



THRIVING TOGETHER:

Nurturing a healthy marriage while serving the church

WARREN & SONYA JACOBS



The Lord is not asking you to sacrifice your marriage at the altar of ministry.

CHALLENGES

- **Constant availability expectations:**

Ministry often demands long hours, frequent evening and weekend commitments, and being “on call” for crises.

- **Neglect of the marriage:**

The spouse can feel neglected or resentful when the church receives more attention than the family.

- **Difficulty setting boundaries:** Many ministers struggle to say “no,” leading to burnout and emotional distance at home.





CONNECTION IS KEY

FOUR PILLARS OF CONNECTION

- Emotional
- Mental
- Physical
- Spiritual

EMOTIONAL

We were built for connection

“Let us make them in our image”

“It is not good for you to be alone, I will make a partner for you”

“They were both naked and they felt no shame”

GENESIS 1 & 2

EMOTIONAL

True emotional intimacy requires **vulnerability, safety, attunement, and emotional presence**. When couples consciously work through fear, communicate authentically, and create a space where both can be seen and accepted, emotional closeness deepens naturally.

FIVE ROADBLOCKS TO EMOTIONAL INTIMACY FOR COUPLES

1. Fear of vulnerability
2. Unresolved past wounds
3. Poor communication habits
4. Emotional unavailability or burnout
5. Power struggles and lack of emotional safety



MENTAL

PILLARS OF CONNECTION

- Hobbies, politics
- Plans and projects
- Work
- Goals, strategizing together, planning for the future



MENTAL

PILLARS OF CONNECTION

- Weekly working date

Weekly/Monthly Working Date

Living life intentionally

Gentle Reminder... this is not a time to resolve conflict

Calendar notes for our family: (travel, doctor's appts, games, events, holiday, birthday, etc.)

Husband

Wife:

Children:

Deadlines that need attention: (Vehicle needs, taxes, bill payments, forms, registrations, etc.)

Any financial concerns?

Any major events happening at work or home?

Meals we will sit down at the table as a family and eat together:

Date plan for couple (dinner, lunch, coffee, etc):

Hopeful Intimacy Schedule :)

Intentional one on one time with the kids:

Family Fun :

How can I be helpful to you?

How can I pray for you?



PILLARS OF CONNECTION

- 
-Our Marriage Vision-

Step 1

- Individually, take a few moments to think about the question, "What do I want our marriage to look like one year from today?" Keep your answer to yourself for now.

- 
- ENJOY YOUR MARRIAGE

W ENJOY YOUR MARRIAGE



PHYSICAL

PILLARS OF CONNECTION



PHYSICAL

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- Sexual and nonsexual touch



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- Body language and tone



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WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE OUR
NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO MEET EACH
OTHERS NEEDS



SPIRITUAL

PILLARS OF CONNECTION

- Shared book or study, Podcasts
- Bible reading plan
- Serve together
- Worship together
- Fasting together



SPIRITUAL

PILLARS OF CONNECTION

- Prayer
 - “Help” prayer (at the point of need)
 - “Blessing” prayer (early in the morning)
 - “Comfort” prayer (before sleep)

BOUNDARIES

- Leave your work at work. Transition and bring your best at home.
- If it is your day off, it is your day off. You are modeling for those you lead. Make it clear that unless there is a valid emergency (which you will need to define), the situation can wait until the next working day.
- Don't make your spouse compete for your attention to ministry
- Gary chapman story: schedule...

BOUNDARIES

Foster Healthy boundaries:

Connect your spouse to your ministry

- ask them to pray for your ministry & give them specific things to pray about
- Tell them about what goes on in your daily routine
- Ask their opinion when you're trying to make decisions in your ministry.

BOUNDARIES

Fight unhealthy boundaries:

- Never be alone with the opposite sex. Never. That means lunch, dinner, etc.
- Privacy creates intimacy



HOW AND WHEN TO GET HELP

Conversation

HOW AND WHEN TO GET HELP

Among those in *unhealthy marriage* relationships, only 14% sought a moderate amount of help or more, while among those in a marriage crisis state, **only 17% sought a moderate amount of help** or more.





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