



SEC Family

Connecting Lives for Eternal Living

A Publication of the South England Conference Family Ministry Department

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Couple Prayer: The Great Untapped Resource

Pr Les Ackie

The phrase, “The family that prays together, stays together” is a well-known adage, but one that demands more attention than it gets. There is often an assumption that Christian couples pray with and for each other on a regular basis, but according to research and anecdotal evidence, this is a false assumption. Some estimates place the numbers as low as between 3-10% of Christian couples who engage in daily intimate prayer with one another.

Marriage was designed by God as a spiritual institution in which two individuals are bound together by their faith in Him. Solomon asserts, “. . . a threefold cord is not quickly broken,” (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Couple prayer is like the glue, which binds a marriage together as we are bound together by God.

Marriage statistics make disturbing reading with the divorce rate in the UK around 40 per cent. That statistic is compounded by research conducted by George Barna, which indicates that Christian couples are just as likely to divorce as non-Christian couples (www.barna.org). However, significant evidence is demonstrating that married couples who pray, study scripture, attend church, and otherwise jointly participate in spiritual activities enjoy significantly higher levels of marital happiness and satisfaction. A national research study in the United States (1980) cited in Retrouville’s International Handbook 2005 established that married couples who attend church together weekly and read the Bible or pray together daily have a divorce rate of approximately 1 in every 1,105 marriages.

In his book *Faithful Attraction*, researcher Andrew Greeley reports that of all the factors known to contribute significantly to marital happiness, praying together as a couple is “the most powerful correlate of marital happiness that we have yet discovered” (p.292).

Couples who pray tend to experience better mental health; greater ability and willingness to forgive each other; show greater gratitude toward their spouse; more willingness to sacrifice for the relationship; greater sexual intimacy, and a higher level of unity and trust with their spouse.

Increasing evidence of the value of couple prayer begs the question,



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By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35

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“Why don’t Christian couples pray together?” The main reasons and excuses include feelings of awkwardness or intimidation, lack of time, failure to prioritize and lack of leadership in the home. However, I suspect that the primary reason has to do with the nature of prayer itself. In her book *Steps to Christ*, Ellen White describes prayer as the, “opening of the heart to God as to a friend” (p. 93). In other words, prayer is a very intimate experience.



Sincere individual prayer involves saying things to the Lord that we would never say out loud to others in casual conversation. But when we learn to pray together as a couple, our spouse will hear us say those intimate things that previously only God heard. That requires a willingness on our part to be open and transparent with each other. Sadly, many couples shrink from this kind of self-revelation because their general relationship does not constitute a “safe place” to lay their hearts bare.

God states in Genesis 2:24, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This indicates a relationship that goes beyond simply the physical. The “one flesh” unity God requires of us involves physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual openness.

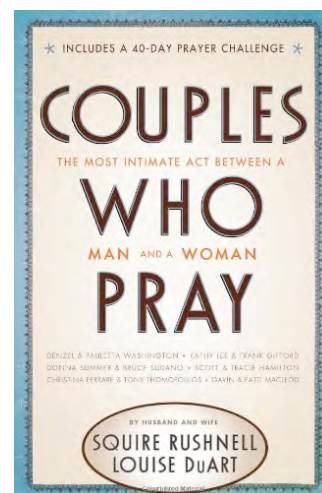
In his book, *The Spiritually Intimate Marriage*, Don Harvey defines spiritual intimacy as, “Being able to share your spiritual self, find this reciprocated, and have a sense of union with your mate” (p. 101). In Romans 12:15, Paul urges us to, “¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.” There is no place where this willingness to enter into each other’s experience is more important than the marital relationship. Spiritual intimacy is crucial in order for Christian couples to experience all the blessings God intends, yet too often spiritual beliefs are practiced individually and not integrated into the couple relationship.

So where do a couple begin? In their book *Couples Who Pray*, Rushnell & Duart present couples with a practical guide and a 40-day prayer challenge. They assert that, “Those who bare themselves before God in prayer for a minimum of five minutes a day for forty days have achieved extraordinary results” (back cover).

It has been said that, “Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly until we learn to do it well.” Couple prayer does not need to be perfect in order to be affective. Jesus assures us that, “. . . where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20). So just do it!

