

4 Ways You Can Humbly Serve Your Spouse

On the night of Jesus' betrayal, Jesus took a towel and a basin of water and washed the feet of His disciples. (See John 13:1-17). In Jesus' day, foot washing was a daily occurrence.

However, it was the custom to have a household slave wash the feet of the guests.

When Jesus and His disciples arrived at the upper room for their last meal together, none of the 12 disciples even considered making sure that everyone's feet were cleansed. Jesus seized this opportunity to take a basin of water and wash His disciples' feet. This story is a great illustration of the call each of us has received to serve one another.

God is looking for servants in the kingdom of God. 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 serving the other person all the days of our lives. We are both called to serve one another.

There are several areas of need where you must learn to serve your spouse in marriage. It is a good idea to discuss these various areas to give you a chance to evaluate how you are serving your spouse in each of these areas.

1. **Spiritual service.** Your spouse needs you to serve him or her spiritually. You can serve your spouse spiritually by being spiritually strong, praying, studying the Word, and developing a circle of good Christian friends.

Your spouse needs you to serve by being his or her best intercessor. At the very least, pray daily for your spouse. Care enough about your spouse's spiritual growth to ask about

the spiritual lessons he or she is learning. Discuss his or her daily Bible study and be interested in his or her one-on-one relationship with Christ.

Your spouse also needs you to serve by being faithful in a local church. Maintain a consistent and positive attitude about your local church and give financially to it as well. The local church is the best way to grow and practice your faith. Being firmly planted in a local church will encourage both of you to be rooted in God and His people as you go through all the various trials and seasons of life.

2. Emotional service. Everybody needs an emotional cheerleader, someone who encourages you and lifts your spirit when you are feeling low. To serve another person emotionally does not require the ability to solve problems; it just requires your presence and support.

An emotional servant invites his or her spouse to discover hidden feelings so he or she can understand what is going on inside. An emotional servant doesn't shame his or her spouse for incongruent feelings and doesn't bring those feelings back up later to belittle that person.

Be committed to becoming your spouse's emotional servant. Keep yourself emotionally fit so you know and understand the feelings you are experiencing within yourself. Be vulnerable yourself so your spouse will feel safe sharing his or her feelings with you.

Above all, protect your spouse's heart. What your spouse shares with you is shared in utmost confidence—don't share it with friends, parents or siblings. It is to be kept just between the two of you.

3. Physical service. A very important area of your spouse's life is the physical body. Some people are great about taking care of their bodies, and others are ... let's say, less responsible.

One important area of physical service is exercise. Now you can't abruptly say, "Hey, Honey, let me drop you off at the gym." But you can invite your spouse to begin attending a gym with you. If you are parents of young children, you can join a gym that has child care and go to the gym together. You can also suggest going for walks together. It's important that your spouse is healthy.

4. Household service. Household issues in a marriage are very important. This is where the rubber meets the road regarding serving one another. But it is easy to find ways to serve your spouse in the home, because there are always helpful things for both of you to do around the house.

Begin your service to your spouse by making absolutely sure that you are doing at least the agreed-upon portion of what needs to be done. Not doing what you have agreed to do will create legitimate resentment in your relationship.

Serve your spouse by occasionally taking on a chore that your spouse normally does—and do it well. Just as there is neither male nor female in Christ, there are no chores that are masculine or feminine (Gal. 3:28).

You can serve in any area of household duty. Be an aggressive servant. Stay ahead of the game in the household area. When you see dishes in the sink, wash them. Just dig in and do it. Don't have a "keeping score" attitude; have a "winning score" attitude. As a Christian servant, you don't want to have a "getting even" or "I did this, and you do that" mentality. Outserve your spouse regularly—doing more than he or she does. It doesn't usually even take that much time.

Do It

There are more ways you can be a servant to your spouse, and I encourage you to always be on the lookout to find opportunities for such. Embrace the servant marriage and

experience marriage the way God intended it for your life.

It feels good to serve your spouse in the various areas of his or her life. I believe you can actually increase your love for your spouse by serving. A servant's heart makes you feel good by doing helpful things for the people you love. In my experience, it also is a tangible way for them to feel your love. {eo}

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