

Couples That Pray Together

by Bill Yaccino

Surveys show that while the divorce rate for Christian couples is not particularly less than for those outside the church, Christian couples who pray together have a divorce rate of less than 1%. It is obvious that there is a strong connection between couples who pray together and relationships that are enriched and strengthened.

Just as our individual lives benefit from nurturing a vital relationship with God through prayer, so it is also with our married lives. These surveys show that building a foundation of prayer within a marriage strengthens it and allows God to work together with the couple. In the book of Ecclesiastes we read, "*A cord of three strands is not easily broken*" (Ecc 4:12), and adding God into a marriage strengthens it and protects it.



There are many benefits to praying together...

- Praying together demonstrates dependence on God rather than trying to solve issues alone.
- Praying together builds trust between partners, allowing issues and joy to be shared openly.
- Praying together allows a couple to be sensitive to God's leading and paves the way for protection, healing and forgiveness where necessary.

For these and many other reasons, prayer is an essential part of a healthy marriage. If you are interested in learning to pray with your spouse, the following suggestions may be helpful for you:

Pointers for Prayer :

Find the right time and place to pray together. For some, that may be last thing at night, but if you have different sleep patterns, you may need to find a different time. Once you've found the best time, then make an appointment with each other in your diaries.

Talk about your prayer needs. You may want to pray about issues affecting one of you, about issues facing your children or other loved ones, future direction, etc. However, don't forget to PRAY and not only talk! Prayer time can quickly become overtaken.

You will need to become comfortable with one another's differing prayer styles. Remember, no one style is "better" than another. Also practice listening prayer, being comfortable with silences during your prayer time that enable you to listen to what God may want to say to you.

You may find a structured pattern for prayer helpful: either the informal structure of the ACTS pattern, or a more structured pattern such as the one suggested here. But do allow yourselves the flexibility to pray openly and freely about the issues of the day.

Do persevere - this may be an aspect of marriage that will take a while for you to feel comfortable with. But as you persevere, you are strengthened and blessed by the God who brought you together and who cares for you.

Blessings and happy praying!