Marriage and the Stress of Ministry

**Guests:** Matthew and Kristin Schultz. Matthew is a pastor and ministry consultant. He has successfully shepherded multiple churches through times of transition and has helped not-for-profit agencies and churches of all sizes reimagine their ministries. Matthew currently pastors a congregation in New York state. Kristin works in health-care communications, volunteers on various committees at church, and leads Bible studies.

**Introduction:** Explore tools to recognize and address the stresses of ministry and how they affect marriage.

**Summary:**

* Stresses of ministry—managing expectations
  + Recognize the expectations for yourself and your families
  + Have frank conversations with church leaders regarding expectations for you and your family. Are there “unwritten rules”?
  + Recognize stress and follow up on that—be aware of your own feelings and discuss them with your spouse.
  + Be intentional about talking with one another—about both big and small things.
  + Set “ground rules” to help manage expectations.
  + “I’m missing you!”
* Stresses of ministry—managing time
  + Availability for church members to gather for ministry is often outside of traditional working hours.
  + Be strategic about using time wisely.
  + Set aside time as a couple to do nonobligatory things.
  + Communicate with one another regarding upcoming obligations so both have input.
  + Give yourself—or your spouse!—permission to say no.
* COVID-19 has added stressors to already stressful situations:
  + Changes in routine and new obligations, everyone in family suddenly in the same space
  + Stress of working from home: “Living at the office”
    - Commit to properly transition
    - Resist the temptation to prolong the workday
  + Managing concern for other family members
  + Coping with how long it’s been and how long this could go on
  + Coping with new expectations for church and what that means for ministry going forward
* Be intentional about . . .
  + Communicating with one another
  + Bringing the stressors to God in prayer—lay it at the feet of Jesus!
* Look for the silver linings of the COVID-19 work situations
  + What have you learned about each other?
  + Connect briefly—in ways you haven’t before—because you can!

**Resources:**

* [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](https://www.franklincovey.com/the-7-habits.html) by Stephen Covey
* [The 5 Love Languages](https://www.5lovelanguages.com/) by Gary Chapman