

MARRIAGE

At North Park, we believe that the principles basic to understanding a Christian marriage between two believers, a man and a woman, are found in scripture. This precludes homosexual, common-law or any sexual relationship outside the marriage covenant. (Rom. 1:26 & following). Gen. 2:18-24 provides a foundation, which is supported by other scriptures in both the Old and New Testament, for the following principles:

Marriage is:

Established by God (Gen. 2:18) as monogamous (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5); permanent (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:6); exclusive (Gen. 2:24); with sex being reserved for marriage between a man and a woman only, rather than before or outside of marriage (1 Cor. 6:18-20 ; Eph. 5: 3).

Blessed of God (Gen. 2:18; Gen. 1:31) with implications that it be respected; esteemed highly (1 Cor. 7:38) and regarded as honorable (Heb. 13:4). The celibate life can also be a valid choice (I Cor. 7:2; I Cor. 7:7).

A partnership of a man and a woman, recognizing it as being a covenant relationship between two individuals which is planned by God (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 12: 1-2); for companionship (Gen. 2:18; Mal. 2:14); complementary (Gen. 2:18; Gen. 2:23); and implying care (Gen. 2:21,22; Eph. 5).

A timeless mystery involving leaving your family of origin, cleaving to the husband or wife and the two becoming one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31).

For life (Rom. 7:2) in a relationship that is monogamous (Gen. 2:24); exclusive (Exod. 20:14; Heb. 13:4; 1 Thess. 4:3); and permanent (Matt. 19:6; Malachi 2:16).

Becoming one flesh (Gen. 2:24; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:31, Mark 10:8-9) through the physical union of a man and woman. Through the total union of a man and a woman, body, soul and spirit, the two become one. This is the mystery of Christian marriage through Christ (Eph. 5:31-33).

The scriptures help us to understand the roles and responsibilities of men and women in a marriage relationship. While there are differences between men and women, as well as differing descriptions of what it means to be a husband or wife, women are recognized as the spiritual and intellectual equals of men. Ephesians 5 is probably the best-known New Testament passage regarding this matter. In this chapter Paul describes mutual submission as the characteristic attitude of Christian men and women who submit to the Lord as well as to one another. The husband is called to lead and is challenged to love his wife as Christ loved, and loves, the church. Paul focuses on the husband's responsibility to have a self-giving love for his wife. Wives are encouraged to respond to their husbands in the same way that they submit to Christ. Mutual submission between husband and wife (Eph. 5:21) rules out positions of domination, privilege, condescension, fear-based withdrawal, codependency, irresponsibility, power struggles. (Gen. 3:12) The church takes seriously acts of physical and/or emotional abuse.