

Improving your Marriage



1. Ask your spouse to put in order of importance from one to five what makes them feel loved – words, touches, time spent with them, things done for them, gifts. Give them **every** day whichever one is top of their list. (Gifts can be small.)
2. Every day look into their eyes and tell them you love them.
3. Express your appreciation of your spouse and what they do regularly. Do not take each other for granted. Express thanks - even for routine things like cooking every meal, washing-up, doing laundry, and cleaning.
4. Pray together. Sadly some Christian marriages do fail, but very few who pray together ever separate. Meal times are a good time for prayer. Those who pray together stay together.
5. If you cause hurt, even unintentionally, apologise, without making excuses. When you receive an apology, respond with real forgiveness, and never even mention the matter again.
6. If you are prone to short temper or anger, ask for prayer and help from a church leader, and persist until the problem is overcome. Otherwise it will cause great unhappiness for both of you in the years to come.
7. When you disagree, listen carefully. Try to see the problem from your spouse's point of view. Give ways on non-essentials. Do not accuse. Ask for "Time out" before things get heated. Pray about the problem. Agree on a good time to discuss it further next day or later. Brainstorm for possible solutions. Agree an order in which to try them out.
8. Avoid working long hours regularly. Make sure you have good time for each other, including for making love, rather than overworking for a better home or car. Make time for things you enjoy doing as a couple. Plan surprises too.
9. Share responsibilities for children, parents and any others in the family. Spend time with the children, even if you work full-time. Discipline should be calm, fair, firm and consistent, and agreed between parents.
10. Just as a car needs servicing, give your marriage a service from time to time. Read a book on marriage together, and discuss it. Even better, go on a marriage course or weekend. Ask a church to organise one.

Summing it up in twenty-one words: **The key to happiness in marriage is to help your spouse enjoy being married to you, and to do so continually.**

Edward Pratt