

5 Reasons Why Your Marriage Needs Church (and Jesus)

Congratulations, you're married! You'll never need help from anything or anyone ever again!

If you believe that, it's not very sound thinking. But I would think a lot of newlyweds or early married couples think in this kind of way.

Why? Sometimes marriage can make people think that the amazing person they just married will be their answer to life's problems. The reality? Without help, new marriages will suffer—and suffer quickly. Problems will arise out of the smallest things, and tempers will get worse over time. Welcome to marriage.

Although my wife and I grew up in Christian homes, went to Christian schools and attended a home church, we had a terrible time going to church together after we got married. We had just moved to a new area and really didn't know anybody. We thought we would be enough for each other to handle anything life could throw our way. We managed to meet a few local people and establish friendships, but we were still missing the solid foundation that only church could provide.

So after living life according to our terms for the first few years and almost getting divorced a couple times, we thought it might be time to see what having a home church would be all about. We got online one day, found a church really close to our house and agreed to try it out. We liked it.

However, after a year or so, we were still not attending regularly. We were trying to give God about half of our marriage, and we still struggled in multiple ways. You know, you become the couple that looks and acts like they have it together, but ultimately the relationship could fail at any

moment. Anyway, we finally agreed to take a stand in our marriage and attend a church full-time. It honestly transformed our marriage, our individual lives and our relationships with Christ.

So now that we know, here is why you need to know.

5 Reasons Why Your Marriage Needs Church

1. Great community. Isolation in early marriage is the wrong idea, but that is typically what happens. It might have even started when you were dating, when you started removing yourselves from other groups and friends so that you could be together more. Church is great way of joining in with a community. In our experience, we have found most of the people to be very helpful and accepting. Most churches will have a visitor area, where you can introduce yourself and your wife. This should be the time when you find out about the next step.

2. Join small groups. The church can provide a great way to meet new people of any age, but a small group or class will help you dial in with people your own age. I can't speak for every church, but our church has a marriage group going on throughout the year. You might find some classes that are held at the church, like "Love and Respect" or "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage." Or keep an eye out for groups that meet at their houses. Our local group of young and marrieds will meet up to hang out together, pray together, play games together and just discuss whatever is on their minds. These groups will help you and your spouse realize you are not alone in this crazy marriage dance and will offer great tools and resources for whatever problems you may be facing.

3. Relationship discipline. Wouldn't it be easier to wake up Sunday morning and turn on TV or just sleep in? Sure it would, and I think we can all agree on that. But this is your marriage, and if you want it to be as successful as possible, you are going to need to mature and get God involved. Don't

wait to decide to go at the last second. Let it be known the day before, and show some excitement. Don't just slap on an old pair of jeans; rather, put on some nice clothes. Schedule a small coffee date or something for after the services with your wife or with a few of your friends from small group. Attending church weekly will birth maturity and discipline in your marriage, and it will make a positive impact in other areas or situations in your marriage.

4. Knowledge of God. Don't just go to church for the small groups or community, but make it a main goal to go for the lead sermon or message. Small groups are typically more about a theme, like marriage, faith, manhood or something like that. The main service is a place to learn more about the Bible and Christ. There may be a theme, but it will most likely be on a subject that you have never heard before. Don't check out at this point, but rather grab a pen and take some notes. Take in what the pastor is preaching about, and find ways to apply it to your life, marriage, friendships or work. Write down a couple questions, and discuss the message topics with your wife afterward. She may have heard things that you didn't, and it will make for great conversation. The main sermon will offer you the diversity you need in your Christian walk.

5. Mentorship. While going through some issues in our marriage, my wife and I finally decided to seek help. The church we attend has a great marriage program, where older married couples make themselves available to help out younger or struggling couples. We were paired up with a great couple that would come over about once a month and just talk with us. After a while, we started to become great friends and actually started taking small vacations with them along with other friends from the church. If we would have never made ourselves open to doing this, we would have missed out on some great friends and some awesome opportunities. Take a bold step and find a marriage mentor!

Are you ready to lead your marriage? What are some ways you

have found church to be essential in your marriage? Share your comments below.

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