

COURTSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

Courtship begins after an agreement has been reached between the brother and the sister that God is leading them into marriage with each other. It is a time of getting better acquainted and ascertaining whether or not they are prepared for marriage.

Courtship is that period during which an unmarried couple becomes personally and intimately acquainted with each other. It is a period of special friendship. It is the period during which final decisions are made for or against marriage. (Although it is not expected that courtship or engagement should be broken if God has spoken concerning the union of two persons in marriage, but sometime, some people discontinue their relationship. That is why we must be sure of God's leading to avoid breakages. When problems crop up, you handle it maturely).

Courtship is an interesting period, a romantic period, a period of comradeship (companionship). It is also a most important period in terms of the lives of the lovers, not only because of the long range importance of the decisions being made because of the mode which is being placed on their friendship - it is going to lead into married life. The habits, customs, and attitudes established during courtship will set the pace for the personal relations of later life.

During courtship, a young man or young woman reserves their special attentions for each other. This monopoly of each other's affections is the fundamental premise of courtship. When two people are courting, none is expected to have an eye on another outside the two of them. Courtship is the time when these restraints should be learned and cultivated, for there is no factor more important to the success and happiness of marriage than the ability to "keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live".

Home keeping and functions should be practiced during courtship in the home of the parents as the case may be. It is fine for the young lady to see her fiancé in work clothes and for the young man to become accustomed to his fiancée in kitchen apron.

A properly ordained courtship is a means of actually beginning the personality and temperamental adjustments of married life. It thus reduces the strain of marriage and definitely tends towards marital happiness.

As far as the premarital adjustments are concerned, the emphasis should be placed on a blending of personalities (understanding of one another, compromising and adjusting to suit one another) rather than on the physical components of marriage (exploring physical charms). Avoid caressing one another, for it could lead you to fornication. Keep away from sex for you are not married yet. Keep yourself pure or you may discover how easily love can turn to hate.

2 Sam 13:14-15

14 But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her. 15 Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"

NIV

Gal 5:17-18

17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

NIV

Exercise self-control. Discipline yourself not to be immoral in your relationship.

Rom 6:12

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

NIV

1 Cor 9:25-27

25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

NIV

Gal 5:22-25

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

NIV

1 Thess 5:22

22 Avoid every kind of evil.

NIV

Flee all sights of evil in your communication and relationship.

Share your problems, likes and dislikes, personal life, homes ambitions and plans for better understanding of one another. In all your discussions and relationship be sincere to one another. Keep no secrets and hide nothing from each other, for it may be dangerous.

The courting couple should sincerely inform the leaders (Pastors) of their fellowship or fellowships (where they belong to different congregations). It is the responsibility of the leaders to counsel them and to watch over them prayerfully so that they don't make mistakes.

The two should share scriptures and pray together.

Courtship and engagement work hand in hand. The period of engagement is still the period of courtship.

An engagement is the point at which the couple has reached final commitment to get married and honorably, joyfully seek to announce to the community their plans to marry soon. The exact time in the courtship that the engagement should be consummated varies a great deal from case to case.

The ideal period of engagement varies from six months to two years, depending upon the circumstances and preferences of the young people concerned. Do not allow it to be too short or too long.

After the announcement, they should prayerfully pursue the Christian and traditional (native law and custom) ceremonies. Let the fellowship or Church be involved. In all these, allow the Holy Spirit and scriptures to guide you. Apply wisdom. And do not allow libation to be poured to idols and demons on your behalf. 2 Tim. 3:16; Ps. 119: 105; 1 Jn. 2: 27; Eph. 6: 1; Mk. 7: 5- 13; Prov. 2: 10 – 15; Matt. 10: 16.

Caution: - Engagement and courtship does not mean you are married.

Please take the period of courtship and engagement serious because the policies, which a young couple agrees upon during their courtship, have a definite bearing on the success of their eventual marriage. The sacredness of the marriage bond has its beginning in the mutual respect and deference (giving away to the wishes, accepting the opinions or judgments of another) which a young couple learn to exchange during their courtship. Courtship is not a trial marriage, but it is the final step toward marriage and therefore constitutes the most important preparation for marriage.

Courtship is the foundation of marriage. The values cultivated, the principles and the habits formed and agreed upon will be what the marriage will be built upon. Build your relationship on the word of God.