The JOY of Friendship

When Michelle Keller's husband, Justin Keller, senior pastor at **Covesville Baptist Church**, joined the SBC of Virginia, Michelle was eager to meet other ministry wives.

Her husband suggested Michelle attend the Ministry Wives retreat at Camp Eagle in the Roanoke Valley on October 18-19, 2024. Over 60 ministry wives from across the state gathered for fellowship, encouragement, and teaching from Jani Ortland, a pastor's wife, speaker, and author.

At first, Michelle was nervous because she didn't know anyone attending the retreat. As the retreat date approached, she made it a matter of prayer, asking the Lord to lead her to a friend. In the welcoming environment filled with opportunities for social interaction, activities, meals, encouragement, teaching, and prayer, Michelle found an answer to her prayer. She met Rachel Bramblet, the ministry wife of senior pastor Philip Bramblet from **Furnace Creek Baptist Church**.

"I was specifically praying to the Lord that I would find a friend. So there, at the retreat, I met Rachel, and we clicked immediately. We went to the bonfire, sang, prayed for one another, and roasted marshmallows. It was such a delight to my soul!" Michelle recalled.

To their joy, this new friendship wasn't just for the weekend. "Rachel and I have continued to encourage each other and stay in touch. We couldn't wait to see each other again at SBCV's Annual Homecoming. I know Rachel and I are going to be friends for a long time. I'm so thankful to have another lady who understands what it's like to be married to a pastor," Michelle shared.

They reunited at Annual Homecoming, where they introduced their husbands, Justin and Philip. The moment was special for both the women and their husbands, as the pastors had heard so much about their friendship before meeting. They could see the joy this newfound friendship brought their wives.

Michelle and Rachel are both looking forward to more opportunities to gather with other ministry wives. Encouraged by the retreat, Michelle is excited to participate in future events that foster connections and growth.

Join the growing movement to equip ministry wives with encouragement, resources, prayer, and a strong community of support. Remember, you are not alone! ■

RESOURCE:

If you are not yet part of the Ministry Wives community, and would like to connect with your regional Ministry Wives representative, contact:

women@sbcv.org