

011 01/03/00 Children need to know parents love each other

On a recent Sunday morning, I helped a couple celebrate their sixty-fourth wedding anniversary. Theirs is a beautiful Christian life of witness to their beliefs. Listening to them talk about sixty-four years of life together, I was reminded of the old adage that the best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. It is also important that children see that mom loves dad.

When a new child enters a family, it is often easy to center all attention on that child. Before the child's pending arrival, the young couple had each other as their primary focus. There was time in their life for romance without too much planning. A new baby changes life more than anyone anticipates. By necessity, the baby is at center stage in the beginning. Being totally responsible for a little person that eats every three hours and does other unmentionables at least that often does require fulltime focus. After the first few weeks, a routine can be established and life can have some degree of normalcy.

Then it is time for young parents to reestablish their relationship as the primary relationship of the family. God created Adam and Eve. He did not create Adam, Eve and the boys. Cain and Abel came after Adam and Eve had had time as a couple.

A child who senses that he is the center of his family will become a very self-centered adult. Besides the fact that we want our children to develop into adults who are concerned about other persons, there is another reason for making the couple the primary relationship. Seeing that his parents love each other gives a child a feeling of security that nothing else can do. Even though a child may invest great effort in becoming the center of his family, he will be happy and secure in the knowledge that Dad and Mom have a special relationship that does not include him.

Perhaps the beginning of a new century is a good time to begin the habit of honoring your spouse in daily small gestures as well as regular date nights. It might be the best gift you will ever give your children.

