

CTH 014

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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| COURSE GUIDE |
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**CTH 014
MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

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Introduction

Welcome to CTH 014: Marriage and family. Perhaps, it will interest you to know that Marriage and Family is a one semester course of two credits. It has 15 study units. The course is available for certificate, diploma and first year students of the Christian Theology programme. Marriage and Family as a course will consist of 15 units of different topics, grouped into three separate modules.

You are currently reading the Course Guide which will introduce you to what the course is all about. What you are expected to know in each unit are all before you. Course material you will require and information on how you can work your way through the material are also explained in the course guide. The Course Guide will also highlight assignments (tutor-marked assignments) as part of the requirements for this course.

What you will Learn in this Course

The study of Marriage and Family life in Nigerian Society will enable you to have insight into the common problems in Nigerian family life. You will also learn about marriage, family planning, courtship, husband and wife relationship, training of children, home management, role of mother and father – in – law in Nigerian family life. Finally, you will discover through your reading and assignments what makes marriage successful.

Course Aims

The course encourages you to:

- i. recognize the importance of marriage to you as an individual and to the society;
- ii. learn that your choice of a life partner determines the kind of home, stable or unstable, Christian or pagan, in which your children will grow;
- iii. discover the qualities that men and women should look for in the partners they hope to marry;
- iv. learn the nature and significance of the marriage covenant;
- v. study the way husband and wife are to relate and live together;
- vi. recognize causes of some common problems that couples experience;
- vii. study what makes marriage successful;
- viii. learn the issues involved in parenting;
- ix. recognize the need to manage home with wisdom;
- x. discover the principles and practice of family worship;

- xi. learn the role of mother and father – in – law in marriage in the Nigerian family life;
- xii. learn the various stages and challenges of family life.

Working through this Course

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- i. identify the importance of having a good home;
- ii. recognize the need for choosing the right partner;
- iii. learn where and how a person may find the right partner;
- iv. list the qualities that men and women should look for in the partners they hope to marry;
- v. recognize some of the common problems in the Nigerian family life;
- vi. identify what makes marriage successful; and
- vii. learn the role of husband and wife in the Nigerian family life.

To complete this course you are required to read the study units, read suggested books and other materials that will help you achieve the objectives. Each unit contains self – assessment for assessment purposes. There will be final examination at the end of the course. The course should take you a total of about 17 weeks to complete. Listed below are the major components of the course.

Major components of the course are:

- 1. Course Guide
- 2. 3 modules of contents of 5 units each
- 3. Recommended textbooks
- 4. Assignments

Study Units

There are fifteen study units in this course. Each unit should take you 2-3 hours to work through. The fifteen units are divided into three modules. Each module contains 5 units. These are arranged as follows:

Module 1 Preparation for Marriage

- Unit 1 Thinking about Marriage
- Unit 2 Choosing a Life Partner
- Unit 3 Courtship
- Unit 4 Preparation for Marriage
- Unit 5 The Marriage Covenant

Module 2 Marital Life

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Husband and Wife Relationship |
| Unit 2 | Sexual Immorality |
| Unit 3 | Finance Management |
| Unit 4 | Marital Conflicts |
| Unit 5 | A Successful Marriage |

Module 3 Family Life

| | |
|--------|------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Training of Children |
| Unit 2 | Family Communication |
| Unit 3 | Family Worship |
| Unit 4 | Extended Relationships |
| Unit 5 | Family Life Cycle |

Each unit includes a table of contents, introduction, specific objectives, recommended textbooks and summary of key ideas. At intervals in each unit, you will be provided with a number of exercises or self assessment questions. These are to help you test yourself on the materials you have just covered. The value of these self-test is to help you assess your progress and to reinforce your understanding of the material. At least, one tutor- marked assignments will be providing at the end of each unit. The exercise and the tutor-marked assignment will help you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual units of the course.

Assignment File

All the details of the assignments you must submit to your tutor for marking will be found in this file. You must get a passing grade in these assignments in order to pass this course. In the assignment file itself and in the section on the assignment within this course guide, additional information will be found.

There are fifteen assignments in this course. They will cover:

1. Thinking about marriage (Module 1, unit 1)
2. Choosing a life partner (Module 1, unit 2)
3. Courtship (module 1, unit 3)
4. Preparation for marriage (module 1, unit 4)
5. Marriage Covenant (Module 1, unit 5)
6. Husband and wife relationship (module 2, unit 1)
7. Sexual Immorality (module 2 unit 2)
8. Finance Management (module 2 unit 3)
9. Marital Conflicts (module 2 unit 4)
10. A Successful Marriage (module 2 unit 5)

11. Training of Children (module 3 unit 1)
12. Family Communication (module 3 unit 2)
13. Family Worship (module 3 unit 3)
14. Family Relationships (module 3 unit 4)
15. Family Life Cycle (Module 3 unit 5)

Course Materials

Course Guide

Study Units

References

Assessment/Assignment File Presentation Schedule

Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA)

Final Examination and Grading

Course Marking Scheme

Course Overview

Textbooks and References

Christenson, Larry. (1970). *The Christian Family*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Bethany House Publishers.

Cunningham, Bess (1989). *Family Behaviour*. New York: University Press.

Elmer, Manuel C. (1992). *Family Adjustment and Social Change*. Chicago: University Press.

Groves, Gladys. (1942). *Marriage and Family Life*. North Carolina: Chapel Hill.

Akande S. T. Ola. (2004). *Marriage and Family Life in the Nigerian Society from the Beginning to the End*. vols. 162. Ibadan. Daystar Press.

Presentation Schedule

The presentation Schedule includes in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor – marked assignments and attendant tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date. You should guard against falling behind in your work.

Assessment

The course will be assessed in two aspects. These are:

1. Tutor-Marked Assignments
2. Written examination For you to do the assignments very well it is expected of you to apply information, knowledge and techniques obtained from the course. You must try to submit the assignments to your tutor for marking before the deadlines given in the assignment file. The assignments will count for 40% of examination, which you will sit for at the end of the course, it will also count for 60% of your total course work. The examination will be of three hours duration.

Tutor-Marked Assignment

This course consists of 10 tutor-marked assignments. The five assignments with the highest marks will be counted for you. In other words, you need not submit all the assignments, but you are encouraged to do so. Each assignment counts 8% towards your total course mark.

In the assignment file, you will find all the assignment questions for all units. To demonstrate your understanding of the course, do not depend only on information obtained from the units to answer the questions. Go to the library, read and research very well to obtain more information on the course.

After completing each assignment, send it to your tutor. Endeavour to get each assignment across to your tutor on or before the dates given in the assignment file. However, if it becomes impossible for you to submit any of this assignment on time, let your tutor know before the due date. After due consideration, your tutor might give you an extension of time to submit.

Final Examination and Grading

To prepare for this examination, revise all the areas covered in the course. Revision of all the exercise and the tutor – marked assignments before the examination will also be of help to you. You should begin the revision after you have finished studying the last unit. This final examination will be of three hours duration. The final examination will be 60% of the total course grade.

Course Marking Scheme

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down

| Assessment | Marks |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Assessment | 5 Assignments = 40% |
| Final Examination | 60% of overall courses marks |
| Total | 100% of course marks |

Course Overview

The units, the number of weeks it would take you to complete them, and the assignments that follow them are outlined in the table below:

| Unit | Title of work | Duration (weeks) | Assignment |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Course Guide | | | |
| Module 1 | | | |
| 1 | Thinking About Marriage | 1 | Assignment 1 |
| 2 | Choosing A Life Partner | 1 | Assignment 2 |
| 3 | Courtship | 1 | Assignment 3 |
| 4 | Preparation for Marriage | 1 | Assignment 4 |
| 5 | The Marriage Covenant | 1 | Assignment 5 |
| Module 2 | | | |
| 1 | Husband and Wife Relationship | 1 | Assignment 6 |
| 2 | Sexual Immorality | 1 | Assignment 7 |
| 3 | Finance Management | 1 | Assignment 8 |
| 4 | Marital Conflicts | 1 | Assignment 9 |
| 5 | A Successful Marriage | 1 | Assignment 10 |
| Module 3 | | | |
| 1 | Training of Children | 1 | Assignment 11 |
| 2 | Family Communication | 1 | Assignment 12 |
| 3 | Family Worship | 1 | Assignment 13 |
| 4 | Family Relationships | 1 | Assignment 14 |
| 5 | Family Life Cycle | 1 | Assignment 15 |
| | Total | 15 | |

How to Get the Most from this Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the University lecturer. This is one of the advantages of distance learning that you can read and work through specifically designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. You should see them (study unit materials) as reading lectures, instead of listening to them in the

classroom. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units also tell you when to read your text materials.

You are provided exercise to do at appropriate points just as a lecturer might give you class exercises.

Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit.

These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the stated objectives.

If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chance of passing the course.

However, when you run into any difficulty, telephone your tutor or visit the Study Centre nearest to you for assistance. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, therefore, don't hesitate to call and ask him to provide it.

The following is a practical strategy for working through the course: Read the Course Guide thoroughly, several times to ensure that the message gets really across to you.

- (i) Organise a study schedule. Refer to the 'course overview' for more details.

Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g. details of your tutorials and the date of the first day of the semester, is available at the Study Centre.

You need to gather together all this information in one place; such as your dairy or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for each unit.

- (ii) Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason why students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into

difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.

- (iii) Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the overview at the beginning of each unit.
- (iv) Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the units you will be instructed as to what to read from them. Keep in touch with the Study Centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.
- (v) Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before due dates), check on the assignment at the Study Centre and take note of your next required assignment. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully and as they fall due. Do not allow backlog. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
- (vi) Again, on the exercises/assignments, you will discover that these are placed both within (under each major section) and at the end of the unit. Some of the sectional exercises are also used as TMAs at the end. You are free to undertake the assignment either section by section or together at the end. The assignments are however graded per unit and not section by section.
- (vii) Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials again and again and/or consult your tutor.
- (viii) When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then go on to the next unit. Proceed, until by unit, through the course and try to plan your study such that you keep yourself on schedule.
- (ix) When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment from and also written on the assignment consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.

- (x) After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide)

Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials

There are 30 hours of tutorial (fifteen 2 hours) provided to support this course. The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you, together with name and address of your tutor. Your tutor will mark the assignments before the deadline. In case you will not meet the deadline, notify your tutor. The tutor will return your assignments to you after he must have marked them.

Try your best not to miss any of the tutorials. This is because that is the only chance you have of meeting your tutor and your fellow students. And your tutor will easily solve any problem you might have encountered while reading the course materials.

Summary

CTH 014 intends to introduce you to marriage and family life in Nigerian society. By the time you complete this course, you would have known about marriage, family and common problems in Nigerian family life. Therefore, the successful completion of this course will help you to answer these questions without much difficulty:

1. What is the nature of marriage and family in the Nigerian society?
2. What is the importance of choosing the right person for marriage?
3. What are the right qualities that men and women should look for in the partners they hope to marry?
4. What are some of the negative roles that mother and father - in - law play in the Nigerian family life?
5. What are the causes of common marital problems?
6. What are some of the common problems in the Nigerian family life?
7. What are the husband and wife relationships in Nigerian family life?
8. How should parents train their children?
9. What are the factors required for a successful marriage?
10. What are the needs for effective family communication?
11. How should family worship be conducted?
12. What are the stages of family life?

**MAIN
COURSE**

| | |
|--------------------|---|
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| Course Title | Marriage and Family |
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MODULE 1

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| Unit 5 | The Marriage Covenant |

UNIT 1 THINKING ABOUT MARRIAGE

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| 3.0 | Main Content |
| 3.1 | Different Views about Marriage |
| 3.2 | The Need for a Good Home |
| 3.3 | Thinking about Marriage |
| 4.0 | Conclusion |
| 5.0 | Summary |
| 6.0 | Tutor-Marked Assignment |
| 7.0 | References/Further Readings |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

By now you should have gone through the Course Guide and should be aware of what this course is about to offer you. This first unit will present to you different views about marriage, the purpose of marriage and the need for a good family. This unit is very important because it sets the pace for the subsequent units of this course. The specific objectives and outline below are what you are expected to learn from this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the Christian view of marriage
- state God's purpose for marriage
- discuss the importance of having a good home
- identify the need for emotional, financial, economical and spiritual maturity before marriage.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Different Views about Marriage

From the outset, you should know that as we have different types of people in the world so we have different views about marriage. The Christian belief about marriage is different from some non – Christian beliefs. Some people don't see anything good or positive in marriage. Such people view marriage as nothing more than an institution associated with physical, emotional and financial stress.

Why do people marry? Some do so in the African context because the society expects everybody to marry. They think of marriage as a necessary evil. Some others do so because they want to bear children. Such men may see their wives as baby-making machines. Of course, most African ladies like to get married because it confers on them a responsible social status. Marriage is also one of the right channels to direct sexual desire and utilize sexual energy. The most important reason however, for marriage is companionship. In a marital union, two people walk together to share their lives and help each other physically, emotionally and spiritually.

However, for Christians, marriage is an honourable estate established by God before the fall of man, signifying the union between Christ and His church. This holy estate, Christ both honoured and beautified with His presence at the wedding in Cana of Galilee. It is therefore not a thing to be rushed into or undertaken or instituted lightly, but reverently, soberly and in the fear of God.

You should know the purpose for which marriage was instituted. The cause for which matrimony was ordained includes the following:

1. Companionship, mutual society, help and comfort which husband and wife ought to have for each other;
2. Procreation of children to be brought up in the fear and nurture of God and unto the praise of His Holy Name;
3. That the natural instincts and affection in man planted by God should be hallowed and directed aright, that those who are of God to His Holy estate, should continue therein in pureness of living.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

State the different views about marriage.

3.2 The Need for a Good Home

Every man or woman needs and desires a good home where the father is true and strong, a home where there is no blight of wrong, a home where there is peace, love and where God is King. If the Nigerian society is to be peaceful, free of violence, corruption and armed robbery the foundation must be laid in the home. The need and desire for a good home cannot be over emphasized because the leadership which a man gives to his country and the love which a man has for his fellow citizens must have been part of his home training.

