

A Common Mistake Christian Couples Make in Their Homes

Your dwelling place is a gift from God. The size of the house isn't as important as your attitude and cooperation in managing the issues around the house. Now, to be clear, I am talking about the physical place—not the relationships—just the bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchen and so on. When you marry, both spouses have quite a limited set of skills unless they are trained to deal with drywall, paint, electrical, plumbing and other types of household repairs.

I will never forget in our first house when the tile in the shower needed to have the grout touched up. My way of solving the problem was to first attempt to fix it. I went to the local Home Depot or Lowes and bought the grout and a grout gun. I put this round thing in the gun and then squeezed and squeezed, but nothing came out. This went on for over an hour until I realized I was supposed to cut the tip off to grout tube. I laughed afterward, but it really was not funny at the time.

I am truly surprised that so many couples never really sit down and divvy up specific tasks or responsibilities in the home. It is more common that a system somehow evolves on who does what. There is wisdom in clearly assigning maintenance issues.

Take a few minutes and discuss this, you can get an idea of who is responsible for different areas of your home. It really does not matter which person handles what. What does matter is that both spouses agree to get it all done.

I am a get-it-done guy. Lisa has never given me a honey-do list because if I see it and I can do it, it is done. If either of us sees it and it is beyond our skill level, then

Lisa usually calls to get it done.

From listening to women talk about their husbands, it seems not all men take on the responsibility of their houses as a priority. As men, we are often guilty of being “too busy.” I have a saying I live by that goes like this: “Men make a plan; boys make excuses.” There may be legitimate reasons to put some things off, and if so, there is usually no tension in the marriage.

Some couples have boundaries set in place as to how long to give a spouse who says he or she is going to fix something—say one week or month. If it is not fixed by the set time, the other person can fix it or call to get it fixed and it is no longer a discussion. They both agreed to the time when a certain thing would be done and the consequences attached.

Getting things fixed can be a place of tension or a place of management. Those in a servant marriage aim at taking responsibility for managing tasks and crises well. Those who are less proactive in management and clear communication can suffer needless tension. If this is an area of weakness, get a mentor couple, partner or counselor to work out details that allow you both to live in better harmony

Chores are a part of life for all of us. Some couples settle this issue early in their marriage. Some have systems to see who can do the least and leave the other to do more. Some argue about this for decades, while some peacefully negotiate.

Let me give you some creative ideas that some couples have used to revive this very legitimate issue in marriage. Now, remember, we are all servants and serving is a good thing. Now, if what you are doing is already working, you should still read through some of these ideas so you can share them with your friends as they try to figure it out. These ideas are in no specific order:

1. Write all chores to be done on strips of paper and place

in a jar. Whatever chores you pull out, you do.

2. Make a list of chores. Each of you should choose chores you do not mind doing and decide the rest by way of a coin toss.
3. Divide the list into relatively equal amounts of time and rotate the list weekly or monthly.
4. One person does outside house chores. The other does inside house chores.
5. Create a list and work through the list at the same time, each picking one, and keep going until the list is done.
6. One person does it all one week. The other person does it all the next week.
7. Use any idea that works for you both.

Agreeing on chores is actually more important to your servant marriage than the system you come up with to do the chores. Remember, it is not as important who does what. You have unique preferences, personalities, work schedules and more to work with in creating the way the two of you navigate the issue of chores. My only cautions would be: Keep it specific, not vague; talk about it; avoid being passive-aggressive; be honest and keep your word; and in all ways strive to be a trustworthy servant of Christ. {eoa}

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, or on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.