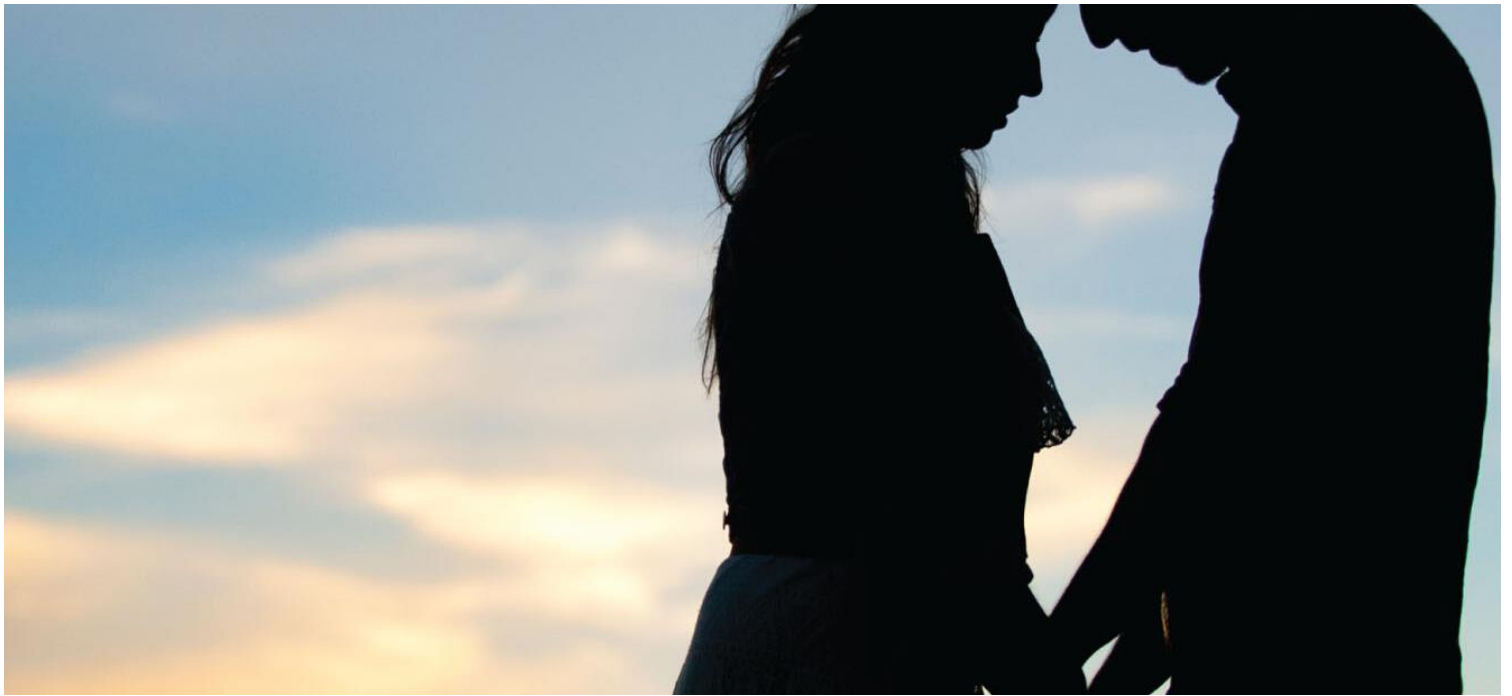


A romantic silhouette of a man and a woman holding hands against a sunset sky. The woman is on the left, wearing a long, light-colored dress. The man is on the right, wearing a dark shirt and pants. They are both looking down at their hands. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow, with soft clouds. The entire image is framed by a white border.

PRAYING WITH  
*Your Spouse*  
A BRIEF GUIDE

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Praying together is one of the most rewarding disciplines of spiritual intimacy. It is also one of the hardest to be disciplined at as Doug and I have found out.

But the outcome is so very powerful, not only in your walk with Christ, but in your marriage also.

One minister of the Gospel puts it so eloquently: "As couples lift their voices to heaven as one, they are growing in holiness and their commitment to bear one another's burdens.

As their intimacy grows, so does their ability to forgive each other's faults, all the while supporting each other every step of the way.

Sometimes one will fall back, but the other is there to encourage, forgive, pray, guide, drawing them back to their side along the straight and narrow path. Often, through the beautiful instrument of our spouse,

God gives us the healing, support, and strength we need the most. And through it all, love deepens and grows from the original singular love of eros towards a more complete love... a love that increasingly becomes more Christ-like in depth, intensity, and commitment."

Praying together is cornerstone in the building of spiritual intimacy and can deepen your love for your spouse and your commitment to your marriage.