It is only in the home, that is, a family constituted by a man and a woman joined together in holy matrimony as husband and wife, that sex finds its acceptable expression. Sex outside of a home by either the husband or the wife is detrimental to society.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Why the need for a good home? Give some reasons.

3.3 Thinking about Marriage

Thinking seriously and honestly about the issues involved in marriage must precede getting married. Before a young man and a lady get married, they must consider the following factors:

1. Emotional stability. Both must be emotionally balanced and mature to accept difficulties, sorrows and disappointments in the family with the calmness of spirit that depicts men and women of strong character.
2. The possibility of having some strong financial base before starting a family. The economic pressures of modern Nigeria require that a man be sure that his income alone is adequate to keep himself and his wife together as the years go by.
3. Possessing some personal effects like clothes and some household utensils.
4. Seeking the counsel of experienced happily married couples or marriage counsellors who will give necessary advice as well as provide answers to some of the questions that may arise in the future. Perhaps the best people to listen to for counsel are parents, provided such parents have not been separated or divorced. Usually, because of their many years of experience, our parents or elderly godly couples are our best advisers.

5. Consider at least the young man having a well paying job or at least the prospect of securing a good job that will enable him to meet the needs of his family. It will be a great shame for a man to get married and still depend on his parents to feed and clothe him, his wife and children.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Thinking about marriage precedes getting married. Discuss

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has taught how God instituted marriage and the purpose for marriage. It teaches that people must seriously consider certain issues before getting married. It also emphasizes the importance of a good home.

5.0 SUMMARY

There are different views about marriage. Some associate fighting, bitterness, hatred and personality conflict with marriage. But Christians believe that God instituted marriage for companionship, fellowship and for procreation. A good home determines the future of the children; influences them for good and brings joy and hope into their lives.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What are the four major ideas that a man or woman must seriously think about before entering into marriage?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Emerson Eggerichs. (1995). *Love and Respect*. Brentwood: Integrity Publishers.

Larry Christenson. (1970). *The Christian Family*. Grand Rapids: Bethany House Publishers.

M. O. Oladeji. (1999). *A Handbook of Christian Marriage*. Ibadan: Vintage Publishers.

UNIT 2 CHOOSING A LIFE PARTNER

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- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Choosing the Right Partner
 - 3.2 Wrong Bases for the Choice of a Life Partner
 - 3.3 Where and How to Find the Right Partner
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit we examined some of the basic issues about marriage. In this unit you will study some things about the choice of a life partner: the significance of choosing the right person, wrong bases for the choice of a spouse as well as where and how to find the person.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the importance of the choice of the right partner in marriage
- state some of the wrong criteria in the choice of a life partner
- discuss where and how a person can find the right partner.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Choosing the Right Partner

The choice of a life partner determines the kind of future home: stable or unstable, Christian or otherwise, in which the children will grow. The right type of wife or husband whose religion has influenced him or her for good will bring joy and hope into the home.

The choice of a life partner will also determine whether the children of that partnership will have respect for law and order in the society. If a father is known for his contempt of law and order it will be impossible for anyone to expect his children to do better than he. It is only in exceptional cases that the son or daughter of a rogue will be law abiding.

The choice of a life partner also determines the extent to which the wife

and the husband will enrich their personality development. A man or a woman must look for a partner who will respect his or her rights, opinions and privileges. Both husband and wife must feel a sense of equality while the man retains the portfolio of the head of the house without the right in any way to arbitrary decisions.

The choice of a life partner will determine to what extent the nuptial partnership will be a source of beauty, joy, and peace in the home. A good partner will lessen the headaches, heartbreaks, disloyalty, divisions and dissatisfactions that destroy homes in the society.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What is the significance of the choice of the right partner?

3.2 Wrong Bases for the Choice of a Life Partner

Some people choose a life partner just because of physical attraction. This is wrong and dangerous. A person may be outwardly handsome or beautiful but inwardly ugly. Don't marry just because of external beauty. Look for a person you love, not the physical features. The physical features (skin, colour, shape, size, weight etc) may change later. When you marry the person you love, the love does not change or fade even when the physical features change.

Some other persons marry on the basis of education or profession. Some people wish that the man will be a banker or the woman will be a nurse. Another common criterion is the family background. Some rich parents insist wrongly that their children should marry children of their wealthy friends. Unfortunately, the level of wealth does not necessary determine love, joy and peace in a home. Finally, prejudices guide choice form some people. Some families will never allow their children to marry from some particular tribes or towns. In Christian marriage, what is important is to determine the will of God.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Mention four wrong criteria for the choice of a life partner.

3.3 Where and How to Find the Right Partner

A suitable place for a Christian young man or woman to find the right partner is at Christian meetings, organizations and societies. A person who desires to win the love of another cannot live a solitary life. A person desiring to have a life partner must associate with other people and share their fellowship and conversations. Joining Christian

organizations and societies is a good means of securing a life partner.

Another way of choosing a life partner is through prayer to God. Such prayer will ask God to direct the man to the right woman. It is a prayer that will call upon God to provide a wife or husband who will help establish a home that will be filled with the kind of love, joy and peace that come from daily communion with God.

Anyone who has prayed to God for a life partner should trust God for guidance. He or she should also be prepared to discover and accept God's will.

The seeker should not only pray but also watch and listen to God's voice. When he eventually makes the right choice, he will be excited because the Holy Spirit will convince him that his choice is the right one.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

A new university graduate has approach you for guidance on when and how to choose a life partner. How will you advice him?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Choosing the right partner means that there are many possibilities. A man will come across hundreds and perhaps thousands of ladies in life before he settles for one person. A lady may be approached by two or three men out of which she will have to determine who is God's will for her. The overall concern is: who is the best person? That is the issue of the will of God. This is a crucial decision of life. It is one of the things that will determine the success or failure of marital life.

5.0 SUMMARY

The key issues discussed in this unit about the choice of the right partner are:

- The choice of a life partner determines the kind of marital life a person will have. Marriage can hardly succeed with the wrong partner.
- We must avoid wrong bases in the choice of a life partner. Such wrong criteria are beauty, education, profession, wealth and tribe.
- Choosing right partner involves going to the right places, prayer, and trusting God for guidance.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss four ways in which the choice of the right partner determines the kind of home a person will have.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Larry Christenson. (1970). *The Christian Family*. Grand Rapids: Bethany Home Publishers.

S. T. Ola Akande. (2004). *Marriage and Family Life in the Nigerian Society*. Vol. 1 Ibadan: Daystar Press.

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UNIT 3 COURTSHIP

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 - 3.1 Making Courtship Purposeful
 - 3.2 A Guide for Christian Courtship
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the first two units, you should have acquired knowledge about the significance of a good home and the purpose for which God Himself instituted marriage between a man and a woman. Also this means that God did not institute marriage between a man and a man or a woman and a woman. God does not approve homosexuality. In this unit, you will study about courtship, its duration and significance. One of the major points in this unit is that courtship is a time when no breach in the promise of two people to marry each other may be expected. This unit also has an exciting discussion of the significance of courtship. Therefore, you are encouraged to notice the different stages in courtship.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define courtship
- determine the duration of courtship
- list the need for courtship
- identify the significance of courtship
- explain the importance of engagement ceremony.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Making Courtship Purposeful

As you must have seen from your reading of the materials in unit one, there are several steps or stages that a man or woman intending to get married must go through before the actual marriage takes place. For

example, after a man has chosen his life partner or after a woman has consented to a man's proposal for marriage, the next stage in their preparation for marriage is what is traditionally known as the period of courtship.

If a young man and woman plan to spend time together, there should be a purpose for such moments of togetherness. There should be a plan of action. To make your courtship period purposeful you may need to consider the following plan of action:

1. Plan to attend fellowship, church and prayer meetings together.
2. Visit mature Christian couples and learn from their wealth of experience.
3. Read good Christian books and share the lessons with each other.
4. Go out together to play games, attend concerts or take a walk to places of interest.
5. Arrange with other friends to go for a picnic. The purpose of courtship is not be interested only in the physical side of courtship but an opportunity to develop a lasting and meaningful relationship.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What is the meaning and purpose of courtship?

3.1 A Guide for Christian Courtship

Courtship should be seen as part of your Christian life for which you will account before God. You should therefore remember that God is recording what you do during courtship and you will be required to account for it before God. You should try to make up your mind not to do anything during your courtship that will cause your conscience to accuse you. Resist the temptation to yield to the sinful passions of lust. You should seek, follow and obey the Lord's guidance during this period. Take note of the following guidelines:

Make your courtship part of your spiritual journey.

If you desire and plan to make your courtship part of your spiritual journey you must not defile your body. You must flee from sexual immorality. If you indulge in fornication during courtship, you are sinning against God. A person, male or female, loses his or her self worth by indulging in pre-marital sex. Remember that according to the Bible, sex is only allowed in marriage and you should therefore recognize that outside marriage, sex is sin. Pre-marital sex brings only diseases, unhappiness, guilt and regret.

Set standards and limits for your courtship.

It is important for you to set your standards, limits, dos and don't before you fall in love and before you begin courtship with anyone. A Christian girl must not allow any man to touch her buttocks or breast. These are the kick starters of sex. To allow sex before marriage leads to loss of respect for and trust in each other. Therefore avoid being in secluded places or dark corners. Avoid visiting your fiancé or fiancée who is staying alone without any form of safeguard. It is dangerous and tempting for the two of you to do so. Try to avoid locking yourselves in a room for such may lead to the temptation to commit sin. Try to avoid any act that will destroy your integrity and the integrity of your partner. Have a strong philosophy that is rooted in respect for yourself and your partner.

Avoid compromise

No matter the temptation or pressure maintain your high standard of spirituality and morality. Do not compromise with your spirituality because of your strong desire just to get married or because you are felling that you are getting old. Always remember that the kind of person that wins with low standards (free sex just to satisfy the other person), is one that will bring you the greatest unhappiness in life. Anybody that encourages you to compromise your purity and spirituality is your enemy and is leading you into a great and dangerous risk. Do not be less than your best. Remember that you do not need to compromise standards to get God's will. Set Biblical standards, hold on to them throughout and you will be rewarded for choosing God's way.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Discuss three practical guidelines about Christian courtship.

3.2 Things to Watch Out for in Courtship

Once you enter into courtship with your partner watch out for the following.

Watch out for the kind of friends your partner keeps

Remember an old adage which says: show me your friends and I will know who you are. The kind of friends he or she keeps, associates with and visits will definitely tell you much about your partner.

Take note of his or her life style

Is he or she neat or dirty, flamboyant or modest? Is he or she living above his or her income? All your observations in respect of the life style of your partner will draw your attention to their lapses and wrong signals. These considerations will assist you in deciding on whether to choose him or her as your life partner.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Name two important things that people need to watch out for in courtship.

3.3 The Significance of Courtship

As you make your bed so will you lie on it. A happy marriage starts with who you marry. The period of courtship as a part of preparation for marriage is significant for many reasons:

Courtship is a period when both of you get to know each other a bit more intimately. It is a period when you observe the life style, interest, level of morality and spirituality of each other. It is usually at this period that the man or the woman finally decides whether to go into marriage with the partner or not.

The courtship period affords the couple's parents an opportunity to know their future son – in – law and daughter – in – law before the marriage is consummated.

Courtship is a trial period. It is a period of investigation into the private and public life of the lady or the man. You should know that most marriages which began in good courtship and continued for a reasonable length of time have ended in successful homes. You should plan and pray to use your courtship wisely.

Courtship is also significant because it is a period when the man and the woman plan for the kind of marriage they want. It is also during courtship that the two partners prayerfully decide on the appropriate time and place for their marriage will take place.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISED 4

What is the significance of Courtship?

3.5 Engagement Ceremony

When you are sure about God's leading, it is appropriate to formally introduce your partner to your parents. Your parents' consent is very important. Do not leave them out of your wedding plans. In Genesis 24:28, Rebecca involved her parents. You need to get your parents involved in your marriage plans.

The next stage in your preparation for the wedding is the engagement ceremony. This is marked sometimes by the presentation of an engagement ring by the man to the woman. It is a time for public recognition and awareness that the man and the woman have decided to marry each other and their parents are involved. The form which the engagement ceremony takes varies from one ethnic group to the other in Nigeria. Once the engagement or payment of bride price has been settled and a date has been proposed for your wedding, you should see your pastor for the formal registration of the date and for pre-marital counselling. Pre-marital counselling is important during courtship and you should see your pastor or a counsellor to counsel both of you before your wedding day.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

"The engagement is the link between courtship and wedding ceremonies". Discuss.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit has taught the meaning of courtship, discussed the duration of courtship and how to make your courtship purposeful. It has also provided some vital guides for Christian courtship.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has discussed the following:

- The meaning of courtship
- The purpose for courtship
- Some guidelines for Christian courtship
- Some important things to watch out for during the period of courtship
- The significance of courtship period
- Engagement Ceremony

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss some important things to watch out for during courtship period.
2. What is the significance of courtship?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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Merril, Dean (1997). *The Husband Handbook*. Exeter: The Paternoster Press.

Oladeji, M. O. (1996). *A Handbook of Christian Marriage*. Ibadan: Vintage Publisher.

UNIT 4 PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Getting Ready for Marriage
 - 3.2 Different Forms of Marriage
 - 3.3 Consequences of Lack of Preparation for Marriage
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the last unit you should have learnt about the meaning and significance of courtship as part of the important steps towards marriage. In this unit, you will study the various ways to prepare for the real wedding day. This unit also has an exciting discussion on the different forms of marriage particularly in the Nigerian society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the various stages in the preparation for the wedding
- list the different forms of marriage
- discuss what each form of marriage entails
- list the consequences of lack of preparation for marriage.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Getting Ready for Marriage

There is no hard and fast rule about the duration of any courtship. The duration depends on the individuals. There are men and women who lengthen their courtship days in order that they may get better acquainted with each other so that they can carry their intimacy into marriage. Some men prolong their courtship when they know that they are financially incapable of bearing the cost of the marriage expenses.

