

Ways to Pray as a Couple

There are as many ways to pray together as there are couples and no one way is the 'right way'. The following are some suggestions.

- 1. Just do it!** God loves us and yearns for us to be in communication with him. But we have to make a first step. It may be simply holding hands and praying silently together or saying a Hail Mary together. The Lord will always respond!
- 2. Evening Prayer.** Hold hands and rest quietly for a minute to become aware of God's presence. Think about how have you experienced God through your spouse today. Share with each other, then pray together:

Lord God,
I praise you for the gift of my spouse,
and I thank you for the blessings
I have had through him/her.
Forgive me for the times
that I have failed
to love my spouse the way I should,
and help me to do better in bringing
your love and acceptance to him/her
Amen.
- 3. Scripture Prayer.** Prayer can be based on a scripture passage (eg the Gospel of the day), reading the passage slowly and sharing what one hears God saying through it.



Lent is a great time to establish new, life-giving habits. Why not use Lent this year to begin praying as a couple? **'Growing in Love through Prayer'** is a forty-day kick-start into regular Couple Prayer. Each day includes a short reflection and prayer to read together. It can be downloaded as an ebook from Alexander House Ministries. <http://bit.ly/1dzCpQp>



Growing in Love



What is Couple Prayer?

Couple Prayer is any prayer said by a couple together. Sounds simple? Well, yes and no! Many couples pray together when attending Mass, saying grace before meals or saying the Rosary. These are wonderful ways to pray but they are not 'Couple Prayer'. Couple Prayer is when an engaged or married couple speak to God about their needs, concerns and hopes while allowing the other person to hear. It requires a level of intimacy that can be challenging. However, God, the source of the couple's love can work powerfully through their prayer, deepening their relationship with each other.

Couple Prayer creates the sacred space in our marriage where we open ourselves to God's presence.

"Our days are so busy and different, so for us, a combination of 'standard prayers' like the Our Father and a shared prayer seem to work best. Sometimes, all we can manage is to hold hands and say a Hail Mary together but it is always worthwhile." - John



The popularity of St Valentine's Day grew out of the joy of celebrating romantic married love. The celebration also encourages us to renew and develop that love. God is love and this year we focus on one particular aspect of deepening the love of a couple, whether they are engaged or married – that is, by turning to God in 'couple prayer'.

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Why Pray as a Couple?

One reason is the high correlation between couple prayer and marriage stability – the couple that prays together, stays together. Jesus promised that when two or more are gathered in his name, he would be in their midst. While individual prayer is always essential, there is a special power that comes through couple prayer. The Sacrament of Matrimony is expressed through relationship and God's grace is always available to us in helping us to become more and more 'one flesh', that is, a communion of body and soul.

Praying as a couple also enhances family prayer. The more comfortable parents are in praying together, the more effective they will be in drawing their children into family prayer.

Couple Prayer is a spiritual openness and is profoundly holy and bonding.

St Valentine | Feb 14

Although not on the universal Church calendar, St Valentine is celebrated throughout the world as the patron of romance and married love. He was a Roman priest who was executed for marrying couples against the orders of the Emperor.

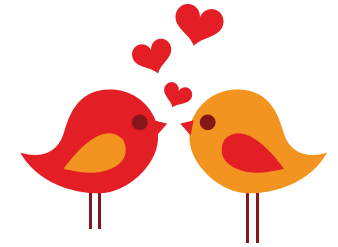


“Jane and I met in a parish youth group where shared prayer was part of the Sunday night prayer meeting. It was a great start for our engagement because praying together came naturally and we have carried that into our marriage ever since.” – Tom



“My husband is very private in his faith so we just started simply, saying The Lord's Prayer together. As we reflected on the words, we found ourselves thinking about how we needed to forgive each other and it seemed natural to talk about the day's mishaps and pray about those.” - Kylie

Keys to Couple Prayer



1

Trust. We don't have to be 'super holy' to pray as a couple. God wants us to come to him as we are, without pretence. Aim to pray with the same trust and familiarity with which we converse with our closest friends.

2

Regularity. As with all relationships, regular contact keeps communication flowing easily. Just make a start. Then try to make it more regular. Developing a 'rhythm' of praying at a certain time helps to bring order into our pressured modern lives, prioritising God and each other. The key is to find a good time when our routine can accommodate some minutes for Couple Prayer.

“My husband's job often takes him away for days at a time. We have made it a priority that, no matter how busy we are, we spend five minutes in prayer at 9.30 each evening. That helps us to talk to God with each other in mind. Later, when we get together again, we often discuss what we prayed about.” – Susan



3

Flexibility. However, 'prayer on the run' may be just what is necessary at certain moments. Try different approaches according to different needs and situations.

4

Openness. There are many things to pray about but our marriage is of central importance. Openness to each other in prayer opens us to God's grace. The more open and self-revealing we can be about our emotions and needs in our marriage, the more we will grow in affection for each other and the more we will grow spiritually.

“One of our traditions is to share at the end of each day how we have experienced God through the other. I never thought about it, but I guess it is a kind of prayer because it always makes us feel loved and close to God.” - Karen