Attached is a brief prayer guide for you and your spouse. Our prayer is that it will help you to overcome barriers to this wonderful spiritual discipline and give you a starting place to deepen your walk with Christ and your spouse.

Sincerely,

Doug & Leslie Davis

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# *Overcoming Common Barriers*

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Good job, brave one, reading this far. We understand most couples don't know how to begin this journey, but they step forward. Then, Wham! Hindrances pop up. Human nature (not the friend of spiritual discipline) creep in, thwarting our commitment. Spiritual forces seek to destroy what we are trying to build up. Combined, they can fatally wound our attempt to grow more spiritually intimate with our spouse.

Be aware of these three main hinderances.

- 1** Fear is one of the biggest deterrents to praying together. Thoughts like “Am I doing it right?” “What will they think?” are common. Also, fear can be present due to previous times of criticism, correction, or instruction. Prayer time with your spouse is not the place for any of these. To mitigate fear during prayer time, strive to create a time of sharing hopes, dreams, and concerns with the Lord free from criticism, correction, and instruction. Prayer time together must remain 100% safe 100% of the time. Attempt to bring honor to this sacred time together. If this fear continues, talk about it, using a different venue outside of prayer time.
- 2** Time is often at the top of excuse list. There, I said it! It's an excuse—don't let it be yours. It's very easy even with a house full of kids. If you can get up a few minutes early or go to bed a few minutes later, you can pray with your spouse. Make a realistic goal—whatever you both can agree on whether it's once a day or once a week. Then resolve to make it happen no matter what. God will honor your efforts.
- 3** If this is new to both of you, you may not know what to do first. Choosing a method and who will lead are two dynamics to consider before starting. There are several methods that work well for partner prayer. The popcorn method: One prays then the other and back and forth. My-turn, Your-turn: self-explanatory. Find one that works for both of you.

# *7 Things To Consider*

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Just as there are many reasons why it's difficult for couples to pray together, there are equally as many ways to push through the barriers and incorporate a habit that will draw the two of you closer to one another and closer to God.

## 1. Talk to God first.

Talk to God first about your desire to pray with your spouse. First John 5:14-15 assures us that "whenever we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked Him for." So, ask God for the time in your schedule, for wisdom in how to suggest it to your spouse, and that God will prepare the heart of your spouse to desire this time with you, as well.

## 2. Set a time.

By setting an agreed-upon appointment for prayer with your spouse, both of you are more likely to keep it. But, as with any appointment, there will be times you or your spouse will need to postpone or reschedule. That's life. So, be flexible, and extend grace.

## 3. Ease into it.

There's a reason prayer is considered a spiritual discipline. And as with any habit or discipline, it will take work. So ease into it. You might even start with praying together once a week for a brief time, then gradually increase your prayer time to two or three times a week until it becomes a part of your daily schedule.

## 4. Keep it short.

There is nothing wrong with limiting the time that the two of you can spend in prayer, especially when you're first starting out. Be respectful of each other's time and put parameters around how long your prayer time will be.

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## 5. Keep it simple.

You can keep it short and simple by limiting your prayer time together to the basic or most pressing needs on your heart. Respect his or her time and pray only about pressing needs that concern your family, such as job, health or financial issues, the salvation or spiritual life of loved ones, the behavioral issues of your children, and so on.

## 6. Keep it safe.

Remove any possibility of intimidation by letting your spouse know that your prayer time together isn't an arena for judgment or assumption. In other words, anything that is prayed for is "safe" and won't be analyzed, critiqued, shared with others, or brought up again in a non-supportive way.

## 7. Keep it supportive.

Praying with your spouse about sensitive issues in your marriage or situations in your past that may cause him or her to feel regret or remorse might not be best.

Save the heavier, deeply personal issues for God. He can handle them and many times your spouse won't know what to do upon hearing prayers that might be directed at him or her and any trouble or anxiety they may be causing the marriage. Aim for a goal of togetherness and encouragement as you pray. If your goal, after praying together, is that both you and your spouse emerge from that prayer time feeling more powerful and strengthened together, then you will know what to address with your spouse and what to keep for an extended prayer time with just you and God. As you begin praying together regularly, the Holy Spirit may impress upon your hearts to pray about deeper issues and, when that is the case, you both will simply be following His lead.

Finally, you can apply the principles of Philippians 2:1-2 as a guideline in praying together by "thinking the same way, having the same love, sharing the same feelings, focusing on one goal." That one goal should be that each of you emerges from your prayer time together feeling stronger, more supported, and more unified in order to take on the enemy of your souls.

This material, by Cindi McMenamin, first appeared in Lifestay's HomeLife Magazine and is included in its entirety in McMenamin's book, 12 Ways to Experience More with Your Husband, Harvest House Publishers, 2018. [www.StrengthForTheSoul.com](http://www.StrengthForTheSoul.com). Used with permission.

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