

FRIENDSHIP IN MARRIAGE

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It is a known fact that friendship leads to marriage. But unfortunately, many stopped being friends after getting married. It must be stated clearly that every marriage needs friendship to succeed. Many married couples started their relationship as friends and later degenerated into just two people living together under the same roof, bound together by the marriage covenant and raising children together with little or no affection for each other any more.

Marriage is fun when the two people involved in it are close friends in the true sense of the word. If you are not friends, you cannot relate well. If you are not friends, you can't share personal information freely. If you are not friends, you cannot trust each other with the level of trust that is required to make marriage last a life time. If you are not friends, romance will be absent from your marriage, and living together will be an uphill task. Friendship is essential for a happy and blissful marriage which we all seek in marriage. It takes two friends to curdle each other, play together, tolerate each other, point out each other's weaknesses, correct each other and share secrets.

Understanding friendship

A friend is someone you are bonded to in love and companionship. A friend is someone you have a close personal relationship with or mutual affection and trust for. A friend is a person you like. A friend is a person you know well and like, and who is not connected to you by blood. A friend is somebody you are emotionally close to. A friend is someone you trust, share your secrets with and communicate freely with without fear and distrust. A friend is someone you seek his counsel and trust his sense of judgement. A friend is a close companion that you like to spend your time with sharing, chatting, praying, studying, loving and fellowshiping.

When friendship is brought into marriage, it becomes a close, lasting, lifelong friendship that has no limit. When friendship is allowed to thrive in marriage between the couple involved in the relationship, the marriage becomes enjoyable, ever fresh and robust. Living together becomes fun and exciting.

The relationship between God and man is likened to the relationship between a husband and his wife. God in relating with Moses the prophet, declares, He talks with him as a man talks with his friend, meaning that Moses was God's friend. This shows that marriage like God's relationship with man requires friendship to thrive.

Ex 33:11

11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

NIV

It takes friendship to have a long lasting relationship as is required in marriage. It takes friendship to stay long in someone's presence without getting bored as Moses did in God's presence for forty days to hear from God and interact with Him on what He wants from His people. This He did twice without food or water.

Friendship is not just a term but a relationship between two or more people. Abraham had this kind of relationship with God and he was also called God's friend.

James 2:23

23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

NIV

A friendly relationship with your spouse will make a lot of difference in your marriage.

Qualities of a good friend

1. Friends stand by each other and help each other overcome the challenges of life.

Eccl 4:10

10 If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

NIV

2. A friend will rebuke, correct, and cause you pain sometimes and most times in good faith.

Prov 27:6

6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

NIV

3. A friend sticks closer than a brother and never leaves in time of trouble.

Prov 18:24

24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

NIV

4. A good friend gives good counsel.

Prov 27:9

9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one's friend springs from his earnest counsel.

NIV

5. A friend will not abandon you in time of trouble.

Prov 27:10

10 Do not forsake your friend and the friend of your father, and do not go to your brother's house when disaster strikes you-- better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.

NIV

6. A friend is someone you can call on at anytime and he will attend to you.

Luke 11:5-6

5 Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'

NIV

7. A friend will not betray or turn against the one he calls his friend.

John 19:12

12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

NIV

Friends sometimes do disappoint or betray their friends. Never the less, there are friends who stand by their friends and remain loyal and friendly till the end. This type is the one I am recommending that you have with your spouse. Become good friends with your spouse. Trust your spouse as a friend will trust his friend enough to share intimate things with him/her. Spend time with your spouse as friends spend time together. As Moses spent time with God and God with him, spend time with your spouse. Love the presence of your spouse. Let the bond of friendship strengthen your love for each other. Stand up for your spouse and never turn your back on him or her. Never betray or side your family against your spouse, especially when he or she has not done anything deserving it.

Be friendly to the point that your spouse can reach you any time of the day. Be there for your spouse when he or she needs you and as friends do. Stand with your spouse all the time, especially in time of trouble. Marriage is for good times and bad times. A good friend never turns away when a friend is in need or in trouble. If you become your spouse's best friend, you will never leave him or her or abandon your spouse to go through the trouble alone.

Friends stick closer than brothers. The bonding between friends is so strong that they prefer to spend more time with each other than with family members. They share intimate things and hide nothing from each other. In the same way, you are to be so friendly with your spouse that you hang out together. You love each others company, keep or hide nothing from each other, share intimate things about your past, present and the future. Share about your failures, challenges and things no outsider should know. Rebuke and correct in love as friends do. Give good counsel and take good counsel from your spouse.

Every time there is a problem or one needs counsel, people normally go to their friends to share and take counsel. You are not to keep things from your spouse. So, take godly counsel from your spouse. Never keep your spouse in the dark about things you are going through or major decisions you are about to make. You are one, and need to work as a team – a friendly team that is united. Be your spouse's best friend. Friends don't think of separation, except something goes terribly wrong and beyond remedy. Friends do settle their misunderstandings and keep bitterness and malice far from their hearts. Never think of leaving each other. Through close friendship, strengthen and build your marriage relationship and make it a heaven on earth.

Guidelines for intimate friendship with your spouse

1. Make yourself friendly and trustworthy.
2. Let your heart be filled with love for your spouse and do all that is necessary to keep it filled always.
3. Love your spouse unconditionally.
4. Think good thoughts about your spouse despite his or her weakness and disappointing words and actions.
5. Be a good listener and speak only when it is necessary and only what is appropriate for the occasion, seasoned with salt and full of grace that builds and not destroys.
6. Be affectionate towards your spouse.
7. Commend your spouse when he or she does what requires commendation.
8. Be appreciative and thankful for services rendered to you, and favours from your spouse.
9. Don't focus too much on the weaknesses and faults of your spouse for this will keep your relationship under tension. Friends concentrate most of the time on things that make them happy and keep them excited about each other and life. Focusing on the negative will sadden your heart and produce anger and quarrels, while focusing on the positive will excite you and cause you to celebrate love always.
10. Speak good things to the hearing of your spouse, especially things that excite her and reveal the deep intimate love you have for him or her.
11. Share gifts together – giving and receiving of gifts help to strengthen love and increase the bond that exists.
12. Harbour no grudge or bitter feeling in your heart towards each other. Forgive when offended and bury the incident afterwards.
13. Keep your spouse's secret with you. Never share it with another friend or family member except with your spouse's permission. Never use it to insult or rubbish him or her in time of misunderstanding, for this will bring distrust and close the door for intimate sharing.
14. Keep your romance and sex life active for it creates a strong bonding.
15. Spend much time together alone and talk freely with an open heart.
16. Go to places together where you can have fun together without sinning against the Lord. Walk together. Sit together where ever you go.

17. Study the word of God and pray together for this will invite and keep God in your relationship till death separate you.

Remember this:

- a. Every marriage needs friendship to succeed.
- b. Marriage is fun when the two people involved in it are close friends in the true sense of the word.
- c. It takes friendship to relate well, share personal information freely, trust each other and be free with each other.
- d. It takes two friends to curdle each other, play together, tolerate each other, point out each other's weaknesses, correct each other and share secrets.
- e. Work on becoming a close and trusted friend of your spouse and your marriage will forever be exciting.