

EXHORTATION FOR SUSTAINING LOVE AND UNITY

Song of Songs 8:6-7, Psalm 133:1-3

Presented by

Dns. Titilayo Nihinlola

At WTC Valentine/Love Enrichment Programme on February 14, 2023

Introduction

Explanation of keywords.

1. **Sustain** - to sustain is to support, hold, and bear the weight.
2. **Love** - from the passage read: love is as strong as death.
 - it cannot be killed by the time of disaster
 - it cannot be bought for any price because it is freely given by God (John 3:16)
 - Love is priceless and even the richest king cannot buy it.
3. **Unity** - David described unity as pleasant and precious. It is very important for the family to live together in unity because:-
 - it makes the family to be close to each other
 - it helps us to be a good example to unbelievers; thus winning them for Christ.

Note: Living in unity does not mean that we will agree on everything:- there will be different opinions just as there are different notes in a musical chord. Yet, unity calls for agreement on our purpose in life - to work together for God. Our outward expression of unity will reflect our inward unity of purpose.

Having understood the keyword - now, how can we sustain the love and unity as a ministers family? According to the presentation of Rev. Prof. Emiola Nihinlola using prophet Hosea's life, I will like to use the illustration: -

Prophet Hosea was an evangelist of God's grace and love. Through a personal experience of a wife who betrayed, deserted and rejected him he spoke very passionately about how Israel has spurned the covenant love of God for them. He called for repentance because the steadfast love of God would not abandon his people (Hosea 11 :8).

The implications of this nature (covenant, faithfulness) of love in a relationship include the following:

- Having chosen and accepted your spouse in love, you have entered into a continuing, covenant love relationship that calls for faithfulness and steadfastness throughout life. Faithfulness is required to sustain a loving relationship.
- You cannot stop loving the person you truly love. Divine love is eternal (I Cor. 13:8). When your spouse offends you, only love (not hatred) will restore the relationship. If you start to hate your spouse for any reason you probably have not entered into a covenant, faithful love relationship with him/her.

- The unfaithfulness of Israelites in the loving relationship was very hurting to God (Refer to an allegory of this steadfast love in Ezekiel 16: 1-19). It is the person we love that can disappoint us and hurt us the most. However, the compassion of love ought to be stronger than the anger that comes from disappointments in a loving relationship.

In conclusion, these 5 highlighted points will help us to keep on sustaining the love and unity in our family.

Love is like fire, that can keep on burning and we can keep the flame aglow.

- A. Do something (ordinary or special) to show your love for your spouse. Jacob worked for 14 years to marry Rachel (Gen 29: 14b - 30). David killed 200 Philistines to marry Michal (I Sam. 18:26 - 27). Express your love. Say it, Act it, Celebrate it.
- B. Loving is giving (John 3:16; I John 3:16; 4:2). Give something to your spouse. Marriage is neither understood nor enjoyed when people enter into it to get not to give. Marital love is like an investment. What you get from it depends on what you put into it. Selfishness will kill the flame of love.
- C. Give your spouse warm affection through the physical, material gifts (Song 1 :2; 8: 1-3). However, the best gift that your spouse needs is forgiveness when he/she offends you (Eph. 4:32).
- D. Christian marriage is not only for physical and material enjoyment. It is a service. (I John 4:10; I Cor. 13:5; Matt. 18:21; Eph. 4:32; Rom. 5:5). Serve your spouse. Love is sacrificial, self-giving.
- E. Appreciate your spouse (Song 1 :8-10; 14 -16; 2:2; 4: 1- 7; 7: 1-7). Honour him/her. Speak well and highly of your mate to others (2:8 - 17; 5:10- 16). If you appreciate, honour and value your spouse, it will come back to you. Nobody will respect you more than you respect your spouse.

Marital love is a gift of God: value it, appreciate it, feel it, act it, and enjoy it.

My closing challenge is taken from the Life Application Bible (1991, 1164):

"Love must be accepted as a gift from God and then shared within the guidelines God provides. Accept the love of your spouse as God's gift, and strive to make your love a reflection of the perfect love that comes from God himself. "Keep the flame of marital love aglow!"