

Serving in Marriage **John 13:12-17**

Serving in marriage is about a husband and wife who are committed to meeting their spouse's needs. Consider these five serving guidelines that you can remember with the acronym S-E-R-V-E.

S: Supply what your spouse needs, not what YOU need.

Your spouse isn't like you. Their major needs are not the same as your major needs. Generally speaking, a man's primary needs are honor and respect, sex, friendship with his wife and domestic support. A woman's major needs are security, nonsexual affection, open and honest communication and leadership.

Men and women are different. If your spouse tells you something they need, but you don't understand it, your tendency might be to downplay its importance. Don't do that! Listen to your spouse's needs and work to meet them. Marriage is a sacrificial relationship where you serve each other, not based on what you need but according to what your spouse needs.

E: Enjoy serving your spouse and do it with a joyful attitude.

When you serve your spouse with joy, it communicates love, value, acceptance and priority. Your spouse needs to understand that you aren't meeting their needs out of duty or obligation, but because you want to.

When you grudgingly serve your spouse, it doesn't communicate love. It communicates how little you value your spouse. Meet your spouse's needs with a positive attitude.

R: Reject scorekeeping.

When we were in our sins, Jesus died for us. That's called redemptive love. It is love given whether we deserve it or not. We can follow His example by acting from a spirit of grace and faith.

V: Vigilantly protect the priority of your marriage.

It takes energy to serve and you can't spend your marriage being too tired to meet each other's needs. Yes, all of us spend our days serving customers or patients or clients at work. Then we get home and serve our children. That's tiring! But if we are constantly too tired to serve each other, then our priorities are out of order.

Our priorities are made clear by who we serve first and who we serve best. God created marriage so that the marriage comes first. The biggest dangers to a marriage aren't necessarily bad things, but good things, kids or work, out of priority.

Find a way to develop disciplines and traditions in your marriage that keep your marriage first. Carve out time to be together, to talk face to face, and if you're parents, to spend time together without the kids. Children are a temporary assignment. Protect your marriage today so it will thrive even after the kids leave home.

E: Expect to be blessed.

Don't get discouraged! Remember, Jesus promised that "if you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (John 13:17). We have to trust that God will honor us for following His example of serving.

God will bless your marriage, because every servant marriage is a great marriage in His sight. Look for ways to serve your spouse and trust God to use your attitude of humility to transform your marriage.