Ten Tips for Couple Prayer

1. More prayer, more power
2. Make time to pray
3. Have an attitude of gratitude and vulnerability
4. Confess and request forgiveness
5. Pray out loud with your spouse
6. Keep it short
7. Use everyday language
8. Pray for your marriage
9. Pray for others and for self
10. Expect God to answer your prayers



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Trick or Treat? Halloween and Seventh-day Adventists

Gerhard Phandl, Ph.D. Associate Director, Biblical Research Institute

Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not taken an official position specifically against Halloween, the churches' opposition to the occult and the demonic precludes any support for this type of festival. Halloween and its customs have no roots in Scripture or in the Christian Church. They are firmly rooted in the occult, and in pagan practices. These connections, however, are today forgotten or made light of. Nevertheless, any practice derived from the occult is incompatible with the teachings of Scripture (Lev. 20:6).

Since many people no longer believe in the existence of a personal devil and his demons, they feel there is no harm in making fun of these "religious relics of the past." The children are taught that there are no such beings as witches and evil spirits and that it is fun to dress up as ghosts or goblins. The modern denial of the existence of Satan and demonic forces is clearly contrary to Scripture. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible affirms the existence of Satan and demonic spirit beings (Gen. 3:1; Job 1:6; Matt. 8:31; Rev. 12:9).

In the education of children it is important that we do not plant false ideas in their minds. The Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov 22:6). To teach them that there is no harm in imitating evil spirits is contrary to God's will.

God in the Old Testament warned Israel not to dabble in the occult. "There shall not be found among you ... one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls upon the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord" (Deut. 18:10-12). Since the occult is today more active than ever, this counsel is still valid today.

Participation in Halloween customs may seem innocent fun for children and adults, but it is one more way Satan can use to deceive people into thinking there is no harm in playing a little bit with the world of spirits and demons.

While Ellen White never mentions Halloween, she has many warnings against dabbling in spiritualism:

Spiritualists make the path to hell most attractive. Spirits of darkness are clothed by these deceptive teachers in pure robes of heaven, and they have power to deceive those not fortified with Bible truth (Great Controversy, p 86).

There are many who shrink with horror from the thought of consulting spirit mediums, but who are attracted by more pleasing forms of spiritism (Evangelism, p 606).

Conclusion

Seventh-day Adventists recognize that spiritualism has many faces. Some of them may seem harmless and even fun. Nevertheless, they lead children and adults away from God's truth, and can become stepping stones to further entanglement with the occult. Therefore, we do not recommend participation in the celebrations and festivities in connection with Halloween.

To read the full article go to <http://www.gcchildmin.org/pdf/halloween.PDF>

Leaving Children Home Alone

There is no legal age limit for leaving a child on their own, but it is an offence to leave a child alone if it places them at risk. Parents can be prosecuted if they leave a child unsupervised 'in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health' (Children and Young Person's Act 1998).

How Mature Is The Child?

The most important factor to consider is how mature the child is. For example, it may be okay to leave a mature 12 year old alone, but not a 13 year old who is not mature.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) advises that:

- children under the age of about 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time
- children under the age of 16 should not be left alone overnight
- babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone



Things To Remember

If you do leave your child home alone, remember to do the following:

- leave a contact phone number and make sure you can answer it right away
- leave a separate contact list of people you trust, in case they can't get hold of you
- talk to your child before you leave about how to stay safe, and tell them not to answer the door to strangers
- make sure dangerous objects like matches and knives are out of reach, as well as medicines and dangerous chemicals
- leave clear instructions on what to do in case of an emergency (like a fire)
- tell them what time you will be back, and don't be late
- set some basic rules about what they can and can't do while you are out
- teach them basic first aid

Finally, it is important to make sure that your child is happy to be left alone. If they aren't confident about being left alone then find someone to look after them.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/yourchildshealthandsafety/yourchildssafetyinthehome/dg_070594


REAL
Family Talk
with Willie & Elaine Oliver

This new, weekly half-hour program helps people enrich their family life through biblical insights for better relationships



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SEC FAMILY


Residential Family Weekend
 26th – 28th October 2012

SNAP




SUPPORT NETWORK FOR ADVENTIST PARENTS

Venue: Hill House Christian Retreat Centre, Otterhampton, nr Bridgewater, TA52PT



- Short presentations on topics relevant to Christian family life
- Group discussion time
- Family activity time
- Relaxing rural surroundings
- Self-catering arrangement, with 2 simple, warm meals provided


The Presenters:

	Pr Wayne Erasmus		Pr Jacques Venter		Mike & Vicky Beamish
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Cost: Adults and children age 12+ - £25 each
 Children age 6-11 - £18 each
 Children age 4-5 - £12 each
 Children age 0-3 - FREE

E-mail: snap.sda@tesco.net or Tel 01242 890566

Jesus in the Family




KIDS IN DISCIPLESHIP
Designed for Families Focussed on Children



Equipping parents, mentors and churches to empower their children to become disciples who joyfully trust, follow and share Jesus

