

## Couples Praying Together

Many Christian couples do not pray together. They often don't realize the power and grace of simply sitting down together, regularly, holding hands, and praying from their hearts about the issues of life. They will pray by themselves, they will occasionally say traditional prayers. Facing each other, praying from their hearts, makes them feel uncomfortable. So they make excuses. Research indicates that couples who pray together have a greater chance of surviving and thriving in their marriages.

**Shelly and Joe**, the couple in the silhouette image, made a commitment in the beginning of their marriage to pray together every morning. They recognize the absolutely necessity of coming before God as a couple--united before God as a team. When Joe prays from his heart, then Shelly knows what really concerns him and she knows better how to pray for him. And Joe knows better how to pray for Shelly when she expresses her heart felt concerns to him. As they humble themselves, and are honest with each other before God, something deep and powerful happens. God's mercy is poured out. They know that if pride holds them back, prayer becomes shallow and ineffective. They have learned that trust is essential to come into a true level of honesty with one another. As Joe and Shelly hear each other express their needs openly, they are drawn closer to God and to each other. As trust grows, intimacy grows.

Developing the habit of praying together on a regular basis has helped them to be ready when unexpected things happen. When trouble comes they immediately come together to pray. It is automatic. (Lord this didn't come as a surprise to you. We thank you for showing us what to do.)

They listen, and the Lord shows them the next step. Together, united in prayer before God, they know they can face anything.

### How do you start?

Here's the basic format of Joe and Shelly's morning prayer time. They get up thirty minutes early to spend time together. First they have coffee and just chat. Then they read from a devotional that includes daily readings for the Church, with a reflection related to the readings. Then they pray together. They start with the Our Father, then Joe prays for family members and friends by name and then adds current heart-issues. Then Shelly prays for whatever is on her heart. They keep it personal. They keep it short, getting to the point, taking turns back and forth as a team, until it feels complete. Because the Holy Spirit is guiding the prayer, they will know when they are finished. God helps them to remain humble, without judgment, sensitive to each other. They finish with an expression of gratitude and love for each other, and for the marriage God has given to them.

### From Others

**Kathy:** My husband and I go to daily Mass together, which is wonderful, but I miss "talking" to God together ad lib. Maybe I am expecting too much. Or am I being unrealistic?

**Noel and Ed:** My husband Ed, now deceased, prayed with me at bedtime. He would start by reading the Bible or a book about the Bible like *The Bible for Dummies*. Then we would take turns praying. Ed would go through his day and then he would pray for family and friends. Then I would pray. Nothing long, but it drew us closer to each other and to the Lord.

**Victor and Vivian:** My husband and I pray together first thing in the morning as we wake up. He usually asks me to lead and he joins in the prayers. Before I finish, I would ask him if there is anything he would like to add and we close from there. We use the format of the *Miracle Hour*. It is a very powerful prayer and it helps us become stronger together in the Lord.

**Carl and Beverly:** As secular Franciscans, we pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* daily. This is a wonderful prayer for a couple to pray together. It can be done in the morning or evening or during the day. We pray it together every evening before going to bed. We find it very beneficial, especially the portion that deals with intercessions. That gives us an opportunity to pray together for our children, grandchildren, and friends, as well as for others who have asked for prayers.

**Chris:** Because my wife and I have different prayer styles, it was difficult in the beginning to pray together. I liked vocal prayer while she liked to sit quietly and meditate. I loved the rosary while she still finds praying a complete one difficult. She does like the Hail Mary however and has taught our two year old how to pray it! It takes time to learn how to pray together and we are still learning.

**Mary and Dom:** I pray in the evening with my husband in bed, which is really wonderful. His prayer is simple, precise and to the point, whereas mine lingers and is stretched out, fluid thoughts that enter my mind and flow out of my mouth. I know God created us differently, so it's no wonder that we pray differently too.

**Lynne:** Bob and I heard a counselor on TV saying that the best way to pray together as a couple is to hold hands at night in bed before

falling asleep. Don't say a word and allow the Holy Spirit to work through the both of you. We have been doing this for about six months now and since my husband is a man of few words in prayer, it has been a marvelous experience. I am a woman of many words and want to pray in tongues, say many memorized prayers and storm heaven with intercessions. For me this is a great discipline just to let go and let God do His job!

**Peter and Bernadette:** We have been married for 33 years. My husband and I met at a prayer group in our college years. Praying together has been very natural for us over the years, while dating and throughout our married life. In addition to spontaneous prayers, we pray rosary novenas; first for discernment in our engagement; when we were pregnant with each of our four children; for all major decisions in marriage, and in our children's discernment for milestones in their lives. We also use the *Magnificat* book to enhance our prayer lives. There are so many wonderful things that happen when couples pray together. Our hearts stay knit together, we see soft hearts, we learn to know and appreciate each other better and we desire to help the other grow and change. It helps us to "be sweet" to one another as we see each other's struggles in this walk of life. We realize we are to make each other better for God. Another thing that we notice is that there is an "aroma of prayer" in our home. People who enter always comment on the peace and welcoming spirit in our home. I know it is the prayer!

**Theresa:** My grandparents were a wonderful example of praying together and loving the Lord together. They came as a couple before him, never missing a day. The Lord showers blessings on couples who pray together.

*"...grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..." (2Pe3:18) NEB*

### **Starter prayer for couples loving the Lord together**

Heavenly Father, you know each of us inside and out. You know our needs and our natures. You tell us in Psalm 139 that you understand our thoughts, and with all our ways you are familiar. We ask you to guide us in the form of prayer that works for us as a couple. Thank you for helping us on this journey of drawing closer to you and to each other as we make a commitment to pray together in the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

### **Linda's prayer for you**

Heavenly Father, I lift your precious couples up to you and ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them now with the mighty force of your unending love. Help them to make praying together such an integral part of their lives that whatever comes, they can handle it. Father, let gratitude and trust in you fill every breath they take, as they journey forward together in love and commitment. Thank you Lord. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

*"With deep roots and firm foundations, may you be strong to grasp, with all God's people, what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ..." (Eph 3:18) NEB*

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## **Christian Couples Praying Together**

...the power of united prayer

*Mt 18:19-20 "...if two of you agree on earth about any request you have to make, that request will be granted by my heavenly Father. For where two or three have met together in my name, I am there among them."(NEB)*



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