

FAMILYLIFE® presents
the art of **marriage**®

40-Day Prayer
Guide

THE ART OF MARRIAGE® 40-DAY PRAYER GUIDE

FamilyLife Publishing®

5800 Ranch Drive

Little Rock, AR 72223

1-800-FL-TODAY • FamilyLife.com

FLTI, d/b/a FamilyLife®, is a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ International®

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

© 2011 FamilyLife

All rights reserved. Permission is granted for the downloading of this document for personal use only. No part may be sold or used in any derivative work. Any other use including reproduction or transmittal in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, is prohibited without permission in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be sent to: permissions@FamilyLife.com.

FamilyLife, FamilyLife Publishing, and The Art of Marriage are registered trademarks of FLTI.

First Edition

15 14 13 12 11 1 2 3 4 5

FAMILYLIFE®
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

Contents

Introduction	4
Week 1	5
Week 2	7
Week 3	9
Week 4	11
Week 5	13
Week 6	16
Week 7	19
Week 8	21

40 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR THE ART OF MARRIAGE

Thanks for your concern for changing marriages and legacies through the Art of Marriage. We hope you will use this guide to bathe your event in prayer, whether your event is forty days or forty hours away.

We've organized this prayer guide into eight "weeks" of five days each, rather than seven, to give you some flexibility. Feel free to use this guide in whatever way you like, based on a frequency that works for your schedule. Each of the forty days includes (1) a quoted Scripture passage and often one or more additional scriptural citations, and (2) suggestions for targeting your prayer. Believing in the transforming power of the Word of God, we encourage you to incorporate the actual words of the selected scriptures into your daily prayer.

As the psalmist writes, "I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God" (Psalm 17:6). What a privilege to bow before the Most High God and intercede for the men and women who will attend the Art of Marriage event in your community. As you pray, realize that you are in a spiritual battle for their marriages and families as well as for those who have yet to experience eternal life in Jesus Christ. What an opportunity and responsibility to cry out for them, to ask for blessings, and to be a blessing. And as you intercede,

Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
 praise him in his mighty heavens!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
 praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Praise him with trumpet sound;
 praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
 praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
 praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!

—Psalm 150

If your time does not allow 8 weeks, you can use the guide over 40 consecutive days.

WEEK 1

Day 1 – 2 Corinthians 3:5

Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God.

Pray for the host couple and all others who are helping with the details before, during, and after the Art of Marriage (AOM) event.

Day 2 – Deuteronomy 33:27 (NIV)

*“The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.
He will drive out your enemy before you,
saying, ‘Destroy him!’”*

See also Romans 8:31.

Acknowledge that there is an enemy who is opposed to the work being done to rescue and restore marriages, families, and homes. The ultimate opposition is toward the sharing of the gospel, the truth that sets all mankind free. Acknowledge that God is greater!

Day 3 – Psalm 33:20–22

*Our soul waits for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.
For our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.
Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.*

Pray that the couples who attend AOM will be spiritually attentive to God and that they will believe that He can answer their heartfelt questions, address their concerns, and meet their deepest needs.

Day 4 – Ephesians 3:20–21

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

See also Hebrews 12:1–3.

Pray for the host couple and all who are promoting AOM and inviting couples to attend. Pray that their passion for serving marriages will be so strong that they will discern and quickly respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting to contact those He brings to mind. Pray for renewed strength in these efforts.

Day 5 – Ezekiel 34:26

“And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.”

Thank God for providing the location for your AOM event. Pray over that location, that God will be glorified there.

WEEK 2

Day 6 – Psalm 51:6 (NIV)

*Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.*

Pray that each couple attending AOM will clearly hear what God has to say to them. Pray that God's Word will penetrate each heart and mind and that each person will respond truthfully.

Day 7 – 1 Corinthians 14:40 (NASB)

But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

See also Colossians 2:5.

Pray over the details and logistics of AOM: that the materials will be ordered and received on time; for the preparation of the facility; for the lighting, sound, temperature, seating, safety, food preparation and serving, parking, and the technical equipment. Pray for any other details the Holy Spirit brings to mind.

Day 8 – Matthew 8:26–27

And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?" Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?"

Ask God to remove every hindrance that might keep couples from attending your AOM event—child-care issues, weather, illness, conflict, etc. Ask the Most High God to clear their paths, to allow them to participate.

Day 9 – Matthew 6:33–34 (NIV)

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

See also Matthew 6:25–26.

Pray that all of the couples attending AOM will be able to transition from the busyness of their week to being still and quiet, where their spirits are able to receive God's Word. Pray that hearts will be tender and eager to learn and apply the biblical principles that are presented. Pray for protection from distractions.

Day 10 – Proverbs 17:22

*A joyful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.*

See also Psalm 95:7–8.

Pray for your AOM guests, that they will have peace and be protected from the enemy. Pray against discouragement and for them to persevere through any obstacles the enemy has put or will put in their way. Pray that each individual will not harden his or her heart to the Holy Spirit and will receive correction through each session's teaching.

