

Lovemaking

By Susan Vogt



One of the great privileges and joys of marriage is sexual intimacy. Yet there are times when couples choose not to have sexual relations but still do make love. How can this be?

For

Couples

Season

Fall

Needed

An open and honest heart, a Bible would be nice in case you want to look up related scriptures . . . but not essential.

Prepare in Advance

Agree with your spouse that you are both willing to talk gently and honestly about a most intimate part of your marriage – your sexual relationship. You don't need to be experiencing difficulties to do this. It can be bonding and reaffirming to talk about sensitive issues even when you are on the same page. Decide on a good time to do this.

Activity Plan

1. Light a candle and open your marital sharing time with a heartfelt prayer such as:

Loving God who created us male and female with a yearning for each other, help us to speak with reverence and honesty about this most sacred and sensitive topic of our sexual relationship. Help us to embrace the times that we come together sexually with full hearts and to accept with loving respect those times when we choose to refrain from embracing. Amen.

2. Read one or all of the following excerpts from the Bible.

- Genesis 1: 27-28 "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply.'"

- The Song of Songs 1:15, 2:6

Husband: How beautiful you are, my love, how beautiful you are! Your eyes are doves.

Wife: How beautiful you are, my love, and how you delight me!.

I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys.



Husband: As a lily among the thistles, so is my beloved among women.

Wife: As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my love among young men. In his delightful shade I sit, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. He has taken me to his cellar, and his banner over me is love. Feed me with raisin cakes, restore me with apples, for I am sick with love.

- Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 5 “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . . a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
3. Sit quietly for a moment while you let the scriptures sink into your being.
 4. Consider that even in the closest and best of marriages there are times when your sexual urges may not be in sync with each other. Counselors call this “desire discrepancy.” Stress, anger, menstruation, moods, or a desire to avoid pregnancy are just a few of the possible causes.

These can be difficult things to discuss—even with your beloved whom you trust. You don’t want to hurt your beloved by refusing intercourse, but it is just not the best time. Choose one or several of the following questions to discuss together:

- When do I feel most interested in making love with you? What about you turns me on?
 - Is there anything that gets in the way of me wanting to make love?
 - How do I feel if you say, “Not tonight, Honey”?
 - Does one of us desire to have sex more often than the other? If so, how does the one with the stronger urge deal with a possible feeling of rejection? What kind of compromise might you work out? How does the one who has a weaker urge (at least at this particular time) find a way to please the other or possibly be open to intimacy even if not initially “in the mood”?
 - When we choose not to be sexually intimate, what other ways do we express our abiding affection for each other (an endearing embrace or kiss, a massage, words of love, doing a favor for the beloved, cuddling, a long walk, listening to music)?
5. The Marriage Encounter Movement stresses that “Making love is a 24 hour-a-day process.” The actual act of physical intimacy is most meaningful when it is part of a whole day of loving words and actions. Of course it can also be a way of healing hurts that have occurred during the day. No matter how much you love your spouse, it’s hard to *feel* loving if you’ve been living with a crab. Change your attitude and actions and good will follow. Be patient and kind with each other.
 6. Close of course with a kiss...and whatever.

