

How Can the Tired Mom Stay Connected With Hubby?

Courtney asks, “Any advice on marriage in the trenches—when you have multiple little ones, money is tight, date nights are tough, sleep non-existent, etc.?”

Courtney, congrats on the “little ones.” They are a blessing. An exhausting blessing, but a blessing nonetheless.

Grace and I understand your season of life. We had five children in eight years. When the kids were little, we were also planting the church, which meant long hours for both of us. Toss in any combination of cold or flu running through the house, teething or travel, and things can feel overwhelming and exhausting.

Most of the time, money is tight in this season as well, as you are trying to live off of one income and dad is trying to get his career started. Admittedly, these were tough years for us. Looking back, Grace and I did not get this right all the time. But we would offer the following suggestions, as Grace thinks aloud and I type along:

1. Pray

Get prayer time in the morning to start the day. Grace says even if you have to get up a few minutes early and pray while you are lying in bed, it’s worth it. Spend time in prayer with your husband, and during the day use texting to stay connected and in prayer for one another.

2. Worship

Keep your relationship with the Lord going. Listen to podcasts or the YouVersion audio Bible while you do your chores, pick a verse to meditate on, read Scripture to the kids—whatever

works for you, you need to do. Try not to miss church.

Even if you have to get up a few minutes early and pray while you are lying in bed, it's worth it.

3. Sleep

Don't feel guilty about taking a nap. Jesus took a nap in the Bible. Sometimes, you just have to sleep when the kids sleep. If you don't get enough sleep and you try to keep up with every task, things might not fall apart—but you will.

4. Prioritize

Don't try to do it all, but discuss what the priorities are. Kids are unpredictable. They make a mess, get sick, get hurt, break something, need you to hold them and love them, etc. You will never check everything off your list, so give yourself some grace. You and your hubby need to figure out what the priorities are, do the most important things first, and get to the rest if and when you can.

Your car will be filled with action figures, crushed crayons and decaying snacks. Your laundry will at some point be stacked up to what Paul calls the "third heaven." At some point, your kids will likely be wearing a swimsuit and rubber boots with chocolate in their hair. Take a photo, make a joke, and let it go.

5. Date

See if you can organize a date night co-op with people you trust who are family or church family. You cannot trust just anyone with your kids. But if there are godly people you do trust, maybe you could find, say, four couples, and each one can take turns watching the kids on date night. This way, you would at least get three weeks out of four without having to spend a ton on babysitting.

Also, godly college gals sometimes like to do this as a

ministry. When we were dating in college, for example, we knew a godly family who could not afford childcare for date night. So Grace and I volunteered to do that for them a few times a month. We wanted to marry and have kids, and we figured we could learn a lot by being with their kids and serving them at the same time.

6. Get Creative

Ask for date night gift cards for holidays and birthdays. Stacking up a few gift cards to restaurants and using them during a happy hour can stretch out a few nice date nights.

7. Have a Night In

Learn to get time together at night at home. Whether this is soaking in the tub, sitting by the fire or just getting a favorite beverage to enjoy while visiting over a board game, at least it's some adult connecting time. This kind of time multiple nights a week goes a long way in the little years. Some couples just enjoy having the kids out of the house for a few hours so they can come home to have dinner and do whatever without interruptions for a few hours.

8. Be Silly

If you are stressed, your kids will be stressed, so take time to do some silly and fun things with the kids. If you don't have any fun until your husband gets home, you can be pretty frazzled by the end of the day. So try to find some ways to have fun even with the kids.

9. Pursue Hope and Joy

What can happen when you are both busy, exhausted and depleted is that you start to feel overwhelmed and hopeless. Throw in some hormones or post-birth troubles, and your outlook can get dark fast. What you need is some hope.

Putting in place some plans and patterns can go a long way

toward keeping you both hopeful, which helps you be joyful. Not to do yet another shameless book plug, but if you have *Real Marriage*, the appendix on “Reverse Engineering Your Life and Marriage” is a very practical tool that might help with some of these issues as you try to architect your life together.

You will never check everything off your list, so give yourself some grace.

Lastly, these years go way too fast. These are hard years but wonderful years. Once these years are gone, they are gone forever.

Our oldest just got her driver’s license. I can still remember when her main mode of transportation was a piggyback ride from me. Do all you can to not just endure but also enjoy these years.

Thank you for asking this question. You are not alone. A lot of people have this question. We are praying for you, your hubby and your blessings! We’ve been there. We get it. And we appreciate you inviting us to speak in to your marriage and family. Thank you!

Pastor Mark Driscoll is the founding pastor of Mars Hill Church—based in Seattle, Washington—and one of the most popular preachers in the world today. In 2010, *Preaching* magazine named him one of the 25 most influential pastors of the past 25 years. His sermon podcast regularly occupies the top spot in iTunes’s Religion & Spirituality category, and his online audience accesses about 15 million of his sermons each year.

Driscoll is the author of over 15 books, including the #1 New York Times best-selling Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship, and Life Together, coauthored with his wife, Grace. He has also written for CNN and The Washington Post and been featured as a columnist for The Seattle Times.