

# Preparation for Marriage Manual

## Part 7 – Roles, Responsibilities and Decision-Making

What about the question of roles and responsibilities in marriage?

Who does what and why?

Is it because of tradition or what the church has said?

Or is it because that is the way it was done in your parents' home?

Failure to clarify the husband/wife roles in a marriage relationship can cause major disruption.

Each couple should discuss together and decide who is most competent to do which task.

Assignment of tasks should **not** be made simply because of parental example, or what is expected by your social group, or because it is tradition.

Each course should establish their own style of working together.

It is imperative that a couple deliberately and mutually develop rules and guidelines for their personal relationship as husband and wife.

Such clear assignment of authority and responsibility by the partners working it out together does **not** create a rigid relationship but allows flexibility and order in what could become a chaotic mess.

Complete the following sentences and discuss them.

1. My main role in marriage is .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. I began to form this belief about my role when .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. My mate's role is .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. In marriage a wife should .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. In marriage a husband should .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. I can best help my partner fulfil their role by .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Your role concepts comparison**

What do you believe about your role concept in a marriage relationship?

**Circle the appropriate concept and where you obtained it**

- |                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| ① Strongly Agree    | Ⓟ Parents  |
| ② Mildly Agree      | Ⓒ Church   |
| ③ Not Sure          | Ⓕ Friends  |
| ④ Mildly Disagree   | Ⓞ Own Idea |
| ⑤ Strongly Disagree |            |

| Wife's<br>Concept    |  | Husband's<br>Concept |
|----------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | a) The husband is the head of the home   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | b) The wife should not be employed outside the home  | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | c) The husband should help regularly with the housework  | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | d) It is alright for the wife to initiate love-making with the husband   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | e) The husband and wife should plan and budget and manage money matters together                               | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | f) Neither the husband nor the wife should purchase an item costing more than £15 without consulting the other | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | g) The father is the one responsible for disciplining the children   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | h) A wife who has special talent should have a career  | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | i) It is the wife's responsibility to keep the house neat and clean  | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | j) The husband should take the wife out somewhere once a month   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | k) The wife is just as responsible for the children's discipline as the husband                                | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | l) It is the husband's job to do the gardening and outdoor house maintenance                                   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | m) The mother should be the teacher of values to the children  | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | n) Children should be allowed to help plan family activities   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |

|                      |   |                      |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | o) Children develop better in a home with parents who are strict disciplinarians                            | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | p) Money that the wife earns is her money   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | q) The husband should have at least one evening a week out with friends                                     | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | r) The wife should always be the one to cook the food   | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |
| 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O | s) The husband's responsibility is to his job and the wife's responsibility is to the home and the children | 1 2 3 4 5<br>P C F O |

Now discuss each concept and come to an agreement as to who's concept should be the role in the marriage.

What does the Christian Bible, say concerning the role of the wife and the role of the husband?

**Ephesians 5:21-33 [NIV]**

1. What one word summarises a wife's responsibility to her husband?

.....  
.....  
.....

**1 Peter 3:1 [NIV]**

2. What do the words "*as to the Lord*" suggest about the wife's role?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Ephesians 5:22 [NIV]**

3. Are there any limits placed upon the wife's submission?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Collosians 3:18 [NIV]**

**Acts 5:29 [NIV]**

4. What should the wife’s attitude be towards her husband and what does this mean in everyday life?

.....  
.....  
.....

**Ephesians 5:33 [NIV]**

5. What does the word “submit” mean to you? Write a definition.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

“Submit” does **not** mean that the wife is inferior, nor does it stifle her initiative.

**Proverbs 31:10-31 [NIV]**

Make a list below of the ways the wife in proverbs uses her abilities.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What is the husband's role?

Is submission ever part of his role and function?

.....

.....

.....

**Ephesians 5:21** [NIV]

1. **Ephesians 5:22-33** [NIV]

What two words in this scripture summarises the husband's responsibility?

.....

.....

**Philippians 2:4** [NIV]

2. What example should the husband exhibit as he leads in the marriage relationship?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Ephesians 2:23** [NIV]

**Ephesians 1:22** [NIV]

In light of these scriptures, for whose benefit should the headship of the husband be exercised?

.....

.....

3. What are the ways in which Jesus Christ loves the Church?

Relate each of these to the way a husband should love his wife.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. In Proverbs we see that the wife has been given great responsibility and is able to use her gifts.  
What gifts or abilities does your wife-to-be have that you do not?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Perhaps you are already getting the idea that in marriage each one gives to the other and receives from the other.