Furthermore, some prolong their courtship when the parents of the lady refuse bluntly to give their consent and blessing to their daughter being married to a man they hate to see or hate to have as a son-in-law. The

man and the lady then stay on unmarried until her parents can bend their decision in their favour. After the young man and the young lady have agreed to marry each other and their parents have consented, then the time is ripe to begin getting ready for marriage. Both the man and the woman must be ready spiritually, the two must determine to live as Christians for the family that decides to live for Christ cannot break under any crisis because they draw their strength from God. A family that takes a stand for Christ is not likely to fall for the devil.

Both the man and the woman must get ready for marriage by being morally upright. The first thing to put off is falsehood. Once a spouse detects a lie in his or her spouse, the foundation of trust is already shaken. Where there is no trust there can be no harmony or peace. In getting ready for marriage both the man and woman must learn and be ready to speak truthfully to one another. A man and woman getting ready for marriage must learn to “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice (Eph. 4:31).

Another way to get ready for marriage is for the man to be sure that he is financially able to take care of his spouse and the responsibilities of the family. Attaining physical maturity is not the only major requirements for getting ready for marriage. Both the man and woman getting ready for marriage must be spiritually mature, morally upright, emotionally balanced and financially capable to meet the spiritual, financial, emotional and moral needs of a family.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Discuss how a man or woman can adequately prepare for marriage.

3.2 Different Forms of Marriage

The marriage ceremony takes different forms in Nigeria. The different forms include the following:

Marriage according to native law and custom

If a man and his fiancée decide on this form of marriage, they must decide on the date and announce it to their respective families and friends. The night before the wedding day is the Bachelor’s Eve. The young man and his lady will invite their friends to their respective homes to share in the festivities of the occasion with them. In the evening of the following day, the bride will go to her father and mother to bid them goodbye. They too, will bless her. Her friends and some of her female relatives will lead her along with her personal effects to her

bridegroom's house.

Marriage under the Ordinance

The second form of marriage is the one people call "Court Marriage" which is better called "Marriage at the Registry" or legally termed as "marriage under the ordinance". Whenever this form of marriage is being contemplated, the first thing to do is to file a Notice of Marriage in the Marriage Registry about ten weeks before the date of the proposed marriage. If either the man or the lady is under the age of twenty-one, they must ask the Registrar of marriages for a consent form which must be completed by the father if he is alive or by the mother if the father is dead or out of the country, or by a guardian or relative if both parents are dead. Unless such a form is filled, no consent will be given for the marriage of that person who is below twenty-one years of age.

After the notice has been filed, the marriage can be celebrated either before the Registrar of Marriages or in the church that has been registered for such.

Wedding in Church

Another form of marriage that is common in this country is the Church Wedding. On the morning of the wedding day, the bride and the bridegroom go to the church. Traditionally most regular members of that church along with the parents, families, friends and co-workers of the bride, the bridegroom would be present in the church for the occasion. It is always a time of joy, merriment, re-union and thanksgiving.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

List the different forms of marriage in the Nigerian Society.

3.3 Consequences of Lack of Adequate Preparation for Marriage

Every important undertaking requires adequate preparation. Any person who fails to plan before undertaking a project is definitely planning to fail. The lack of adequate preparation for marriage will lead to the following consequences:

1. The couple will not cooperate with each other. Each person will be pretending to be an island to himself or herself. There will be a lack of recognition of the fact that marriage is a network of interdependency.
2. The man assuming to himself too much superiority and thereby

regarding the woman as created solely for his pleasure and thereby treating her as inferior in all respects.

3. Lack of joy and fulfilment of the married life.
4. A total collapse of the marriage, manifesting in separation or even divorce.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Discuss the consequences or results of lack of adequate preparation for marriage.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit teaches preparation for marriage, how to get ready for marriage, different forms of marriage and consequences of lack of adequate preparation for marriage.

5.0 SUMMARY

1. The major ways to prepare for marriage include financial preparation, moral preparation, emotional and spiritual preparation.
2. The different forms of marriage include: marriage according to native law and custom, marriage under the ordinance or marriage at the Registry and the church wedding.
3. Consequences of the lack of adequate preparation for marriage are misery and eventual collapse of the relationship.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Mention four possible consequence for a couple that did not prepare adequately for their marriage.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Pofi, David (2005). *Fundamentals of the Christian Home*. Nigeria: Africa Christian Textbooks.

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UNIT 5 THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Importance of the Marriage Covenant
 - 3.2 Symbols of the Marriage Covenant
 - 3.3 Tests of the Marriage Covenant
 - 3.4 Consequences of a Broken Marriage Covenant
 - 3.5 Commitment to the Marriage Covenant
- 4.0 Conclusion
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- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

It appears as if many couples do not remember to reflect critically on and understand the implications of the marriage covenant or take very serious the wedding vows once made with their spouses in the presence of God and the people of God. A vow is a voluntary agreement between two parties. It is a contract, a pledge and a covenant. It is therefore sacred and legally binding.

The declaration of the wedding vow is an integral part of the solemnization of a Christian wedding ceremony. The wedding itself can be defined as a covenant made in the presence of God and people for a life – long union of a man and woman for the purpose of companionship, sexual purity and procreation. A traditional form of the vow is written below:

*I take
you..... to be my wedded wife and
to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for
richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to
cherish till death do us part according to God's holy law,
and thereto I give you my truth.*

The analysis, symbols and tests of this covenant as well as commitment to it will be discussed in this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the importance of the marriage covenant
- identify the important symbols of Christian marriage
- discuss the ways in which the marriage covenant can be tested
- explain the consequences of breaking the marriage covenant
- discuss how the marriage covenant can be kept.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Importance of the Marriage Covenant

The marriage vow is a life-long commitment for the welfare of the couple. A partner is to seek the material/economic, social/physical and spiritual good of the other throughout life. The covenant is legally binding as long as the spouse is alive. The vow implies a commitment to the spouse in spite of possible unpleasant experiences of life. While varying circumstances may test the relationship, commitment is required.

In contemporary life some Christians object to the traditional marriage vow. They prefer a covenant that is for better against worse, for richer against poorer, for health against sickness, for prosperity against adversity. It is argued that the traditional vow is a negative confession and even amounts to a curse. Our response is that this new version sounds sweet. However it is superficial and lacks practical and biblical depth. This reasoning is not realistic. It is not true to life. It is a pretence, a self-deception and so a lie.

The traditional marriage vow is true to life. Do we know of any single marriage and family life that is without its ups and downs, sweet and bad moments, ease and difficulty? Do we think there will be one? The traditional covenant is an affirmation of a fact of life. It is a confession and acceptance of reality. It means that God expects a Christian couple to always be faithful to each other. There is no sufficient excuse for failure to fulfil the vow.

The most basic duties of the spouse is to love and cherish the other in all circumstances. A successful Christian family is not a family without problems. It is a family where the partners are faithful to God, to one another and to their covenant. There is no problem-free marriage. The presence and power of God within us in our faithfulness is the only guarantee to overcome problems and experience peace and joy.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What is the importance of the marriage covenant?

3.2 Symbols of the Marriage Covenant

Three important symbols of the Christian marriage, which also have profound implications for the covenant, are rings, the Bible and flowers. It is customary to exchange rings both at the engagement and wedding ceremonies. Rings symbolize value, purity and continuity of marital commitment. Traditional marriage rings are made of gold, a very precious metal. When the gold is pure it is also very valuable. Since it is a perfect circle it has not beginning and end. All these apply very succinctly to the marriage vow and relationship.

The Bible is the Word of God. It contains the revelation of God written down for our guide and instruction in every aspect of life including marriage. The godly principles in the Bible are laws that must not be violated, if the purpose of marriage will be fulfilled. The flower is more of a Western marital symbol but it is becoming acceptable because of its colour and sweet smell. It also turns into fruit. Flowers therefore speak of attraction and productivity in marriage.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Mention three important symbols of the marriage covenant.

3.3 Tests of the Marriage Covenant

The word of God teaches us that the construction of a house and the building of a house have something in common (Psalm 127:1-5). When we build a house we cannot ask the rain not to fall; we cannot tell the streams not to flow by the side; we cannot ask the winds not to blow against it. What we can do is to build our house well and strong so it can withstand all these adversities (Matt. 7:24-25). In a similar manner every aspect of the marriage vow will be tested. Our task is to build a Christian house that will withstand the rains, the streams and the winds of life. The tests of the marriage covenant are the challenges, problems, troubles and difficulties associated with the building of a Christian home. These tests relate to the purpose of companionship, sexual purity and procreation. Some examples will be mentioned.

In the area of companionship, misunderstanding between a couple can show their incompatibility. A difference of understanding on a little matter (if it not well handled) can grow to become disagreement and a cause for conflicts, crisis, separation and even divorce. Hardness of

heart (Matt. 19:8) led to the breakdown of a marriage only a few hours after the joining of the couple, due to disagreement over where to keep the many precious gifts they received. The two left the reception in different directions!

There are women today who seek for divorce in the courts of law on the ground that there is no more love. That expression usually connotes financial difficulties. Differences in social status can test and break a marital relationship. Religious convictions do sometime put asunder couples joined together. Critical health issues (like epilepsy) can separate a couple.

From the viewpoint of sexual intercourse some marriages have broken down due to problems like impotence and adultery (smartly called extra-marital affairs). A couple needs sexual adjustment to one another. When there is no sexual compatibility the relationship can break down due to lack of sexual satisfaction.

With regard to procreation, winds that may blow to test the marriage covenant of a couple are delay in pregnancy, bareness, and even how to parent children. It is true and unfortunate that some couples do not have serious crisis until they begin to raise their children. Isaac and Rebecca present a good biblical example. Isaac and Rebecca appeared to be a good husband and wife respectively. Unfortunately, they became bad father and mother s they showed favouritism to their children Esau and Jacob respectively (Gen. 27:1-47). Does this not mean that worships (songs, prayers), and services (tithes, offerings) rendered by covenant breakers are wasted?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISED 3

State and discuss three ways in which the marriage covenant can be tested.

3.4 Consequences of a Broken Marriage Covenant

Our God is a covenant making and covenant keeping God. The person who delays in fulfilling a vow made to God is considered to be a fool (Ecc. 5:4). Failure to keep the marriage covenant and obey the Word of God is plain foolishness (Matt. 7:26). God takes a broken covenant to be a sin and not a mistake, for whatever reason (Ecc. 5:6a, b). God is so angry with the covenant breaker that he destroys the work of his hands (Ecc. 5:6c). While it is a blessing to keep the marriage covenant it is a curse (misfortune, disaster, calamity and evil) not to keep it.

When the people of Judah broke God's covenant because of their

unfaithfulness to their spouses, God did not accept their worship. God did not pay attention to their tears, weeping and wailing (Mal. 2:13). A marriage covenant broken with a spouse also breaks our covenant relationship with God. When that happens heaven will be closed, prayers will be unanswered (1 Peter 3:7). The gifts that we bring to the altar are rejected (Matt. 5:23). Does this mean that worship (songs, prayers), and services (tithes, offerings) rendered by covenant breakers are wasted?

Christianity is based on the New Covenant of God with man through the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 26:28). When we become Christians we enter into a covenant relationship with God in Christ Jesus. If we break a covenant made with our spouse we have also broken the covenant made with God. It is an imperative Christian duty for us to keep our marriage covenant. Our marriage covenant is sacred. It is spiritual.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

“The consequences of a broken marriage covenant are grievous”. Discuss.

3.5 Commitment to the Marriage Covenant

The fear of God is one of the virtues that will help us to keep the marriage vow (Ecc. 5:7). Even when we feel that our spouse no longer deserves our love, submission, and faithfulness, nonetheless we should do so “out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:21). Thus the fear of the Lord gives wisdom that we need to be faithful to God and our spouse concerning our marriage covenant (Prov. 1:7).

Daily renewal of our covenant with God is required for us to be faithful to God. Unfaithfulness in Christian marriage is an evidence of unfaithfulness in Christian life. Lack of faithfulness to God will automatically reflect in a lack of faithfulness to one’s partner. Marital unfaithfulness is a mark of spiritual unfaithfulness. Renew your faith in God (Mal. 2:16). Strong stubborn faith in God will help you to be faithful to God, to your marriage covenant, to your spouse.

Christian marriage is more than physical cohabitation. It is a spiritual relationship. The husband and wife are one in body and spirit (Mal. 2:15). Christian couples need to guard themselves in their spirits (Mal. 2:15, 16) so as not to break Christian and marital faith. Marital unfaithfulness is not just a social but a spiritual problem. It is a sin against God and against one’s spouse. Marital faithfulness is a mark of spiritual wellbeing. We need to ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us keep our marriage covenant.

Christian spouses ought to be determined and committed to keep their marital vows and say like Ruth: “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will say. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me”. (Ruth 1:16-17; NIV).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

How can a Christian couple keep their marriage covenant?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The various difficulties of marital life which have been described as rains, streams and winds can make a couple to be unfaithful to the marriage covenant. The greatest problem of Christian marriage is unfaithfulness to the marriage covenant. Six times in Malachi 2:10-16 the Lord complained of the unfaithfulness of Judah (verses 10, 11, 14, 15, 16). In Christian marriage there is no convincing reason to God for a person to break marital faith and covenant. The marriage covenant has been made for life. Only one thing can break the marriage covenant and that is death. When the marriage covenant is broken it has grave consequences.

