

Couples: Share a simple life of prayer

Prayer is both the gift of grace and a response to God's invitation to covenant relationship as a married couple. Prayer allows husbands and wives to walk humbly before God in the obedience of faith — it is listening to the voice of God and allowing that voice to change their lives and shape their marriages. Prayer draws them deeply into God's heart so that every day they recommit themselves to a personal relationship of love and intimacy with Him.

In response to their prayers, Jesus tells them that the Father is ready to give His Holy Spirit to spouses who genuinely hunger and thirst for God's love as "one flesh." "God is love, and he who lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him" (1 John 4:16).

Many couples have a problem with prayer because they believe that going to church together on Sunday, praying before meals, or maintaining a personal prayer life is enough. Many couples do not know how to pray together, or the experience of praying together is uncomfortable or awkward. How do spouses overcome this, especially if they have



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different prayer styles?

The key is to keep it simple. In the morning, before getting out of bed, the husband can hold his wife close to him and say, "Lord, I thank you for the gift of my wife. I thank you for our years together. I thank you for our beautiful children and for the life we have built together. Lord, please help me to be the husband and father that I need to be for them today. Amen."

The wife, in turn, can say something like, "Lord, thank you for my husband, my children and our marriage. Fill my heart with your love so that I may be patient and loving with my family today as a true witness and example of your love for us. Amen."

How simple is that? If spouses are serious about keeping God at the center of their married lives, they cannot make excuses for not praying together every

day. In a week that has 168 hours, husbands and wives can and must spend at least a few minutes together in daily prayer. Spouses make time for those things in their lives that are important to them, and there is nothing more important in marriage than putting Christ first.

Some couples will find that praying together comes easily and naturally; others will have to work at it. They should find a time and a place that is comfortable for both of them, either in the morning before the workday starts or in the evening before bed. Spend a few moments in silence. Then pray. They should say what is in their hearts.

Each spouse can share one of their favorite prayers. They can read a few lines of Scripture and meditate on what those verses mean to them. Husbands and wives should not be afraid to make themselves vulnerable with each other and before God in prayer.

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