

## **The importance of prayer in married life**

**(Mathews Barnabas Metropolitan)**

We human beings are self-centered and selfish to some extent. Marriage is the most intimate relationship of such people. As a result many families do not enjoy proper peace and progress. Through a change of heart, both husbands and wives should try to win the love of the partner in life and make their families a heaven on earth. For this, God's grace is to be received through prayer.

The best way to foster love for others is to visualize them as children of God, to whom we owe everything. This is especially true in the case of husbands and wives. Our Lord asked St. Peter whether he loved our Lord. When Peter replied in the positive, our Lord asked him to tend His lambs and sheep. In the same way, our Lord is asking the husbands whether they love our Lord. Our Lord is then asking them to love their wives. In a similar way, our Lord is asking the wives whether they love our Lord. Then He is asking them to love their husbands.

There is no limit to our obligations to God, for His countless blessings, without which we cannot even survive. All that we are and all that we have, are the gifts of God, given to us, in our unworthiness. The husband has to express his thanks to God, through his love for the wife. Similarly the wife has to express her thanks to God, through her love for the husband.

The husband who does not love and forgive his wife, who can be seen, cannot claim that he loves God who cannot be seen. In a similar way, the wife who does not love and forgive her husband, cannot claim that she loves God who cannot be seen.

Our Lord has asked us to get reconciled with the brother who has a complaint, before offering anything to God. In a similar way, the husband and wife must get reconciled with each other before prayer. In our prayer, we have to say "Forgive us our debts and sins, as we have forgiven our debtors." Hence the husband and wife must get reconciled before prayer.

Our Lord has asked us to love one another, as He has loved us. See St. Jn. 15:12. Hence, it is the duty of the husband and wife, to love each other, as our Lord has loved them.

We are praying as a group especially in the Lord's prayer. This includes at least husband and wife. The Lord's Prayer will bring the husband and wife close together. Not only we pray together; we have to pray for each other. Hence the husband must pray for the wife and the wife must pray for the husband. Prayer must be the sincere desire of the soul. When we pray sincerely, there will be real change in our hearts.

The fact that we are created as male and female in the image of God, means that the relationship between husband and wife, must be like the relationship among the persons of the Holy Trinity. When we come to God for prayer, we say "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit." God will have glory, when we, His children, become godly. Our Lord said "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (St. Matt. 5:16). When the husband and wife say, "Glory be to the

Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,” they are dedicating themselves to a godly life, which will bring glory to the Holy Trinity.

When there is love and good-will between the husband and wife, there cannot be any jealousy. As they are one, the exaltation of the wife will be considered as the exaltation of the husband. So also the exaltation of the husband will be considered the exaltation of the wife.

When the husband and wife identify themselves with each other, there will not be any room for anger and hatred. Then the sin or mistake, committed by the wife, will be looked upon as if committed by the husband. Similarly the sin or mistake committed by the husband, will be looked upon as the sin or mistake committed by the wife. Then correction will be made through a counseling approach and there will be better love.

When the husband and wife consider themselves as members of the same body, they cannot belittle and insult each other. On the other hand, they will cover up the sins and mistakes and speak only the good things.

God’s grace is necessary for such a blessed relationship. Hence prayer is inevitable in married life.