5.0 SUMMARY

The main lessons discussed in this unit about the marriage covenant are:

- The covenant recognizes diverse experiences of marital life
- Rings, the Bible and flowers are the important symbols of marriage
- The purposes of marriage are usually tested inside marital home
- Breaking the marriage covenant has adverse spiritual consequences
- We need to ask God to help us to keep the marriage covenant.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write a short note on “The importance of the marriage covenant”.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- S. T. Ola Akande. (2004). *Marriage and Family Life in Nigeria*. Vol. 1. Ibadan: Daystar Press.
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MODULE 2

| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Husband and Wife Relationship |
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| Unit 3 | Finance Management |
| Unit 4 | Marital Conflicts |
| Unit 5 | A Successful Marriage |

UNIT 1 HUSBAND AND WIFE RELATIONSHIP

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the first module of this course you studied issues that relate to preparation for marriage. In this second module you will examine issues about marital life, how husband and wife should relate together as well as some common marital problems like sexuality, infertility, and finance. You will also examine the factors for a successful marriage. The focus of this first unit in the module is that husband and wife need to live together and do many things together, such as planning, spending, sleeping, playing and worshipping.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss why husband and wife need to live together
- list various things that husband and wife can do together
- explain how husband and wife can overcome the circumstances that may tend to separate them.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Living and Planning Together

Marriage is for companionship (Gen. 2:24). Husband and wife must learn to live and stay together. If you can live alone, why did you marry? Don't try to live an isolated life; walk together; appear together in public and do things together. In contemporary life, some couples live apart permanently due to job situations. Weekend husbands, end of the month wives, annual parents are now part of our marital lexicon. This development threatens family life. It creates temptation for immorality and concubinage. Husbands and wives should live together.

Discuss, reason, think with your spouse. Plan your life and future together: your needs, plans, projects, aspirations. Fighting and quarreling are often signs of a breakdown of communication. Talk things over. The Shunammite woman and her husband did so (2 Kings 4:8-10). Take time to dream together about what you want your marriage, family to be. Grow together spiritually, socially and educationally; plan together.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Mention some circumstances that make it difficult for husband and wife to live together. What can be done to overcome these?

3.2 Spending and Eating Together

Finance is a very important part of family life. Plan and share together. Talk about your budget, income and expenditure. Don't allow money to divide you. Buy and own things together like TV, car, fridge, land and house. Joyfully share from your mutual sweat. Spend your money together.

In traditional Yoruba families couples hardly ever sit and eat together from the same table. We can do better in modern life. Eating together is a sign of love. Harmonise your taste. If it is possible, cook together. It is fun to work in the kitchen together. If the children are not at home, sex can start in the kitchen and then move to the bedroom. It is a shame when a man gives only five hundred naira to the wife to cook for the family but spend one thousand naira for pepper soup with his friends. Your wife/husband/children should be your best friends. Eat together.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

How can husband and wife spend the family income together?

3.3 Sleeping and Playing Together

This exhortation has various dimensions. It could mean try and go to bed at the same time, if only sometimes (Ecc. 4:11). It is not the best for one to always go to sleep at 9.00p.m. wake up at 5.00a.m. while the other sleeps at 10.00p.m. and wake up at 6.00a.m. When will you read the Bible and pray together? It could also refer to sexual relationship.

Find sexual fulfilment in your spouse. Even if you can afford different bedrooms abandon one room many times so as to sleep together, even if that will not always involve sexual intercourse. Don't make your spouse a widow/widower while you are alive. When God blesses your union with children, please nurture the children together (Prov. 22:6, 15). Love, discipline and rebuke them together, with one voice. Don't play favouritism like Isaac and Rebekkah who chose to love Esau and Jacob respectively (Gen. 22:1-17). Join hands to finance the education of your children. Guide them together from babyhood, through adolescence to youth and adulthood. Sleep together. Fun is an indispensable part of life. Relax and recreate together. Watch films together. Play games together – ludo, cards, scrabble, etc. When you can afford it, bathe together. Go on vacation together. Don't be busy as not to have time for your wife/husband. If you have no time to care for her/him somebody will look for the time to replace your affection. Play together.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

State the advantages and disadvantages of husband and wife sharing the same bedroom.

3.4 Worshipping Together

Attend the same church together. It is not good for one person to always come on time while the other comes late. It is not the best for the two to belong to two different churches (one Yoruba speaking, the other English speaking) or two denominations (one Baptist, the other Anglican).

Pray together to overcome life's difficulties and marital problems. Pray for one another. Study God's Word together. Build your faith together. Serve God together like Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. 16:3-5a). Agree to faithfully support God's work with tithes and offering. Strengthen one another spiritually. Encourage and help one another. Husband, be a Lot (Gen. 19:16, 25). Wife, be an Abigail (I Sam. 25:25). The following couples did not help one another: Adam and Eve, Ahab and Jezebel, Ananias and Sapphira. They sinned together and they received the punishment together. Don't be like them. Together let the resolution of Joshua be your own resolution too: "But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15b).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

“A Christian couple should worship God together.” Discuss.

4.0 CONCLUSION

If you can do good things together as suggested above you will be more faithful and committed to one another. This will give you a greater appreciation of your spouse and it will result in greater joy in your marital relationship. There is strength in togetherness (Ecc. 4:12; Matt. 18:19). Nothing, not even death, can separate two persons who have become one (Ruth 1:16:17). When there is togetherness there will be success and fulfilment of God’s purpose for marriage: companionship, sexual purity and procreation. Do you want to have a joyful marriage and family life? Then live together, spend together, eat together, sleep together, play together, worship God together with your spouse.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit I have led you to appreciate that one important secret of harmonious relationship between husband and wife is to try to do things together. The couple should try to live together, plan together, spend together, eat together, sleep together, play together and worship God together. This is not always easy. However, when a couple desires to do things together, they will look for practical solutions to overcome the things that want to separate them.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

List seven things that husband and wife can do to relate together.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Oladeji, M. O. (1999). *A Handbook of Christian Marriage*. Ibadan: Vantage Publishers Ltd.

UNIT 2 SEXUAL IMMORALITY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Nature of Sexual Intercourse
 - 3.2 Causes of Sexual Immorality
 - 3.3 Consequences of Sexual Immorality
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One common marital problem today is sexual unfaithfulness of husband and wife to each other. Sexual intercourse is one of the three major reasons for marriage. This is often stated as part of the marriage exhortation: “marriage is ordained for a remedy against the sinful life of adultery and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continence might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body.” This means that the intention of God is for people to find sexual fulfilment inside marriage. Therefore, when there is no sexual satisfaction a marriage fails. Moreover, from the biblical, Christian point of view (I Cor. 6:15) God expects sexual purity of the body of Christ through faithful, healthy sexual relationships of couples.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the nature of sexual intercourse
- state the reasons for adultery
- identify the consequences of sexual immorality
- discuss how couples can experience sexual fulfilment in marital union.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Nature of Sexual Intercourse

In psychology and medical science, sex can be treated as an instinct or appetite like thirst and hunger. Sexual intercourse is therefore considered to be a physical or emotional co-habitation of a male and a female. We know that even animals engage in sex. Sexual relationship between couples must rise above the animal level.

In the Christian faith, sex is more than mere physical exercise. It is in fact a spiritual or mystical union of a very deep and intimate sharing of love which unites two persons to become one (I Cor. 6:16). Therefore, within marital relationship, sexual intercourse is a blessing while it is a curse – evil, misfortune, calamity, failure - when two people who are not married to each other engage in it (Heb. 13:4). The two purposes of sex therefore find fulfilment only within marriage. These are pleasure (Song 4:10-16; 7:6-9) and procreation (Gen. 1:28). Sex gives a unique experience of excitement and joy to married couples that cannot be derived through any other means. It is also God's plan that through sexual intercourse, a woman becomes pregnant, bears a child and populates the human race.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

“Sexual intercourse is a spiritual or mystical union of a couple.” Explain.

3.2 Causes of Sexual Immorality

Because of the sacredness of pure sex God frowns at the sin of sexual immorality (Heb. 13:4). Some of the causes of sexual immorality in our society are:

Evil desire for mere fun and pleasure, just to please the body: Boys and girls engage in illicit sex in the process of friendship, pairing, dating and courtship. Such people must learn that true genuine love waits (I Cor. 3:4). God frowns at this evil desire (James 1:13-15) that led Amnon to rape Tamar (2 Sam. 3:1-22). Of course he paid for this fornication with his life.

Lack of sexual satisfaction in marriage, due to a number of factors: Temporary physical separation (for some days, weeks or months), menstrual period, sickness, pregnancy, sexual inhibition/rigidity, menopause and depression may lead to adultery.

Satanic affliction/bondage: Duet. 27:20-23 outlines cases of sexual perversion that bring evil and curses upon people:

- To sleep with one's father's wife (v. 20)
- To have sexual relations with an animal (v. 21)
- To sleep with one's sister (v. 22)
- To sleep with one's mother-in-law (v. 23)

These and other forms of sexual immorality are going on in our society.

Economic needs: There are young ladies, students and even married

women who engage in sexual immorality because of the economic benefits. There are people who have adulterous relationships with partners as old as their parents or as young as their children. Of course, professional harlots make their living through sexual immorality. Commercial sex is a dirty and cursed job.

Lack of self-discipline and control: Many godless men today demand sex from female job seekers. The earth trembles at the feet and misdeeds of such evil men. Job resolved to discipline himself (Job 31:1). Whoever has this problem which may be medical (emotional, psychological, psychiatric) or spiritual should seek Christian counselling and deliverance as quickly as possible.

Covetousness, carelessness and temptation: What led King David into adultery with Bathseba and the consequent curse of the sword and calamity upon his family (2 Sam. 11; 12:10, 11)? What did King Solomon do with seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (I Kings 11:3-4)?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Give six reasons that may cause sexual immorality among couples?

3.3 Consequences of Sexual Immorality

Some of the problems and dangers associated with sexual immorality are as follows:

Defilement of the body (I Cor. 6:18-20): Some of the worst human ailments are sexually transmitted diseases like gonorrhoea, syphilis and HIV/AIDS. Even when diseases are not caught, hyper sexual involvement can weaken the human body (backache in particular).

Breakdown of confidence in marriage: Your spouse will find it difficult to trust you once you have been guilty of extra-marital sex. The suspicion and breakdown of trust can lead to separation and divorce with its attendant pains, hurts, sorrows and stigma. The worst is the terrible effects of separation on the children.

Unwanted pregnancy: This will lead to the crime of abortion, and lack of peace. The crude exercise may endanger health and life (Isaiah 48:22).

Judgement of God (I Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 22:15): Fornication and adultery are two of the sins that destroys integrity and testimony of people. They weaken spiritual life and exposes people to the wrath of

God.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

State four possible consequences of sexual immorality.

3.4 Some Tips for Sexual Fulfilment

Let me begin this section with an assertion. In a monogamous relationship it is possible for the man and the woman to satisfy themselves sexually. This is because whereas the average man seems to have greater desire/urge for sex, an average woman has greater drive/capacity for sex. A man can find complete sexual satisfaction in his wife. Some tips that can help a couple to find greater sexual fulfilment are stated below:

Settle all your quarrels before bedtime: Sexual enjoyment cannot take place when there are unresolved conflicts. Love can begin in the kitchen and living room and then end up in the bedroom.

Nobody can dictate **the frequency of sexual intercourse** to a couple. Everyday may be too much; once a week may not be enough; twice or thrice a week may be average! Let the man be understanding when the woman refuses sex because of tiredness/fatigue, menstrual pain, or sickness. But the woman should not complain everyday. She should not force her husband to become a polygamist. She should never refuse sex to punish her husband; it is a bad lesson a man never learns. Having **adjusted sexually** to each other take some time off. Sex gives greater fun and satisfaction after some break as agreed by the two. When you agree to refrain from sex because of fasting, agree together or break your fast!

Take a good bath together. If your spouse merely tolerates your body odour and sweat, it takes away significantly from the pleasure. A mild perfume and powder is not wrong. Spray the room with a sweat smelling air freshener (Song 1:12-13).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

A Christian couple comes to seek your advice on how they can enjoy their sexual relationship. What advice will you give them?

4.0 CONCLUSION

God wants the husband and the wife to enjoy their sexual intimacy and

relationship. When they are not satisfied sexually it should be discussed lovingly. A couple may also read some Christian and medical books that discuss sexual enjoyment in marriage. If this does not solve the problem then the couple should agree to discuss the issue together with a godly Christian marriage counsellor.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has examined sexual immorality as a common marital problem. Some of the key points discussed are:

- The nature of sexual intercourse as a spiritual, mystical union
- That several factors like emotional, satanic and economic can cause sexual immorality
- That sexual immorality defiles the body, destroys marital trust, may lead to unwanted pregnancy and incurs God's wrath.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

State and discuss five reasons for the prevalence of sexual immorality today.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Akande, S. T. Ola. (2004). *Marriage and Family Life in Nigeria*, Vol. 1,

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Aworinde, J. A. *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Christian Homes*.

UNIT 3 FINANCE MANAGEMENT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Types of Finance Management
 - 3.2 Family Income and Expenditure
 - 3.3 Advice on Family Finance
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The last unit discussed the problems of sexual immorality. In this unit we will consider the issue of management of family income.

- Financial matter is one of the common problems in many homes.
- The problem is that many couples do not trust each other to the point of spending their money together!
- Christian marital relationship ought to be bigger than family finance. Talk about it, realistically.
- Problems in finance management indicate that the two do not truly trust each other! As a matter of fact, it means the two have not become one.
- Your purses will never be together until your hearts are fully together.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state different ways that husband and wife, can raise and manage the family income
- explain how husband wife can plan family expenditure together
- discuss some disciplinary measures about family finance.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Types of Finance Management

Christian husbands and wives do handle their family finance in different ways:

- **One source of Income:** Only one partner (usually the husband) is working to take care of family material needs. He/she decides how money is to be spent and provides accordingly.
- **Designation of Responsibilities:** This is a modified common purse. Sources of income from husband and wife are designated for different purposes e.g. The man pays the school fees of children and house rent, the woman handles feeding, bills (NEPA, etc).
- **Common Purse:** This is a situation where husband and wife have a common understanding of family income and expenditure. It may (or may not) involve joint bank account in which both are signatories. If one or both are not salary earners it is usually helpful to separate business account from family account. The business person runs the business account but money put into the joint family account are operated by both.

Common purse model is the ideal where there is oneness, mutual trust, cooperation and support. Value system and priorities have to be harmonized. All financial responsibilities (including major social expenses) of the spouses and their children are discussed and addressed together. However, spouses have freedom to spend for minor expenses to be reported to the partner later. Common purse will not work when there is: individualism, laziness, selfishness, wastefulness, closeness.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

State three different ways by which husband and wife can manage family income.

