



Enhancing Couple Prayer Time

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One of the most effective ways to maintain a flourishing marriage is to develop an effective prayer life together—which means praying together, out loud, in the same room, perhaps holding hands.

Although it is certainly fine to pray about circumstantial matters (a job possibility, whether to buy a particular house, a sick child, the monthly bills, etc.) a couple's prayer life together can be taken to a whole new level by focusing on the internal struggles and challenges occurring in your partner's world, and vice-versa. We call this "soul-targeted" prayer.

How does this deeper type of prayer work? What exactly does that mean? The Bible gives us a hint in I Thess. 5:23 by identifying the three parts of a man and woman: Body, Soul, and Spirit. Thus, if we are going to pray for our marriage partner, we should be praying for the three parts that God himself identifies—their body, their soul, and their spirit.

Although many Christian couples have figured how to pray for their partner's body ("Lord, please place your healing hand on Susie's stomach today...") and their spirit ("Lord, please cause your Word to come alive for John today with encouragement and wisdom"), very few couples have discovered how to pray into their partner's soul. This "soul-targeted" type of prayer seems to be the most fruitful form of prayer in the lives of many couples. It is not easy to achieve, however.

Most Christian experts on the inner workings of our faith would agree that the Soul encompasses at least 3 component parts: the mind, the emotions, and the will. In the "mind" we have thoughts, in the "emotions" we form our feelings about life events, and the "will" is the inner place where we dream dreams, set goals, and make countless daily decisions. In short:

- The mind: thinks
- The emotions: feel
- The will: sets goals and develops dreams

So, it would logically follow that if you want to pray effectively for your partner's "soul," you need to ask them the following questions in forming your prayer list:

- What has been on your mind today?
- How do you feel about...?
- What personal goals, dreams or decisions are you focused on right now?

Once you have developed some answers to these three questions, you will automatically have your prayer list ready to go. We suggest you interview your partners "soul" on a regular basis (mind, emotion, and will) and write down what you hear. This will then become your prayer list.

Couples that practice this form of prayer on a fairly regular basis (especially during times of high stress and personal challenge) will experience a wonderful forward leap in their feelings of love and oneness. We have never known a couple with this type of ongoing prayer life who ended up in divorce.