“And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.”
 Joel 2:28


For more information in the UK and Eire contact:
 K.I.D. Children's Ministry Department
 British Union Conference, Stanborough Park, Watford, WD25 9JZ
 Tel: 01923 872251
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/department/childrensministries.php

NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS

NRPFF

S E M I N A R

Be.Still.Ministries presents No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPFF) Families and Current Changes in Immigration Law

This seminar is for anyone who is or knows someone subject to immigration control. This seminar will provide clear and accurate information as well as raising awareness of NRPFF. The seminar seeks to enable and empower individuals, community and churches to play their part.



The Seminars will focus on:

- * Immigration Law and current changes
- * Home Office Applications and prices
- * UKBA protocols re deportation
- * Benefits/ Housing
- * Social Services
- * The Church
- * Health Services
- * Immigration solicitors (what you should know)
- * Employment/Volunteering and Education
- * The Needs of NRPFF Families

If you would like this FREE seminar to be held at your Church, Community Centre or Children's Centre, please do not hesitate to contact:
SARAH BASHORUN (DipSW/HE, BSc)
 on 07507994541 or email be.still.ministries@gmail.com

Please be advised that seminars will last approximately 2 hours. For other available workshops and seminars please enquire via email.


A supporting ministry sponsored by the SEC Family Ministry Department

SEX AND THE SANCTUARY

Assisting young people to safely navigate the pitfalls of sexual temptation and fall in love with Jesus

- Sexual Purity Weekend Retreats
- Youth Programmes
- Seminars & Workshops

Ages 13-19



Contact: Isha Prince or Khaya Chiweshe
protectingthepassion@gmail.com

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Useful Links

AdventSource -
www.adventsource.org/

Adventist Parenting -
www.adventistparenting.org/

Adventist Special Needs
Association - [http://
www.asna.info/](http://www.asna.info/)

BUC Family Ministry-
www.adventistinfo.org.uk/

The Ellen G. White Estate -
<http://www.whiteestate.org/>

GC Family Ministry - [http://
family.adventist.org/](http://family.adventist.org/)

Hope Channel - [http://
www.hopetv.org/](http://www.hopetv.org/)

Kids in Discipleship -
www.kidsindiscipleship.org/

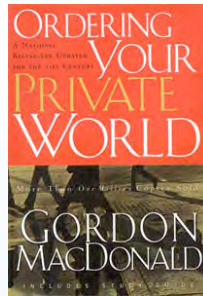
North American Division Family
Ministry - family.nadadventist.org

SEC News -
www.secadventist.com/secnews/

Share Him - [http://
sharehim.org/php/index.php](http://sharehim.org/php/index.php)

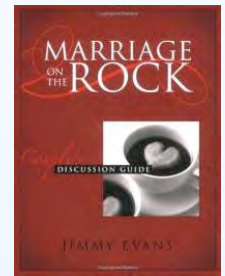
South Pacific Division Family
Ministry - [http://
adventist.org.au/family-](http://adventist.org.au/family-)

Recommended Reading



Gordon MacDonald's classic book *Ordering Your Private World* invites readers to bring order to their personal life by inviting God's control over every segment of their lives. MacDonald's premise is that if the private world of a person is in order, it will be because they are convinced that the inner world of the spiritual must govern the outer world of activity. An excellent resource for the development of self-awareness and personal spirituality.

In *Marriage on the Rock*, Jimmy Evans clearly details God's principles that will strengthen good marriages and turn disillusioned, divorce-bound marriages into satisfying relationships. In an age of disposable marriages and information overload, couples can only turn to one place for real answers that will make their relationship work—to God.



Smart Love: A Field Guide for Single Adults. Whatever the state of your love life (or lack of one), you can stop drifting in and out of relationships and start having more control. Nancy Van Pelt, acknowledges the particular issues with which single adults often struggle and gives practical advice on how to take relationships slowly and prudently to prevent common dating and relationship disasters.

Cornerstone Counselling Service

0207 723 8050
or ccs@secadventist.org.uk


Contact us to speak with a counsellor about issues that trouble you, or to make an appointment.




SINGLESEVENTHDAYADVENTISTS.COM
Info@singleseventhdayadventists.com

The brand new FREE A.S.I member official supporting ministry exclusively for baptised single Seventh-day Adventists. Join single Adventists from around the globe in fellowship and perhaps find the person made just for you.

Genesis 2:18

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[Twitter.com/singlesdas](https://twitter.com/singlesdas) 



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