3.2 Family Income and Expenditure

- **Think of how to increase family income: Little money is not enough to take care of the family responsibilities.**
 - If further study will lead to promotion, make the sacrifice!
 - If one partner is involved in trading/business expand the scope. Wholesale is more profitable than retail.
 - Do something to augment salaries: plant vegetable/okro, what of

poultry/fishery/snailery?

Most couples fight over expenses. Bake the cake first before you share it!

- **Plan together how to spend family income.**

Through a realistic budget, determine what to spend money for. Let us use **an example** of a family of seven persons (father, mother, 4 children, 1 ward)

- Regular family Income: N50,000 (from the spouses)
- Expenditure pattern (Determine your own!)

| | Item | Percentage | Amount N |
|----|---|------------|-------------|
| 1. | Tithes (10%) Offering/Gifts (50%) | 15% | 7,500.00 |
| 2. | Feeding (Food Stuff, Cooking, Children Food Allowance)/Medical expenses | 30% | 15,000.00 |
| 3. | Transport (Public Transport/Car) | 10% | 5,000.00 |
| 4. | Housing (Rent, Water, PHCN etc) | 10% | 5,000.00 |
| 5. | Education/Clothing/Social | 20% | 10,000.00 |
| 6. | Savings/Investment (eg. Coop) | 10% | 5,000.00 |
| 7. | Miscellaneous (Pocket money) | 5% | 2,500.00 |

Notes

1. Who should be the family treasurer or financial secretary? The one who does not like to spend money!
2. A family that spend above 30% of income on food will not likely be able to carry out other major family projects.
3. If a family saves N5,000 monthly in a cooperative society that will be N180,000 in three years (N5,000 x 12 months x 3 years). They can take twice that amount (N360,000) to buy a car after three years! If they do so in five years they can save N300,000 and take N600,000 to invest in a good business! If they prefer to do it in ten years they can save N600,000 and obtain N1,200,000 to start to build their personal house.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

The total income of a family is N50,000.00 per month. How can a couple plan for family needs with this amount?

3.3 Advice on Family Finance

- **Live according to your income: This is the discipline that is lacking in many homes.**
- If you are a low income earner don't deceive yourself by competing with wedding/naming ceremonies of millionaires!
- If a N5,000 hand set is your ability whom are you fooling using N10,000 type?
- Private institutions are great for any child but they are meant for families well above average financially!

Stay out of debt (Rom. 13;8). Live in peace and good health.

- **Closing Encouragement! (Ecc. 4:912)**
- Christian husbands and wives. Let us be hardworking. Avoid waste, be one open, honest, trustworthy. Let us seek to have one heart/mind, one finance/purse. Let us harmonise our financial resources/needs/plans.
- If finance does not divide you most likely nothing else will divide you (Poverty, Satan, Sin, Friends, Co-workers, Parents, In-laws!)
- If you are united in your heart/mind and finance (income and expenditure) you will be united in most other ways.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Mention some disciplinary measures that a couple can adopt to maximize their family income.

4.0 CONCLUSION

From the study of family finance done in this unit, some conclusions can be made:

- Husband and wife need to work very hard so as to build a reasonable family income,
- Husband and wife need to plan together on how best to spend family income,
- Savings investment, however small should be considered an essential part of family finance;
- Mutual love and trust are imperatives for effective management of family finance.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have studied some aspects of family finance. While family expenditure is handled in different ways in different families. It is important to spend family's provisions judiciously to meet the material and physical needs of family members. It is necessary to think of how to raise family income as well as to plan together how to meet the priority needs of the family.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Mention three different ways that husband and wife can manage the family income.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

John A. Aworinde (2003). *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Christian Homes*. Ogbomoso: Gabesth Printers, 26-30.

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UNIT 4 MARITAL CONFLICTS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Nature of Marital Conflicts
 - 3.2 The Causes of Marital Conflicts
 - 3.3 Solution to Marital Conflicts
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last two units we considered two common marital problems, namely, sexual immorality and finance management. In this unit we shall study marital conflicts. Marriage is a good, sweet, exciting and wonderful relationship. However, it also very costly, demanding and practical. Marriage will demand the whole of your being. It will test your character, personality, attitudes, profession of faith. Marriage will bring out who you are. It will show the best and worst in you. This paper will briefly examine the nature, causes and resolution of marital conflicts.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the nature of marital conflicts,
- enumerate the common causes of marital conflicts,
- state some possible solutions to the problem of marital conflict.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Nature of Marital Conflicts

Let us face it. *Incessant marital conflicts* is an indication that the two of you have not become one (Matt. 19:4-6). Yet, conflict area provides opportunities for growth in your relationship, if it is handled creatively.

A little clarification is necessary at this juncture. *Some conflicts are*

healthy. Indeed a level of conflict is a sign of life in relationship. The “noise” of the market is better than the “peace” of graveyard. Something is likely wrong with a marital relationship that has not experienced any form of disagreement. Agreements are good. E.g. the marital relationships of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:60, 63), Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. 16:3). Some other agreements are bad sinful and evil e.g. the marital relationships of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:6-7), Ahab and Jezebel (I Kings 16:1-16), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). It is better to disagree with your spouse who goes wrong than to keep quiet, agree with sin and be judged along. Abigail and Nabal offers a good example of good disagreement (I Sam. 25:14-35).

Some marital conflicts are inevitable. They arise as a result of differences and disagreement not properly handled. Marital conflicts come in different ways and levels. **Minor differences** can become little **disagreement** which can grow to become **quarrels, conflicts** and **crises** that can lead to **separation** and **divorce**.

Conflicts can also be expressed in a number of ways:

- Breakdown of communication
- Breakdown of cooperation (spiritually, financially, sexually, etc)
- Abuses: words, proverb, songs
- Physical: beating, fighting/wrestling
- Separation: psychological, physical
- Divorce: legal, “permanent” separation
- Anger

Anger in marital conflict deserves a little attention. What is your preference: A spouse who is never angry? One who can be angry but pacified? If you have a spouse who is never angry, your life may be at risk. Understand your spouse. Know when he/she is angry. Don’t take the anger lightly saying “There is no need to be angry” How wrong you are. He/she is already angry! A more constructive attitude is: why is he/she angry? Meanwhile don’t face the anger with another anger. If he/she is boiling you better keep your cool or your relationship will explode. Meanwhile even the person who is angry must learn to exercise self-control (Eph. 4:26-27). Watch what you say and do in anger so as not to regret later. Walk away quietly from the scene and situation that makes you angry, if it is possible.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3.1

Write a short note on the nature of marital conflicts.

3.2 Causes of Marital Conflicts

The causes of marital conflicts include communication break down, finance, sexual dissatisfaction, poor parenting, spiritual disposition, and external influences. **Communication breakdown** is a major cause of marital conflicts. E.g. Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 16:1-6). If you quarrel with you spouse frequently one (or both) of you is a poor communicator. You also need to learn lessons in interpersonal relationships. Seek the earliest, most practical opportunity to renew your communication. Seek a good quality time and a free atmosphere to discuss your conflict. You must agree if you must walk together (Amos 3:3).

Conflicts also often arise from the handling of *family finance and projects*. If money divides a couple some other things will divide them. Financial crises will be reduced to the barest minimum. If you learn to: Plan and administer your income and expenditure together, harmonize your attitudes to money and property.

Sexual dissatisfaction may also constitute marital conflict. Unfortunately when most spouses are not finding sexual satisfaction in their marriage rather than discuss it with their spouses they will look for solution in extra-marital affairs. God who designed monogamy knows that a woman can satisfy a man sexually.

Some couples experience serious conflicts in the process of *poor parenting* of children. Isaac and Rebecca offer a good example. They were good husband and wife but bad parents. They chose to love Esau and Jacob respectively (Gen. 27:1-47). God designed if for a man and woman to sleep together before they bear a child so that they can cooperate to train the child together!

Differences in *spiritual disposition* can lead to marital conflicts. How easy is it for harmony to exist between a godly woman and a man who engages in pools betting, adultery, smoking, alcoholism? Plenty of patience and longsuffering. Lot and his wife offer an example. Lot obeyed the Lord and he was saved from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorah. The wife disobeyed and became a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:12-26). Moses and Zipporah give another example (Exodus 4:18-26). Husband and wife will experience harmony if they will grow together in prayer, study of the word of God, Christian worship and service.

External influences can bring conflicts into a marital relationship. This may be in the form of satanic/demonic affliction, in-laws, friends (co-workers, church members). Adam and Eve were apparently living well till Satan visited them, deceived them and made them to disobey God (Gen.3). However, outside agents can only come in to destroy your

relationship if and when you give them a chance.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

State five common causes of marital conflicts today.

3.3 Solution to Marital Conflicts

We must not be naïve. Marital conflict is often a complex problem that defy a simple solution. However, most will be resolved through understanding of spouse, admission of fault and prayer.

Understand and love your spouse. You cannot change your spouse until you know and accept him/her. Know his/her nature/character: what irritates, angers him/her, the temperament (sanguine, choleric, melancholy, phlegmatic), is he/she an introvert, does he/she reasons inductively or deductively, emotionally/sentimentally or logically?

Most conflicts, however serious, can be resolved if spouses will learn to admit their faults and say sorry. When you have wronged your mate and he/she is hurting no explanation will satisfy. Such explanation are often: good reasons for bad actions, excuses for doing wrong. Only admission and confession of the wrong done will keep the relationship going. Is it right for a spouse to make apology a condition for continuation of a relationship?

Unfortunately as simple and helpful as it is to say sorry this is sometime a difficult lesson to teach and learn. We have an insight from psychology. Some people grew up as spoilt children and undisciplined youth and so have become adults who do not know when and how to say sorry.

When your spouse apologizes, you should accept the apology, forgive the offence and forget it (That is: Don't refer to it again). Let me offer an appropriate biblical insight. True forgiveness is never cheap. It includes repentance. Even God will not forgive a person who refuses to repent, admit, confess his sins. Why did God destroy and not forgive Sodom and Gomorah? Why will God not forgive but cast people into hell at the end of the age?

Along with other methods of conflict resolution ***pray for divine intervention***. Pray for yourself, that God will help you to make efforts to be at peace with your spouse (Heb. 12:14). Pray that God will speak to, touch and transform your spouse. Pray that God will visit and transform your marriage and family. When marital conflicts are creatively resolved there will be peace in the hearts, love among spouses, joy in the house. The Lord who has ordained marriage will help us. Amen.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Discuss three general solutions to most marital conflicts.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Marital conflicts result from differences between couples that are not carefully managed. Young couples need to understand that increase in the understanding of their spouses will reduce conflicts and that is a life long pursuit.

5.0 SUMMARY

Conclusions that can be drawn about marital conflicts from the study of this unit are:

- Marital conflicts are caused by disagreements between couples and can be minimized,
- Marital conflicts are caused by many factors between the spouses and outsiders,
- Marital conflicts can be resolved through better understanding, admission of fault and prayer.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Why do conflicts arise in marital relationship? Discuss five reasons.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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John A. Aworinde, *Conflict in Christian Resolution in Christian Homes*, 4-15.

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UNIT 5 A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Love
 - 3.2 Submission
 - 3.3 Giving
 - 3.4 Forgiveness
 - 3.5 Godliness
- 4.0 Conclusion
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is no marriage without problem, however little. What is important is for a couple to know how to solve the problems. Marriage is successful when a couple overcome their problems. Marriage is sweet and lovely but it requires hard work. Every Christian marriage can be successful if the couple will obey the principles of marital relationship stated in the Bible. Some of the principles of successful Christian marriage are: Love, Submission, Giving, Forgiveness, and Godliness. When these principles are followed marriage will work. If any of the principles is disobeyed the relationship will break down. Let us consider them one by one in this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- list the factors for a successful marriage
- discuss how the following principles can give marital success: love, submission, giving, forgiveness and godliness.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Love

Marriage is love affair from start to finish. A couple must love each other or perish. Husband and wife must express mutual love totally: **eros** (romantic/erotic feelings, sexually), **phileo** (affection), **agape**

(unconditionally, sacrificially). The love of God that sustains a Christian couple is the love that means ‘I will help you. I will seek your good and welfare’. Marriage begins with a tie of the chord of love at the altar. We must not allow the tie to become loose with lack of love.

The man initiated the love and talked the woman into it. That must continue. Love is eternal (2 Cor. 13:8a). Husband let your wife be sure of your love. You are in trouble if she doubts your love. It is easier for you to love your wife if she is a good woman. However, even if she is not so good you must love her since you have invited her to be your friend. If you will truly love your wife then you will enjoy her the more (Prov. 5:18, 19). Assist her emotionally, materially, physically. Share in family chores because you love her (Gen. 2:18, 20b). Recognize her weakness(es). Your first responsibility is to love your wife (Eph. 5:25, 28). If you succeed in love then you can succeed in the marriage. If you fail in this you fail in all. However, you cannot love your spouse more than you know God who loves, more than you know the love of God, more than you love yourself (Matt. 19:19). Every man ought to seek to know and experience the love of God and give the love to the spouse. Husband will you love your wife the more?

The essential role of the woman is to respond to love, to conjugate and appreciate the love of the husband. A loving wife must know how to accept the husband and give love to the man, his family, his colleagues/co-workers (Rom. 12:12-21). A woman who loves her husband is the one who can win him from the other woman, from extra-marital affairs.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

“Love is the supreme principle for marital success.” Discuss.

3.2 Submission

The Bible counsels husband and wife to “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:21). It is a Christian duty to give oneself to the spouse and it makes for success. The Christian **husband** is expected to submit to his wife. Out of respect he should listen to her point of view and appreciate her opinion. The gospel truth is that a man can be wrong. In Christian understanding your wife is equal to you that is why she is your companion. She is a complete, rational and responsible human being as you are. Remember she is created in the image of God like you. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of both of you. The Holy Spirit also lives in her. Most Christian marriages will succeed better if only the men would listen to their wives. Nabal listened to Abigail (I Sam. 25). Pilate did not listen to his wife (Matt. 27:19). Only the Christian man who give submission to God will has the right to ask for the total submission of

the wife.

