

3 Ingenious Ways to Serve Your Spouse

Most Christians are familiar with the story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples on the night that Jesus would be betrayed. In Jesus' day it was the custom of a slave to make sure that guest's feet were washed.

None of the 12 disciples even considered making sure this was done for their group. Jesus seized the opportunity to take a basin of water and began to wash his disciple's feet. This is a great story to illustrate how all of us are called to service.

Serving is a virtue of being a Christian. I know many of us strive to lead but Christ calls us to serve. "Who will be the greatest in the kingdom?" the disciples asked Jesus. He answered it is He that is the servant.

In the kingdom of God, servants are what God is looking for. In a Christian marriage this is also true of what God is looking for—a servant.

When we are called to marriage, we are called to servitude. We are saying, "I do" to serve the other person all the days of our lives. I know some of us have it backwards; we think marriage is a deal where our spouse is made to be our servant. Sorry, we are both called to serve each other.

Your spouse will have several areas of needs for you to serve them, and I thought it would be a good idea to discuss these various areas. In doing this you can more clearly see how you are doing as far as serving your spouse.

1. Spiritually

Your spouse needs you to serve him/her spiritually. You can serve by being spiritually strong yourself through prayer,

being in the Word and having good Christian friends.

Your spouse needs you to serve them by being their best intercessor. At the very least, pray daily for your spouse. Your spouse needs you to care enough also to inquire about what they are learning spiritually, whether it's what they are reading in the Bible or in their spiritual one-on-one relationship with Christ.

Your spouse also needs you to serve them by being faithful in a local church. This means your attitude must stay positive and consistent to attend a local church and give financially to it as well. The local church is the best place to grow and practice your faith. The encouragement to be steady in a local church can help you both be rooted as you go through all the various trials and seasons of life.

A final way your spouse needs a servant's heart spiritually is when serving your children. So many parents are not intentional in their children's spiritual growth. You can serve your children's spirit by praying with them, reading the Word to them, getting them involved in the local church and seeing that they have Christian same-gender friends is a great way to serve your children spiritually.

2. Emotionally

Everybody needs an emotional cheerleader: someone who encourages you and takes walks along side when you are not so up. An emotional servant doesn't have to solve problems; they just need to be present.

An emotional servant invites their spouse to discover their feelings so they can know what may be going on inside. An emotional servant doesn't shame their spouse for incongruent feelings and doesn't bring these feelings back up later to make them feel less than.

As an emotional servant, you keep yourself emotionally fit so

you know what is going on within you. As an emotional servant, be vulnerable so that your spouse knows that you are safe to share with.

An emotional servant protects their spouse's heart. What your spouse shares with you is of utmost secret—you don't share it with friends, parents or siblings. It is kept just between the two of you.

3. Household

Household issues in a marriage are very important. It's here where you really see and need teamwork in a marriage. Here, it is easy to serve your spouse because there are always things to do around the household that would be helpful.

The first way to serve your spouse is to absolutely make sure you are doing at least the agreed-upon portion of what needs to be done. Not serving your spouse in this manner will create legitimate resentment toward the other.

Secondly, serve your spouse by not only doing your portion but by occasionally picking a chore that your spouse normally does and doing it well. There are no chores that are masculine or feminine; in Christ, there is no male or female.

You can serve in any area. Here's where you want to be an aggressive servant. Stay ahead of the game in the household area. Everyone can see dirt, dishes, laundry or towels on the floor.

Just dig in and don't have a keeping-score attitude, have a winning-score attitude. As a Christian servant, you don't want to play "getting even," such as "I did this and you did that" mentality. No, out-serve your spouse regularly—do more than they do. It usually doesn't take that much time.

Don't sit in front of the television until you have served your spouse in household matters. Get a project list you agree

on and systematically get it done. I am a busy guy, trust me, but that's no excuse. Folding laundry is a way of serving my wife, knowing the status of the dishes in a dishwasher is romancing her. I am not too good to serve a queen of God and our royal family. It's my duty. Honestly, I feel God's pleasure when I do these things.

I keep up with the odd jobs and honey-dos. I know this is a way of loving Lisa, so it's no big deal. Plus, it's fun to serve your spouse around the house—changing light bulbs, taking out garbage, wiping down kitchen counters, putting dishes in the dishwasher or putting them away; this is nothing for a servant of the living God.

It feels good to serve your spouse in various areas of their life. I think you actually can increase your love for a spouse by serving them. It makes you feel good to do helpful things for people you love. In my experience, it also lets them feel the love you have for them as well. {eo}

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books including, *Servant Marriage*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, www.heart2heart.org, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@heart2heart.org.