

Church Etiquette

Many people feel uncomfortable when they go to a church, synagogue, mosque, or other place of worship whose customs they are not familiar with. If you would like your spouse to go to Midnight Mass with you, or a Bar Mitzvah comes up in the family, here are some suggestions that might make the occasion a little smoother.

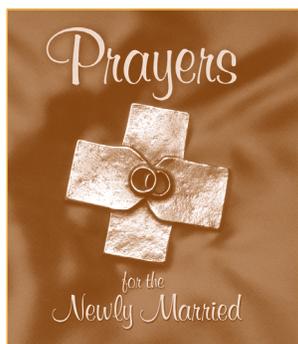
1. Tell your spouse what to expect. Go through the order of worship before you go.
2. Get a book or pamphlet from your church, temple, etc., that explains a little about the service.
3. Let your spouse know it's okay just to sit through the service and observe.
4. Try to sit in a place that's not too conspicuous. Sitting to the side or the back may help your spouse feel more comfortable.
5. Before you go, explain what this ritual means to you and why it is important to you to attend.
6. Go with friends or family. The company may ease your spouse's discomfort.
7. If there are parts of the service that only members can participate in (for example, receiving Communion in the Catholic Church) be sure to explain that beforehand. Also, if there will be parts not in English, talk about that too.
8. Quietly explain what's going to happen next during the service. It helps those who aren't familiar with the tradition feel included.
9. Assure your spouse that the important thing is the willingness to attend the event with you. You are fortunate to have a partner who will put aside their own comfort to do something that is important to you. Make sure you let him or her know that you appreciate this gesture of love. ■

Book Review

Prayers for the Newly Married

by Kathleen Finley, Acta Publications, Skokie, IL ©2006, \$14.95

This book is a gift book, one of those pretty little books you often see at card stores. But this one has more substance than many. It is a prayer book directly aimed at the situations that come



up in marriage – sexuality, children, finances, and making up after a fight. Each reflection is accompanied by a Scripture passage which is followed by a prayer crafted to speak to the heart of the new couple. And while some of

the prayers don't seem to address topics of the newly married, (children for example), many newly married couples DO bring children into the marriage and so praying for and about them IS part of their reality. Then there are the prayers of the occasion of anniversaries – first, fifth, twenty-fifth, fiftieth – that newlyweds are not experiencing. It's great to have that perspective though, and those anniversaries to look forward to!

Kathleen Finley is in a long-term marriage herself, and knows the joys and challenges involved in the everyday experience of being a wife and mother. She knows the changes that come with the addition of children to a relationship, and then at the other end as children leave home and the couple has to renew their personal relationship. She is a seasoned writer as well, so this book comes out of her personal and her professional experience.

If you are interested in ordering the book, you can do so from www.acta-publications.com. ■