While submission is mutual in Christian marital relationship this concerns the wife the more. A woman is not designed to overcome her husband by struggling with him. A woman submits to conquer her husband. Christian marriage begins with the submission of the woman. Your father hands over your hand to the minister who gives it to your husband; that is submission. You drop your surname and take up that of man; That is submission. You must continue in submission. Only submission will grantee your marital success. Your husband is the first among the two of you. The duty of the Christian wife is to submit to her husband. Don't debate that. If you fail in submission you fail in all. Now submission is easy if you agree with the man. However, even when you disagree with him you must also submit (Read Eph. 5:24). When you submit to your husband even when he does not deserve it you are doing so "as to the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). You submit because, for reasons that you may not know, your husband is your head (Eph. 5:23).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

How can mutual submission lead to a successful marriage?

3.3 Giving

Marriage is a love affair and loving is giving. We know that God loves us because God gave his son for our redemption (John 3:16). Giving is fundamental to Christian marriage. The father gives his daughter to the man and his family. The man accepts the woman to give his life to her. The man gives a covenant gift (wrongly called bride price) to marry the woman. They also exchange rings and he then gives her the Bible.

This giving attitude is needed to sustain the marital union. It is possible to give without loving but it is not possible to love and not give. Husband and wife must give life, time, money, body to each other willingly, generously and kindly. When we withhold our giving we withhold our love, we withhold our relationship, we withhold our success. Give to your spouse. Share with one another freely and joyfully. No partial as any property personally inside marriage. What each person used to owe now belong to both of you: radio, television, furniture, money, car, land, house, etc.

The spirit and practice of giving will make marriage to progress. The problem of selfishness on the part of one or both partners will make a marital union to fail. The problem of selfishness is one key reason why many couples cannot keep common purse. Common purse will not work when a man wants to spend all family income on himself and his own parents and siblings, when a woman prefer to spend her money on her

dress, shoes and jewels. However, I should state that common purse is to have common understanding of family income and expenditure. In common purse a partner has a say concerning every aspect of family finance. Even when a couple operates a joint account each partner should be given freedom to handle minor expenditure. The principle of giving will work out if a couple will plan and spend their resources together.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Marriage requires giving to succeed. Explain.

3.4 Forgiveness

Forgiveness is needed to sustain any kind of relationship or friendship (Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; Prov. 17:9). The spirit of forgiveness is particularly imperative for marital success. A person who does not want to be offended should not marry. If no one offends us in life our spouse will do so in view of the close interaction. Sometime this will happen unintentionally. If a person cannot forgive he/she should not marry. In matrimony every partner has to forgive not once or seven times but uncountable time(s) (Matt. 18:21-22). Some common reasons for broken marriage are lack of love, lack of adequate care, adultery, nagging, physical separation, childlessness. These and other problems will not break a relationship where one partner is willing to forgive.

However, it is one thing to see the need to forgive it is another thing to be able to forgive. Many marriages have collapsed today because of lack of ability to forgive. It is not easy to forgive. Only those who have experienced forgiveness know the value. Only those who have received forgiveness are able to give it to others. We must admit that it is not natural to forgive. The natural thing to do when we are offended is to revenge. Forgiveness is a supernatural act. The Lord, who enables Prophet Hosea to forgive his wayward, adulterous wife, Gomer, can empower us to forgive.

In Jesus we see the power of forgiveness. He was falsely accused, roughly arrested, cruelly crucified yet on the cross he prayed for his enemies "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Through faith in Jesus we can receive forgiveness of the sins we have committed. That experience of forgiveness will help a person forgive others. That is why the word of God exhorts: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Eph. 4:32).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Write a short note on “Marriage cannot success without forgiveness.”

3.5 Godliness

The great gain that comes through godliness with contentment is applicable to marriage (I Tim. 6:6). Christian marriage is not a carnal thing. It is godly; it is of God. Every marriage needs the presence, guidance and power of God to succeed. Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 teaches about the vanity of aloneness, the benefits of two people in relationship and the strength of three. God who is the author and designer of marriage is the third strand in the marital union.

When two people are right with God individually and they live in agreement with each other God will help them to overcome marital problems (Matt. 18:18-19). Satan, sin, curse and poverty cannot overcome two children of God who live in godliness and obedience to God. When the home of a couple is built on the rock it will withstand rain, streams and winds of adversity (Matt. 7:24-25). Two persons in spiritual agreement can knock the doors of heavens (Matt. 7:7-8) and open the windows of heavens for answered prayers, provision, blessing, miracles, protection and victory. If we loose godliness we loose the favour of God too (I Peter 3:7).

Dear Christian couple I admonish you to seek godliness for the benefit of your relationship. Live for God. Study God’s word and pray together fervently. Study diligently. Present your tithes and offerings to support God’s work faithfully. Individual faithfulness to God will help you to be faithful to your spouse (Malachi 2:10-16). Christian marriage is a covenant relationship made with a partner in the presence of God and the people of God for the purpose of companionship, sexual purity and the nurture of children in the fear of God (Ecclesiastes 5:4-7). Nobody who neglects God can be faithful to the vow. We cannot ignore God and have a successful Christian marriage. Godliness is the most crucial law of successful marital union. Therefore, let us “stand in awe of God” (Ecclesiastes 5:7b).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

Explain how godliness can contribute to marital success.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we have studied the principles that can help a Christian couple to overcome their problems and succeed in their marital relationship. The principles of a successful marriage studied imply that marriages fail when the couple refuse to abide by the principles of the bible for harmonious relationship in general and marital union in particular.

5.0 SUMMARY

Five principles of a successful marriage studied in this unit are:

- i. Love: sacrificial actions for the good of one's mate,
- ii. Submission: listening to one another in decision making,
- iii. Giving: sharing one's resources for the good of other family members,
- iv. Forgiveness: giving pardon freely when offended by the spouse,
- v. Godliness: obedience to God out of reverence in marital affairs.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List five important principles for a successful marriage.
2. Explain love as an important principle of marital success.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Larry Christenson, *The Christian Family*, 32-54, 126-146.

S. T. Ola. Akande, *Marriage and Family Life in the Nigerian Society*, Vol.2, 15-27.

M. O. Oladeji, *A Handbook of Christian Marriage*, 44-52.

MODULE 3

| | |
|--------|----------------------|
| Unit 1 | Training of Children |
| Unit 2 | Family Communication |
| Unit 3 | Family Worship |
| Unit 4 | Family Relationships |
| Unit 5 | Family Life Cycle |

UNIT 1 TRAINING OF CHILDREN

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| 3.4 | Socio-Cultural Training of Children |
| 3.5 | Spiritual Training of Children |
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the past two modules we have examined how to prepare for Christian marriage and how husband and wife should relate to have a successful marriage. In this third and last module for this course we will lead you to consider the following issues about family life: training of children, home management, family worship, extended relationships and family life cycle. This first unit deals with training of children.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- highlight the care of a pregnant woman by her husband
- discuss how parents should provide food and clothing for their children
- explain career guidance to parents for their children
- describe how to give children social and cultural training
- discuss the spiritual training of children.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Giving Birth to Children

Preparation for parenting starts when a woman is pregnant. The husband is expected to take care of the woman:

- a. Good feeding with balanced diet,
- b. Let her read a medical book to receive information from medical personnel concerning pregnancy, childbirth, childcare, etc,
- c. It is not a time to quarrel with and fight a woman,
- d. Let her prepare a list of needs for childbirth and post-natal care. Buy these items month by month. Let her be free from anxiety.

Concerning Number of pregnancy/children: Every couple should decide early the number of children they think they will be able to parent effectively. The contemporary reasonable range is 2, 3, or 4. It does not matter if they are all of the same sex. Philip the Evangelist had four daughters but he parented them spiritually (Acts 21:9). Every additional pregnancy/childbirth puts a woman at risk. Some men have killed their multi-gravida wives in the process of looking for another sex.

Advantages of few numbers of children include:

- a. The body (including the shape/figure) and health of the woman is better maintained,
- b. Attention can be given to every child.

Biological parenting is involving but it appears to be the easiest aspect of parenting.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Mention three ways that a man can care for her wife during pregnancy.

3.2 Providing Food and Cloth for Children

It is costly but it is also a privilege to spend money on our children. The economic responsibilities of parents towards children include provision of good food, clothing and education.

- A. **Feeding:** God has planned that the human life be sustained physically with food. Provide good food for your children and teach them good feeding habits like balanced diet. Fish is better than beef. Palm oil is better than groundnut oil. Take carbohydrates, protein, fat/oil, water, vegetables. Don't take only

rice or only beans all the time. Natural foods are better than indomine, macaroni, spaghetti, etc. Too much sugar is bad for the body. Drink plenty of water. Water is better than soft drinks, malt, wine, beer. Have adequate rest but it is sinful to sleep too much. Fruits and vegetable are rich sources of vitamins and mineral salts. Teach your children to learn to be satisfied with reasonable quantity of food. Overfeeding merely overworks the digestive system. In fact gluttony is a sin (Deut. 21:20-21). Teach all your children how to cook, yes, both boys and girls.

- B. Clothing:** The basic purposes of human clothing and shoe wearing are to cover the nakedness and protect the body (Gen. 3:21). Some guides concerning clothing are:
- a. Modesty and decency according to the financial needs of the family. Covetousness, lack of contentment will lead to theft.
 - b. **Boys:** Gently discourage outrageous haircuts, exposure of chests, loose shirts, too long trousers, wearing two/three/four pants together.
 - c. **Girls:** Discourage the use of mini-skirts, micro-tops, tight trousers, figure-hugging clothes that expose breasts, thighs, navels, pants. Girls stand the risk of being raped when they tempt boys.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Provision of food and cloth is a basic responsibility of parents for their children. Discuss.

3.3 Education of Children

Money spent to give children general (often wrongly called secular) education is well spent. There is nothing wrong with children going to public school at any level if we don't abandon their education to the school alone.

- a. **Day/Care/Nursery/Primary School:** It is okay if you have the means to enroll children in a private, nearby school that can give education with Christian background. At this age, at least one of the two parents **must** be actively involved in the learning process: check notes and assignments regularly (daily or weekly), attend PTA meeting, report any suspicions to the school authority.
- b. **Secondary School:** One crucial issue of parenting at this level is the choice of subjects/and courses. Guide your children. Please

do not dictate. Basic choices are arts, commercial, social science, science. Some wrong criteria of choice are: solely on job prospects/commercial value. While finance/banking may be the most lucrative today, teaching may become more rewarding (economically) tomorrow. Guide them on the basis of: perceived strengths, abilities, talents, skills; expressed desire/preference; professional guidance/counselling; the will of God. From the Christian point of view, career guidance is a spiritual exercise. Parents need to pray for discernment to know and guide their children accordingly (Exodus 2:2; Heb. 11:23).

- c. **Tertiary Institution:** Let us accept the reality. Not all Christian parents can afford private Christian Universities. The important issue is: what course/profession does your child want to take to? Look for the appropriate and affordable institute – College of Education, School of Nursing, Polytechnic, University. You must take time to visit your young adults in their schools. Please do so. Give your children some important vocational training too: bakery, typing, computer, trading etc. Parents who are technicians/artisans should proudly give their children the training – barber, tailor, bricklayer, driver, photographer. Warn the boys against cultism and public fights; the girls against prostitution; and all against bad companionship. It is very costly to educate our children but we must thank God for the privilege.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Discuss four factors to consider in career guidance of children.

3.4 Socio-Cultural Training of Children

Social and cultural values to teach your children include: Good manners/human relations, good communication: to respect elders, helping to carry things, yielding their seats; to care for and assist people; to greet people appropriately, to appreciate and thank people when we receive favour/help, to apologize when we wrong/offend/hurt people even unintentionally.

To mold the character/behaviour of your children teach them: **honesty**, to always speak the truth (Prov. 22:15; Eph. 4:25; Exodus 20:16); to be **hardworking** and responsible (Gen. 2:15), to wash plates, to account for money given/spent and return the change, however small; to wake up early, lay the bed, hang the night dress or fold the covering cloth. **Dignity of labour**, good environment by clearing the kitchen, washing/flushing toilets, sweeping the floor, removing cob webs, cutting grasses, clearing gutters; **neighbourliness**, patience in dealing with

others, not being quarrelsome; **personal hygiene**, bathing, washing clothes including underwears.

Watch out far and quickly **correct negative traits and personality defects**: pride/arrogance/superiority complex, ingratitude, impatience, inferiority complex, ego, procrastination, laziness, lying, stealing. **Balance love and discipline**. Don't be too soft or too hard on your children (Eph. 6:4). **Never** disown a child; it speaks more of your own irresponsibility and failure. According to your ability appreciate and celebrate with your children-exam success, birthdays, church/school leadership positions. Sit down and plan how to give your children African communal, social, cultural values like respect for elders, unity, cooperation, hospitality and greetings.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Write a short note on "The Need for Socio-Cultural Training of Children."

3.5 Spiritual Training of Children

Spiritual training of children is the most important and difficult part of parenting. If we fail in this (God forbid) we fail in all. Use regular family worship (and other occasions) to: lead/teach children the fear of God, how to **pray** to God, teach them the **word of God** and the need for **personal devotion**, teach them how to **serve God** with their time, talents, body, money, influence; lead them to **salvation** through knowing, encouraging, confessing Jesus as Saviour and Lord (2 Tim. 1:5; 3-5). Children have natural tendencies for spiritual activities; you are warned not to hinder/discourage them (Matt. 18:6).

In the society today the school, church and family are involved in training children, the truth is that out of these three "the family is the fundamental means of Christian nurture and education." (Deut. 6:4-5, 6-9). Children who benefit from training in school and church are those who have had home training. If we fail to give our children good training the society will not fail to give them bad training. Radio, television, home video, peer groups will give them ungodly evil teachings.

