

Make Conversation a Priority

Opening Prayer

PRAY TOGETHER:

Father, you have blessed our lives with the sacrament of marriage.

We call to you today to shower us with Your love
so that we may be open to each other.

Continue to increase our love throughout the joys and sorrows of everyday life,
and help us to grow in holiness all of our days.

Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You and with the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTION

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil
and the lips from speaking deceit.”

1 Peter 3:10

Like golden apples in silver settings
are words spoken at the proper time.

Proverbs 25:11

He who answers before he hears —
his is the folly and the shame.

Proverbs 8:13

Listen, for I will speak of excellent things,
and from the opening of my lips will come right things.

Proverbs 8:6

- What is the relationship between a happy life and good communication?
- Why is listening important to communication?

SOCIAL INQUIRY

Couples who know how to listen to each other, to share feeling appropriately, and to renegotiate their expectations of each other not only survive the troubling times but grow closer together. Those who do not know how to communicate make things worse with their tongues; they become more hurt and distant from each other.

Philip St. Romain and Lisa Belleci-St. Romain
Living Together; Loving Together: A Spiritual Guide to Marriage

Authentic, honest talking and listening allow the human mask to be removed, so that the inner person is revealed. You come to know your partner and yourself through the intimacy of healthy talking and listening. This is where you come to know the experience of being soul mates, where you realize the profound feeling of being fully known and accepted by another human being and this closeness is the essence of marriage.

William Rabior and Susan Rabior
Nine Ways to Nurture Your Marriage

What would it be like if we stop multitasking our relationships? How much more connected might we feel if we give our partners our full attention? It might be scary- maybe we haven't connected in a long time and we're unsure what it would be like. But maybe it would be glorious. We can find peace and stability in each other again, amidst the harried business of work and household. The benefits of full attention are great: increased intimacy and attachment, deeper connection and understanding, and greater capacity for empathy. Giving full attention also facilitates active listening skills, which improves communication.

Lindsay Hoskins, Couple & Family Therapist,
Multitasking Our Relationships

OBSERVE

Ask two other couples and yourselves the following questions and note responses in your notebook:

1. What is good communication?

2. How much time do you spend with your partner in good communication? Daily? Weekly? (Keep a record of your own husband-wife communication for one week.)
3. What are the barriers to communication in marriage?
4. How has technology (texting, e-mail, cell phones) changed the way you communicate?

JUDGE

1. Why is it necessary to communicate as husband and wife on a deeper level?
2. What are some specific ways that a husband and wife can make their communication more meaningful?
3. What effect does good husband-wife communication have on the rest of the family?
4. What communication habits interfere with a strong marriage?

ACT

NOW:

Each couple should find a quiet place away from the group. Take two minutes and reflect on the statement: "This week I have been happiest when ..."

One partner takes three minutes to communicate to the other partner his/her feelings on the statement. The listening partner remains silent. At the end the listener relates what he/she heard. Reverse the process.

AT HOME:

- a. Communicate on any of the following:
 - My favorite time with you is ...
 - Someday I would like to ...
 - Sometimes I need to be alone because ...
 - I feel loved by you when ...

- b. Dedicate yourself to removing one barrier to communication with your partner.
- c. Write and mail a love letter to your partner.
- d. Read one of the following:

William Rabior and Susan Rabior, *Nine Ways to Nurture Your Marriage*, Ligouri, 2000.

Emerson Eggerich, *Cracking the Communication Code: The Secret to Speaking Your Mate's Language*, (Focus on the Family Book) Thomas Nelson, 2006.

Gary Chapman, *The Five Love Languages: the Secret to Love that Lasts*, Moody Publishing, 2010.

Gary Chapman, *Now You're Speaking My Language: Honest Communication and Deeper Intimacy for a Stronger Marriage*, B&H Publishing Group, 2007.

Look Ahead to the Next Meeting

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us to have open and honest communication about everything, with our spouse.

Let us clearly say what we mean and help us to choose the right words to help our spouse understand us. Help us to listen to each other, both with our ears as well as our hearts.

We pray that when our communication fails, you will help us to restore it to what it should be. Teach us, Lord, to honor each other by taking time each day, to honestly listen and respond. We ask this in your name, Lord.

Amen.

Bibliography

Bellici-St. Romain, Lisa & St. Romain, Philip. *Living Together, Loving Together: A Spiritual Guide To Marriage*, 1995, 2011. Ligouri Publications, Luli.com.

Rabior, Susan & William. *Nine Ways to Nurture Your Marriage*, 2000. Ligouri Publications, Ligouri, MO.

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