

Date : 9 February 2024
Theme : Building a strong foundation for the family
Topic : The role of a husband
Key passage : Ephesians 5:25-33
Key verse : Ephesians 5:25-26 – “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word ...”

Introduction

Proverbs 31 impresses upon us, God’s vision and high regard for the noble and godly wife. She is diligent, wise, and excellent in managing her home and raising her children. In fulfilling her role as a suitable helper to her husband, she enables him to embrace his calling to provide spiritual leadership in the community.

A spiritual leader must be above reproach—self-controlled, sober-minded - not given to drunkenness, gentle, able to teach, and bearing the fruit of the Spirit. More importantly, he must manage his own household well, for only then can he effectively care for God’s church (1 Timothy 3:1-5). The spiritual leader cannot happen without the steadfast support of his wife.

Ephesians 5 provides the job definition of the wife, to help her husband, and to submit and respect him. It also provides the job definition of the husband, to love his wife, serve her and lead her. When both embrace their God-given roles, they fulfil God’s vision for their marriage, family, the church and even the nation. We shall examine the 3 key roles of the husband.

1. Love your wife.

“Husbands, love (agape) your wives...” Ephesians 5:25.

Loving our wives is the husband’s highest priority in marriage. Ephesians 5 repeated the word “love” 6 times, underlining its importance. This is because love is the deepest desire of wives – to be cherished, valued, and secured in her husband’

a. What “love” means.

i. “Agape” love – To love based on actions regardless of how we may feel.

- In contrast to “phileo” love, which is to love by our affection and feelings. Many times, we use the word “love” to express our feelings, “I love you”, “I have fallen in love”, and also “We are no longer in love”. Most husbands would stop loving their wives when they no longer feel love for them.
- However, Ephesians 5 commands husbands to agape love our wives, not because we feel loving, but to love based on deliberate choice. Jesus’ love for the church is the agape love based on action – by choosing to give his life for the church even “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

ii. **“Agape” love – To love regardless of whether the other deserves or not.**

- Ephesians 5 instructs husbands to love their wives and for wives to respect their husbands (v33). It is not "Husbands love your wives if they respect you."
- The command for husband to love his wife as he loves himself (v28). Husbands have no problem loving and taking care of their bodies. Likewise, husbands are to love their wives.
- Who should make the first move to love or to respect? It is the one who is more mature - the one who obeys God's command.

b. How can husbands love their wives?

i. **Practice love described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.**

- “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”
- **Application:** Husbands to choose and declare “I will be patient, kind, ..., to my wife.

ii. **Speak her love language.**

- **Physical touch:** holding hands / arms, hugs, affectionate gestures.
- **Words of affirmation:** write love letters, say “I love you”, “you look pretty”, “I really like your cooking.”
- **Gifts:** Thoughtful surprise and pamper them with flowers, favourite snacks, or meaningful presents.
- **Quality time:** Treasure time together, share common interests and activities, chat, have fun, tease each other, laugh together. Dedicate mealtimes to connect with each other instead of each one focusing on mobile phones.
- **Acts of service:** Serve her food and drinks, open the car door for her, carry her bags, be the gentleman, etc.
Application: Husbands, survey your wife on the above: 1 for nice to have. 2 for like to have. 3 for like to have more!

2. Serve your wife.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” Ephesians 5:25.

a. Serve your wife by putting her needs before your own.

- Helping with the house chores and taking care of the children so she can rest.
- Feeding the young children, so that your wife can rest and enjoy her meal.

b. Serve your wife by protecting her.

- In today's culture, gender roles are confused, and gender equality is being pushed. Yet when facing external threats like burglars, wives are very clear that is the husband's role to protect her and the family.
- God designed man to be physically stronger, therefore the husband is to protect his wife and family. If ever a life-threatening crisis happens, the husband will sacrifice his life to save his wife.
- If there is a need to run errands late at night, the husband should take the initiative to do it.
- Husbands are also to protect the family from inappropriate media, whether sexual, violent, vulgar, or godless.

c. Serve your wife by providing for the family.

- With the rise of radical feminism in today's culture, many couples today have lost the clear and noble vision for the husband to serve as the primary financial provider for the family.
- Couples, who rely on 2 incomes, require the wife to continue working even when the newborn arrives. The baby is then left with grandparents, maids, and childcare, but none has neither the authority to discipline the child, nor the personal responsibility to impart values, character, and faith in the children.
- Financial crisis must surely be attended to. But if the husband and wife can agree with God's role for the mother to be a homemaker, and pray, God will provide the way in time.

3. Lead the family.

"... to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word."
Ephesians 5:25.

a. Husband must take responsibility and be accountable for his wife and his family.

"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." 1 Corinthians 11:3

- When Adam and Eve sinned, though Eve started it, God addressed Adam first, holding him accountable as the head. (Genesis 3)

b. Husband is to provide spiritual leadership for his family.

- God's mission is that none should perish and to make disciples of all nations. He also appointed man to provide spiritual leadership in the church and community. But if the husband is out to save souls of the nations, yet neglects his wife and children, he has failed in his God-given role to provide spiritual leadership for his own family.
- Having the family go to church does not mean that all are saved, as we see church-going children stop going to church when they grow older.
- A husband needs to decide for himself and his family, if he will be like Joshua who boldly declared, "For me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15)

c. How shall the husband provide spiritual leadership for the family?

- Many husbands hesitate because they feel unqualified or unsure of where to start. Leading spiritually does not mean knowing everything—it means being willing to learn, take initiative, and grow together.

Consider joining the conversation training starting 15th February Saturday.

- Pray and ask the Holy Spirit for wisdom and ideas. Ask also from leaders for recommended learning resources. Wives can assist, support, and encourage husbands to lead especially if they have never led before.
- Start small and simple, with your wife or the children. Take a short 5-10 mins to read the Bible and pray together. Then progress with more like in cell group – worship, discussing the sermon, memorizing scriptures, praying for salvation of friends, and loved ones, and bless one another.
- If children are having difficulty participating in Sunday worship and sermon, prepare them ahead during the weekdays.

Discussion

In your small group, discuss the mindset change about the role of the husband.

- **Husbands** discuss what you can do differently to love, serve, and lead your wife.
- **Wives** discuss how you can help your husband to fulfil their role.
- **Youth and singles** discuss how you can prepare mentally or practically to fulfil your role in future as a husband or wife.