The home is the best and most effective place to train a child (Prov. 22:6). That is the way God has planned it. Moreover, infancy is the most crucial stage to learn in life. If a child is not trained properly during nursery, primary school days then he/she loses significant training in life.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

“Spiritual parenting of children is very challenging.” Discuss.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Training of children as described in this unit requires:

- a. **Time** to stay with them to instruct, lead, guide, correct, appreciate children,
- b. **Patience/faith** in God for them to understand and accept biblical, godly teachings,
- d. **Prayer** of intercession (if need be with fasting) for them (Job 1:3),
- e. Backing up your instructions with **exemplary godly life**.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have examined very briefly how to parent children through diverse means which include the following:

- a. The husband taking care of the wife during pregnancy,
- b. Provision of food and clothing,
- c. Spending for the education of children,
- d. Teaching children social and cultural values,
- e. Training children the fear of God.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

You have been invited to talk to some couples about how to provide educational training to their children. Outline your speech.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Larry Christenson, *The Christian Family*. Grand Rapids: Bethany House Publishers, 1970, 63-125, 157-197.

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UNIT 2 FAMILY COMMUNICATION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Meaning of Communication
 - 3.2 Communication Problems at Home
 - 3.3 The Need for Communication for Harmony
 - 3.4 How to Communicate for Harmony in the Family
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One very important factor for harmony in the family is effective communication. Good communication techniques strengthen the family relationships. In this unit I will lead you to consider the meaning of communication, some communication problems at home, the need for communication, and how to communicate for harmony in the family.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the meaning of communication
- highlight communication problems at home
- explain the need for communication for harmony
- discuss how to communicate for harmony in the family.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Meaning of Communication

In a very broad sense communication can be defined as the process by which individuals give and receive information. The information to be communicated can be facts, ideas, or emotional feelings. It can be transmitted in a number of different ways, such as by speech, gestures and pictorial or written symbols. When people use this process well, “communication” takes on the additional meaning of a more intimate sharing, and of a close relationship. The purpose of communication is to persuade, get result or ensure understanding. Although there are means of communication, the most prominent one is that of verbal language.

Speech is considered as our most distinctive characteristic as human organization. Language facilitates the conceptualizing process so essential to life. It allows us to group together various elements within our environment on the basis of our needs and wants. Languages also help us to experience life in terms of recurring patterns of order, constancy and regularity. But language is also a human trait that makes us “go wrong” and at the same time they can give comfort, harmony, peace and pleasure.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What is communication?

3.2 Communication Problems at Home

Communication is a partnership, a shared responsibility between the persons speaking and the person listening. If the listener does not show genuine interest and sensitivity to what’s being said, the speaker will stop talking, and communication will fade. At family level it has been found that most of us are somewhat lazy when it comes to communicating. Poor attitude or sloppy habits in communicating at home only creates more home problems for us. Poor patterns of communication take the following forms:

- (a) **Poor Parent-Children Communication Pattern:** The usual pattern of poor parent – children communication in our culture is “direct top to bottom”. This is characterized by parents giving orders or commands to children -“Stand”, “sit”, “go”, “come”, “do this”, “don’t do this”, “give me this” e.t.c It also features as interrogations with monosyllabic answers from children - “Have you fetched water? Have you cleaned the table? Have you washed the bowls? Have you done your homework? The usual answers are “yes ma, no sir, not yet, not me”.
- (b) **Poor Husband-Wife Communication Pattern:** Some couples use the one-way communication patterns described above for parent-children relationship. Some make little modifications to give a measure of respect to one another. But the level of dialogue is not reached, and so mutualism is not fully experienced at home.

Some psychological and sociological facts complicate communication process at home. These include verbal facility of an individual (fluency or stammering, garrulousness or reservation, glibness etc) extrovertness, introvertness, boldness or shyness, loquacity, pomposity, arrogance, stature, position in the society, position in the family, orientation etc. There are cultural factors such as male domineering trait, female over submissiveness, influence of other wives outside, influence of parents, influence of friends etc.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Mention and discuss two poor patterns of communication in the family.

3.3 The Need for Communication

1. The family is a boundless collection of interdependent parts (members). It is by effective communication that they are coordinated, directed, i.e. link discontinuous parts together.
2. At the family level communication is a valid linkage mechanism among the children severally and individually, between immediate family members and extended family members, and between family and outside world.
3. Communication promotes healthy living of the family and its growth. Communication enhances good and prompt sensing or detection of internal strains within the family as well as provides enough data relating problems of the family. Absence of, or inadequate communication among the members of the family will create an environment of rumour and counter-rumour, which are injurious to the family health. Conflicts are encouraged in the family when channels of communication are closed. Open channels of communication encourages the expression of existing tensions which otherwise would remain hidden until they probably blow up and wreck the family.
4. Communication is used to familiarize every member of the family with the concerns, hopes, aspirations, needs, and prospects of the family. It is also needed to promote family security, love, sense of belonging and “we” attitude.
5. Communication facilitates decision-making. The amount of information available to a person affects the decision outcome of that person.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Write a short note on the need for effective communication at home.

3.4 How to Communicate for Harmony in the Family

1. Hand in hand, share the day, happy moments or personal concerns. Conversation refreshes the body, mind, marriage and family life. Sincerely and lovingly tell each other how much you appreciate each other and what is specifically beautiful or

wonderful about the other as you walk together, eat together, relax in bed or share a lovely spot in nature.

2. Be sure that you plan for communication as a member of the family whenever you start anything new or make a change.
3. Children and the wife in particular should keep the father (husband) informed at all times.
4. Candidly list each of your mutual needs and discuss them. (You may not know your mate as well as you thinks). Set goals for meeting these needs and jot them down.
5. Try a confession session. Learn to say, "I am sorry" and mean it.
6. When you are about to get angry, or to lose your temper, hold it. Think calmly, then speak "I love you dearly, but what you are doing is making me angry. I really didn't want to be angry with you."
7. Enjoy some pillow talk before going to sleep (particularly husband and wife). Chat about good events of the day but do not discuss problems that can make your partner sleepless.
8. Use the Bible basic communication guidelines always.
 - (a) Present your idea clearly, simply and gently (Job 29:22-25)
 - (b) Be a ready listener (Job 29:21)
 - (c) Be slow to speak (Prov. 15:1)
 - (d) Speak the truth always (Prov. 16:13, James 3:2)
 - (e) Don't allow yourself to become involved in quarrels (Ps. 1:1, Prov. 17:19)
 - (f) When you are in wrong, admit it and ask for forgiveness (Dan. 9:9, Ps. 32:1)
 - (g) Do not respond in anger; use a soft and kind answer (Prov. 15:1, Eph. 4:32)
 - (h) Avoid nagging. This applies to both male and female (II Tim. 2:24)
 - (i) Do not blame or criticize. Instead try to encourage and edify (Prov. 15:18, II Cor. 2:7, Prov. 12:25)
 - (j) Try to understand one another's opinion, make allowance for differences (ability, education, age, experience, background, physiology etc) (Ps. 25:18, Prov. 12:25).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

List seven biblical and practical guidelines for effective family communication.

4.0 CONCLUSION

If there is effective communication in the family the following are some of the results:

- i. The relationships and intimacy will be strengthened,
- ii. Family members will understand one another,
- iii. Family member will have a sense of belonging to the family,
- iv. There will be peace, love and joy,
- v. Family members will be able to share there experiences of joy, bitterness, etc.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has explored the role communication for harmony in the home. There will be harmony in a family where information are given and received adequately. Communication is poor where there is no discussion between parents and children and also between husband and wife.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss three reasons for effective communication at home.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3 FAMILY WORSHIP

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Meaning of Worship
 - 3.2 Family Singing
 - 3.3 Family Bible Study
 - 3.4 Family Prayer
 - 3.5 Other Opportunities for Family Worship
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One important feature of Christian marriage/family is that the people come together to worship the Lord. In this unit we will examine how family members are to engage in prayer, bible study, singing and serving the Lord. The study will start with a brief examination of the meaning of Christian worship and end with some other features of family worship.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- state the meaning of worship
- explain the need for family singing
- highlight the value of family Bible study
- discuss the importance of prayer in family worship
- describe some other opportunities for a Christian family to worship and serve God.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Meaning of Worship

The word worship is derived from Anglo-Saxon *Weorthscipe* and it means honour. From a very simple, biblical understanding worship is to know the worth of God, to give worth-ship to God (Rev. 4:11). More technically worship has been defined as “an adoring mental attitude toward God and an outward expression in corporate speech and act”

Baker's Handbook of Practical Theology (1967, 364). In worship God is praised, because of His perfection, holiness, goodness and love. The bible teaches that only God is to be worshipped and adored (Deut. 6:13). No one and nothing else is to be worshipped beside God (Ex. 20:4).

Worship may be offered to God in different ways and places: formal ceremony, free, alone or with other persons. The two general purposes of worship are to glorify God and to edify (build up, bless) the worshippers (I Cor. 10:23; 14:26-31). Three important elements of family worship are singing, bible study and prayer. These will be examined in the subsequent sections.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

What is the meaning of worship? Explain very briefly.

3.2 Family Singing

The singing of songs in forms of simple choruses or hymns is a very important part of any Christian worship, whether personal devotion or corporate worship, involving two or more persons. As a matter of fact in the discussion of public worship in I Cor. 14:26-33 Apostle Paul listed singing of hymns first. A hymn is first of all a song directed to the worship of God. Christian hymn singing today include the singing of Psalms and Christian compositions.

Family singing should be done to praise God and thank him for the various ways that the family continue to receive the favour and kindness of God through provision, protection, answered prayer, etc. Even when a family passes through moments of difficulty, trouble or challenges they should to affirm their confidence in God and ask for God's mercy. Through singing family members are taught important spiritual lessons about creation, redemption, providence, church and Christian life.

In Ephesians 5:19 the Bible exhort: "Speak to one another with Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord." It is significant that the admonition was followed by what ought to be family relationships, between wives and husbands as well as between children and parents. Hymn singing is important for harmony in a Christian home.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Write a short note on the reasons for family singing.

3.3 Family Bible Study

The study of the Bible is a very important part of any form of Christian worship. The Bible is the word of God. The authority of the Bible is divine, it is not human. Therefore it is the basis for Christian belief and practice. The Bible reveals how God created human beings and the entire universe, how we sinned against God, the means of redemption and the reason for hope in the future.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 teaches us that the Bible is the breath of God. This means that it is inspired by God. The reading of the Bible also gives salvation, spiritual growth (through teaching, rebuking) and training for Christian service. Every Christian family ought to read, study, meditate on and memorize the Bible.

A devotional study of the Bible by a family is not just for knowledge but to shape and build the character of family members. **The Parents Resource Bible** (1995, 600) thus provide this note on Proverbs 4:13: "Family devotions should be times of character development. The fruit of Bible Study is much more than biblical knowledge. It is applying life-changing truths of the Word of God to our life. Good character traits-honesty, truthfulness, gratitude-grow out of these life-changing truths."

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

"Family worship is not complete without Bible Study." Discuss.

3.4 Family Prayer

Prayer is one of the basic activities of the Christian life. Through prayer the family commune with God. Family prayer includes praising and adoring God, thanking God, asking for something for others and for ourselves from God. When the people of God pray: God is praised, glorified and magnified; the devil is defeated; sins are recognized, admitted, confessed, forgiven; requests are answered and needs are met (Matt. 7:7, 8); people receive guidance for directions from God; troubled souls are comforted. Prayer has numerous spiritual benefits. God is always willing and ready to respond to the prayer of his people (2Chr. 7:14).

Family members should be taught the requirements of answered prayer which include the following: praying in the will of God (I John 5:14, 15); Confession of sin (Psalm 66:18), praying in faith (James 1:6-8) and asking rightly (James 4:3).

One popular saying is that “the family that pray together stay together”. Every Christian family must learn to come together in prayer. Family worship provides a unique opportunity to pray for one another (James 5:16). Every member, including children, should be allowed to lead family prayer. Parents should also set aside special time (during the day or night) to pray and intercede for every member of the family. Job prayed for and offered sacrifices for his children (Job 1:4-5).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

What is the importance of prayer in family worship?

3.5 Other Opportunities for Family Worship

In addition to the opportunity for daily, regular family devotion, every family should use some other opportunities for Christian worship, including the following:

- Going to church together on Sundays and Weekdays to participate in corporate activities for worship and service (Psalm 122:1; Joshua 24:15).
- Parents should lead their children to be involved in special church activities like fasting, song service, revival service, vacation Bible School, evangelism, etc.
- Special worship programmes (Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, Holiday, etc) provides other opportunities to worship God. The parents of Jesus took him to Jerusalem for special worship (Luke 2:41-52) Christian parents should learn to do the same.
- Family members should be encouraged to serve God through: tithes and offering; the stewardship of time to visit other people; the use of their talents, gifts and abilities to serve God.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

List five special opportunities for Christian family worship.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Family worship is a very important requirement to build a Christian home. The hymn of prayer by B. B. McKinney captures this conviction so well.

God, give us chris-tian homes!
Homes where the Bi-ble is loved and taught,
Homes where the Mas-ter's will is sought,
Homes crowned with beau-ty thy love hath wrought;
God, give us Chris-tian homes;
God, give us Chris-tian homes!

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have examined the meaning of worship as adoration offered to God in recognition of his worth. The three most important elements of family examined are singing, Bible Study and prayer. Some other special opportunities for family worship considered are church worship/activities (regular and special) and service.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

“Prayer is an integral component of family worship.” Discuss.