Quotation from – “Christian: Celebrate Your Sexuality” by Dwight H. Small

*“When a man and woman unite in marriage humanity experiences a restoration of wholeness.  
The glory of the man is the acknowledgment that the woman was created for him: the glory of the woman is the acknowledgment that the man is incomplete without her.  
The humility of the woman is the acknowledgment that she was made for the man, the humility of the man is the acknowledgment that he is incomplete without her.*

*Both share an equal dignity, honour and worth.  
Yes, and each shares a humility before the other, also.  
Each is necessarily a completion of the other, each is necessarily dependent upon the other.”*

By now you should have discovered that the role of the husband is that of a servant.

**The husband’s role is that of a loving leader-servant, just as Jesus Christ was and is now and will be to the Church, His future bride.**

List some ways in which the husband can be that of a loving leader-servant.

- 1 .....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 2 .....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 3 .....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 4 .....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
- 5 .....  
.....  
.....



6

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

9

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

10

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Decision making.

Who should make the decisions in the marital relationship?

The main questions to consider are which partner is gifted in the area that is involved?

Also will each partner have sufficient opportunity to give what they have to offer towards making the right decision?

To help this balance of decision-making, fill in the chart below.

**The total percentage in the two columns must add up to 100%.**

|   | Wife's<br>%<br>Vote | Husband's<br>%<br>Vote |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| Choice of new car                         | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of home                            | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of furniture                       | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of your own clothing               | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of holiday areas                   | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of decor for the home              | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of mutual friends                  | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of church                          | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of TV shows                        | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of home menu                       | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of number of children              | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of where to live                   | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of husband's job                   | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of wife's job                      | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of for what and how money is spent | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of .....                           | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of .....                           | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of .....                           | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of .....                           | .....               | .....                  |
| Choice of .....                           | .....               | .....                  |

Every couple directly or indirectly establishes a pattern for reaching marital decisions. Many of these patterns are ineffective or self-defeating.

Some bring lingering feelings of resentment.

The majority of couples have **not** considered how they arrived at decisions.

Write your answers to the following questions and then decide how well you have considered the decision-making process.

1. Who made most of the decisions in your family?

.....  
.....

How do you feel your future partner will answer this question?

.....  
.....

2. Have you established guidelines to distinguish between major and minor decisions? If so, what are they?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. What procedure will you follow when there is an impasse and a decision must be made?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. How will you decide upon responsibilities for household chores?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. In what areas of family life will you have the right to make decisions **without** consulting your partner?

Who decided this policy and how did you arrive at this decision?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. Will you make the decisions that you want to make or the ones that your partner does not want to make?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Will you have any “*veto power*” over your partner’s decisions? If so, what is the basis for it and how did you arrive at this decision?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Answer the following questions and then compare your responses with those of your partner.

1. I’m afraid to make decisions when .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. I’m afraid to have my partner make decisions when .....

.....

.....  
.....  
.....

3. I'd like to make decisions when .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

4. I'd like my partner to make decisions when .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5. I want to make decisions in the area of .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. I want my partner to make decisions in the area of .....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**1 Corinthians 12:14-26** [NIV] *“Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.”*

After reading the above scripture consider the following thoughts about the roles of the husband and wife in decision-making.

1. The principle of mutual submissiveness in marriage is similar to the pattern of submissiveness between the members of the Body of Christ, the Church.
2. There are times in the church when it is appropriate for one member to exercise leadership over the other members as a function of their spiritual gifts.
3. No single spiritual gift automatically qualifies a member to be the leader or ultimate decision-maker all of the time. This position belongs to The Head, Jesus Christ himself.

The success of a Christian marriage lies in the negotiation and assignment of these leadership roles on the basis of the abilities of the partners.

In the marriage the husband has the office of head to take the lead in mutually examining the marriage to see if it is maturing according to its long-range goals.

Both the husband and wife remain free to be themselves and mature as a unique person reflecting their Creator God.

Clearly headship has nothing to do with being “boss”, the husband can only command the wife to live up to what the two of them mutually pledged when they were married.

If the husband neglects this office, the wife should remind her husband of their mutual vows.

Headship is a special office of service so that the marriage relationship may thrive and mature.

How will the presence of Jesus Christ in your life and the Holy Spirit inspired words in the Christian Bible, help you in the process of decision-making and discovering your personal gifts that you bring to your marriage relationship?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