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UNIT 4 FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Nuclear Family Relationships (I): Husband and Wife
 - 3.2 Nuclear Family Relationships (II): Parents and Children
 - 3.3 Extended Family Relationships (I): Problems
 - 3.4 Extended Family Relationships (II): Solutions
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concern that this unit examines is what kind of relationships should we find in a Christian home? In the nuclear family how should husband and wife relate? What of parents and their children? In the extended family what should be the relationship between spouses and their parents-in-laws? How should husband and wife relate with the friends and relate co-workers of their spouses? This unit will attempt to answer these questions.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss what will make for harmonious relationship between husband and wife
- describe how parents and children should relate with one another
- state some problems associated with extended family relationships
- highlight the solutions to the problems of extended family relationships.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Nuclear Family Relationship (I): Husband and Wife

In module 2 unit 5 we considered the following crucial factors for success in marital relationship between husband and wife: love, submission, giving, forgiveness, and godliness. These are the principles of harmonious marital relationship. The overall emphasis is for the wife

to submit to and respect the husband, while the husband is to love and care for her wife (Eph. 5:22-30).

In the Bible and in the world today we see examples of couples who relate by these principles and they experience joy, peace and fulfillment in their marriage. Why such couples may experience some difficulties they are able to overcome their problems. Three examples of such godly couples are Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, as well as Priscilla and Aquilla.

Zechariah and Elizabeth will be used for illustration. They were upright, obedient and blameless, barren but they continued to serve the Lord faithfully. They related well with God and with each other. The Lord visited them, answered their prayer and the wife bore John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25; 57-80).

However, in some other instances we see relationship problems that did not allow the couples to experience marital fulfillment. Lot appeared to be a good husband but the wife was not. Much as he tried to persuade her for them to run away from Sodom and Gomorrah about to be destroyed she did not cooperate but looked back (Gen. 19:1-26). The opposite was the case of Abigail and Nabal. The wife was intelligent and beautiful but the husband was surely, mean, wicked and foolish (I Sam. 25:1-25). The marriage did not last.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Use one biblical example to discuss of harmonious relationships that should exist between husband and wife.

3.2 Nuclear Family Relationships (II): Parents and Children

One of the main reasons for marriage is to give birth to and train children in the fear of the Lord. Experience has shown that the birth and coming of children into the home may create additional relationship challenges. There are thus some instances when couples appear to relate well and enjoy their relationships which were destroyed by wrong relationship with their children.

Isaac and Rebekah is a good example of good spouses but poor parents. The Bible testifies that Isaac loved his wife Rebekah and she in turn was a source of comfort to him (Gen. 24:67). Unfortunately, favoritism created problem in the family when they had children. Isaac loved Esau and Rebekah loved Jacob. The family story was full of deceit and conflict because of the mistakes of the parents (Gen. 27:1-6). The descendants of Jacob and Esau, Israelites and Edomites respectively,

became bitter enemies.

Again in Achan we find an example of a parent who brought disaster on the members of his family. He coveted and took robe, silver and gold of the people of Ai contrary to God's instruction. He was stoned to death along with his sons, daughters and livestock (Josh. 7:1-16). The children of Eli is the opposite. They engaged in wickedness, godlessness, contempt for God's offering and sexual immorality. They brought God's judgement and curses on themselves and their descendants (I Sam. 2:12-36). Again the general guidelines for relationships between children and parents are found in the Bible. Children are to obey and honour their parents. Parents should but irritate but train and discipline their children in God's ways (Eph. 6:1-4).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Write a short note on how parents and children should relate with one another.

3.3 Extended Family Relationships (I): Problems

One of the skills required for marital success is the ability to handle extended and external family relationships well – in-laws, uncles, nieces, cousins, friends, co-workers etc. These relationships must not be allowed to interfere with and disturb the welfare of the nuclear family. The problems many manifest in different ways:

- Some overbearing parents try to control and dictate to their married children, some terrible mother-in-laws have sent their daughters-in-law away from their children,
- Some new/immature husbands and wives are tied to the aprons of their parents and cannot reason and take decisions with their spouses, so they seek the consent of their parents on almost every important decision instead of discussing to decide with their spouse,
- Some may ask their children who have married not to stay alone but will provide accommodation for the new couple to stay with them.
- Some parents completely take over the management of the home of their children – the finance, the projects, the correction of the spouse, the choice of school for the children, etc.
- Some parents and in-laws ask for too much money above the income of a couple. They will never be satisfied with whatever they are given.
- Some couples flippantly report their spouses to their parents, friends and colleagues and have received advices that have ruined

- their homes.
- Some siblings (especially the juniors of the husband) and even housemaids have constituted serious threat to the peace and joy of some couples.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

List five external problems that may disturb the welfare of a couple.

3.4 Extended Family Relationships (II): Solutions

The Bible provide a principle in Genesis that should help a Christian couple to handle extended and external family relationships: “For this reason a man will **leave** his father and mother and be **united** to his wife, and they will become **one flesh**” (The emphasis is mine) This means that marriage will succeed when husband and wife become **one** flesh and there are two basic requirements for the experience of oneness: they have to **leave** other persons; they have to be **united** to each other. The implications of this guideline will now be stated as possible solutions to the problems that may arise from extended family and some other external relations:

- Having been joined together, husband and wife must recognize and accept the fact that the two of them now share a common future and that their marital relationship is to be prized above all other relationships.
- If they join their hearts together in faith and trust in God, they will experience the presence and power of God to overcome problems that may arise from any external quarter (from parents, siblings, in-laws, friends, colleagues (Ecc. 4:9-12a; Matt. 18:19-20).
- The ideal is for a new couple to move away from the house of their parents and live together in their own house. As a matter of fact in the first few months the newly needs should not allow anybody to stay with them, so they can be properly united.
- As the Lord provides for your nuclear family try to take care of your parents and assist your parents siblings, in-laws and friends. The two of you must always agree on the financial and other forms of assistance to render to people.
- Before they mention their family problem to any other person, couples should first of all pray and discuss it together. They should not take such decisions with outsiders (including parents)

and then force the same on their spouse. External persons will destroy your relationship, only if you give them the chance.

- When you have a problem do not first of all blame outsiders. Look for the primary cause from either or both of you and think of how to solve the problem.
- However, if a problem relationship problem exists between you and your spouse that is becoming unbearable, in addition to prayer and discussion with your spouse, you are free and encouraged to talk to your church pastor or the ministers who joined you together or handled your pre-marital counselling or a trusted, spiritually maturing Christian family friend approved by both of you.

Abraham and Lot give us a good biblical model of extended family relationships. When God called Abraham he took Lot, his nephew like his ward along (Gen. 11:31; 12:4-5). He settled in a place between Bethel and Ai. There arose quarrelling between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot. Abram resolved it amicably (Gen. 13:1-18). When the possession of Lot were carried away in war Abraham fought the enemies and rescued his nephew (Gen. 14:1-24). When angels were about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah Lot also showed concern for his family members and would-be sons-in-laws (Gen. 19:12-14). A nuclear family is further blessed when they become a source to blessing to their parents, siblings, friends and colleagues.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

In-law relationship is a common extended family problem. How should a couple handle the problem?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Relationship is a key issue in Christian marriage and family life. In the nuclear setting the husband is to love and care for the wife and she is to submit to and respect her husband. Parents are to instruct their children and be exemplary in their conduct while children are to obey and honour their parents. While there are many problems from extended, external members that may want to interfere with and disturb the welfare of a nuclear family they can be overcome through correct applications of the principle of Genesis 2:24.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has examined the following dimensions of family relationships:

- Relationships of love, care, submission and respect between husband and wife,
- Relationships of instruction, exemplary living, obedience and honour between parents and children.
- Relationships of leaving, unity and oneness between husband and wife to overcome extended and external family relationships.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

How can the principle of Genesis 2:24 be applied to solve the problems of in-laws relationships?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 5 FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Child Bearing Stage
 - 3.2 Children Education Stage
 - 3.3 Middle-Age Parents Stage
 - 3.4 Aging Family Stage
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the last unit in this module to end the course on marriage and family. This unit discusses the various stages of family life. The tasks, needs and challenges of each stage are also highlighted. The intention is to help family leaders to understand and prepare for each stage. The various stages that will be discussed are: child bearing, children education, middle-parents and aging.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- HIGHLIGHT the responsibilities of couples during the child bearing stage
- discuss the features of Children Education Stage in the life of a couple
- state the characteristics of middle age parents in family life cycle
- describe how family life ends with aging and dissolution.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Child Bearing Stage

Some concerns of most couples at the beginning of their marital relationship which may last for about 3-15 years are:

- The newly married couple begins to live together,
- They look for/have their own accommodation,
- They try to establish a home,
- One (especially the wife) may have to look for a new job,

- They expect pregnancy. If it comes early they need to learn fast how to handle it. If it delays they need to learn patience and absorb pressure without becoming worried (Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7).
- At this stage it may be best for the couple to stay together alone and try to handle many family chores together (shopping, cooking, washing, etc). This is a precious stage. They may not have this rare privilege again for many years to come.
- This stage is becoming prolonged this day due to delay in pregnancy.
- Make effort to conclude on the purchase of basic family needs/furniture – radio, television, video, fridge/freezer, camera.

The following are some responsibilities connected with child bearing at this stage:

- This stage begins and ends with the births of the first and last children of the family,
- While a grand parent (usually the mother) may assist, couples themselves should seek the means to educate themselves on child development,
- Very early as you bear children lean to talk to your child, play with the child, enjoy the child (Psalm 127:3). Learn lessons about the Kingdom of God from your child (Matt. 18:1-4),
- Arrange family furniture to allow the children to move and play around easily. Make effort for family safety to minimize home accident. Where should you keep medicine, boiling ring, kerosene, etc?
- Plan your family; determine the number according to your means. Space child bearing sensibly (1-2 yrs in between) (Gen. 1:22), decide on a nearby good, Christian Nursery school for the children as soon as the need arises,
- Having a family car at this stage is not a luxury as God provides.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Highlight some responsibilities of couples during the child bearing stage.

3.2 Children Education Stage

The second major stage in the Family Life Cycle is the period when a couple is providing formal education for their children. The stage may take up to 15-20 years as the children attend primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning. The popular features of this stage are as follows:

Primary School Years

- Most of the children are between 6-12 yrs of age
- Don't lose focus on your personal relationship with your spouse. Don't be overwhelmed by the needs of the children.
- Learn about behaviour of children. Parents should be especially careful of irrational behaviour. Most children learn fastest and the most at this period. Most parents fail and lose their children at this stage.
- Parents must take personal interest in the studies of the children; it does not matter how good the school/teacher and church lessons are (Prov. 22:6).
- Christian parents have to be very watchful and pray for their children while they are very tender and innocent. They can be easily deceived and misled at this stage.
- No matter how busy you are at least one parent should visit the children at schools regularly, attend Parent/Teachers Association meeting etc.
- Planning to embark on family projects together is crucial at this stage.
- This is a good time to buy a piece of land and have all the necessary documents (including survey and house plans).
- Identify fully with the family of your parents. Interact with in-laws, relatives and the community.

Secondary School Years

- Children are becoming teenagers. This is a very difficult age for the children to handle themselves. Traces of independence and rebellion begin to manifest.
- Assign them family chores/responsibilities.
- As they attend secondary school they are going to experience greater exposure to the world. Whatever secondary school you choose for them (day or boarding) the parents who keep away from their teenage children will blame themselves for life.
- One crucial need of the age is choice of subject and career guidance. It is also a good time for the sex education of the children.
- Real financial investment begins in terms of the purchase of good quality dresses, shoes etc for the children.
- As the Lord provides couples should endeavour to complete the construction of their first family house at this stage. The sensible guide as to the location is between where they live now or where they hope to retire later in life.
- Increase investments towards retirement.

Tertiary School Years

- At this stage most of the children are in Colleges of Education, School of Nursing, Polytechnic, Universities, etc. Many parents are also getting to the peak of their careers. These are too great demands on their wisdom, time and energy.
- The teenage children are becoming young adults and they should be so treated. Parents should no longer take and handover decisions to them. They should be properly involved and carried along in most (if not all) decisions that concern them: choice of college/career, participation in church life, etc.
- Maintain high moral standard.
- Before and at the point of leaving home for school (nearby or far) parents should discuss and share fully their family values.
- As young adults they will begin to think very seriously about or conclude thoughts about the kind of spouse, marriage and family life to establish.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Discuss the features of Children Education Stage for most couples.

3.3 Middle-Age Parents Stage

This is the stage of about 5-10 years prior to retirement. The popular characteristics of the stage will now be examined.

- Now the children are completing their studies. They are starting to work, to marry and also to establish their own homes.
- It is possible that they have travelled more extensively and interacted with other people and culture more than their parents. They will not likely contact/consult parents to ask for their opinions before they take decisions. If and when they do so parents should be grateful and cooperating.
- Parents are now becoming family, extended family and community leaders.
- They should attend seminars to prepare for retirement.
- Watch your health more than ever.
- Participate actively in community life.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

State the characteristics of the Middle-Age Parents Stage in the life of a couple.

3.4 Aging Family Stage

This is the last stage in the Family Cycle and it may take about 10-25 years.

- This period begins when one of the parents retires from place of work.
- They should also begin to seriously relinquish some active leadership positions in the life of church and denominations. Middle-adults who are more energetic will be trusted more.
- The remaining children will marry and have their own homes. This period is also called empty nest.
- In the future, aging parents will have to depend less on their children financially and take care of themselves. Adjust to your retirement income.
- Now parents do more service for peace in the extended family, community, etc.
- In the family, church and community their best roles will be one of offering consultancy as people come to them for problem solving, to seek advice/opinion, etc.
- This stage it ends with dissolution of marriage when one member of the union dies.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

“Family Life Cycle ends with aging family and dissolution”. Discuss.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This analysis is fairly artificial and your own family life may not fit into this categorization. As stated earlier one reason why this unit is prepared to conclude this course is that knowledge of this family cycle should help a couple to prepare for each stage. In a similar manner this presentation can be helpful to guide newly married couples.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit has examined the characteristic features and responsibilities of the following major stages in the family life:

- Child Bearing Stage, the period when a couple is giving birth to children and the children begin to attend nursery school,
- Children Education Stage: the main concern of the couple is the education of their children in primary, secondary and tertiary schools,
- Middle Age Parents Stage: when the children are ending their education and are having their own families,
- Aging Family Stage: the period of retirement to the time when

marriage is dissolved through death.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Highlight five important aspects of childbearing stage in the life of a couple.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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