WEEK 3

Day 11 – Hebrews 4:12–13

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

See also Psalm 139:23–24.

Pray that God would peel away any layers of deception at work in the couples attending the AOM event and that each person would see him- or herself honestly. Pray that all will have an openness to share with their spouses honestly. Ask God to stir their hearts so that oneness will be the desire of their souls.

Day 12 – Proverbs 24:3–4

*By wisdom a house is built,
and by understanding it is established;
by knowledge the rooms are filled
with all precious and pleasant riches.*

See also Proverbs 15:23; Ephesians 4:29.

Pray that, as biblical principles are taught, the couples will be able to respond with humility and openness. Pray that self-centered desires and motives would be forsaken and replaced with Christlikeness. Pray that, where needed, each spouse will give the other honesty, forgiveness, and gentleness.

Day 13 – Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . .
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

See also Jeremiah 29:11; Colossians 3:8, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17.

Pray that each AOM guest would be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Pray that anger and resentment would not be allowed to grow, and that walls built by anger will be brought down. Pray that the Lord will bring hope to every heart as each spouse embraces God's design and purpose for their marriage.

Day 14 – John 17:22–23 (NIV)

"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

See also Genesis 2:18; Matthew 19:4–6.

Pray that each couple attending will understand that a godly marriage is a picture of God's glory in the world. Pray that couples will receive God's truth for marriage and begin to live according to His purpose, reflecting God's image, mutually completing each other, and developing a godly legacy.

Day 15 – Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."

See also Psalm 34:4–5; Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 4:18.

Pray for any AOM couples who have lost a child or who are unable to have children—that they will be comforted by the Lord. Ask God to restore their joy and hope, and to heal any anger or resentment this situation may have brought to their marriage.

WEEK 4

Day 16 – Genesis 2:24 (NASB)

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

See also Philippians 2:3; James 1:17.

Pray that each AOM guest will end any unhealthy dependence on his or her parents. Ask the Lord to draw the spouses together and bind them to each other emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Pray that each couple will allow God to use their differences as individuals to make them stronger as a couple.

Day 17 – 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

See also Revelation 12:11.

Pray this scripture for each AOM guest who may be dealing with issues of abuse, infidelity, or addiction. Ask the Lord to destroy every effort of Satan to defeat oneness and every human excuse to reject God's plan. Pray for complete healing and restoration.

Day 18 – 2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

See also John 3:16; 6:44.

Pray that God will create a hunger in the soul of each person and draw all to Himself through the Holy Spirit. Pray that all will understand the depth of God's love for them individually. Pray that nothing will hinder the truth from being heard and received.

Day 19 – Psalm 51:3

For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is ever before me.

See also John 14:6; Romans 3:23.

Pray that each unbeliever or seeker in attendance will truly understand the depth of his or her depravity and isolation from God. Pray that the Holy Spirit will awaken and call them to salvation through Jesus Christ.

Day 20 – Luke 11:13

"If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

See also John 14:16, 26; Ephesians 5:18.

Pray that each AOM guest will be filled with the Holy Spirit. Pray that all will understand what the Holy Spirit does in their lives and what it means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Pray that couples will spend time in God's Word, pray together, fellowship with other believers, and confess sin and turn from it when it occurs. Pray that the fruit of the Spirit will become increasingly evident.

WEEK 5

Day 21 – James 4:1–2

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

See also Psalm 34:13–14; Matthew 5:23–24.

Pray that the AOM couples will understand the damage caused by anger and bitterness. Pray that husbands and wives will have the courage to resolve their conflicts, taking personal responsibility for what they have done. Pray for couples to walk humbly through the process of resolving conflict with the goal of attaining oneness.

Day 22 – Psalm 13:2–3, 5 (NIV)

*How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and every day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?*

*Look on me and answer, O LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death. . . .*

*But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.*

See also Galatians 6:1.

Pray for those guests who may be struggling with depression. Pray that they will be willing to seek counsel. Ask God to make clear to them any root issues that might be feeding their depression. Pray also for understanding as couples hear about loving confrontation—that the Holy Spirit will prepare their hearts to share, receive, and respond.

Day 23 – Colossians 3:12–14

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another,

forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

See also Proverbs 19:11; Colossians 1:17.

Pray that couples will understand the power of forgiveness. Pray for the Lord to begin the process of rebuilding trust in hurting marriages. Pray for individuals to put trust in the Lord and His ability to “make all things new” and to “hold all things together.” Also, pray that each person will be prepared to receive the spouse’s confession, await repentance, and extend forgiveness with God’s grace.

Day 24 – 1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

See also Song of Solomon 7:10–12.

Pray that God will prepare the hearts of the AOM couples to understand the extent to which any physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual factors are affecting sexual intimacy. Pray that the Lord will provide guidance as the couples address these issues. Pray for couples to increase companionship, commitment, passion, and intimacy.

Day 25 – Romans 6:8–14

Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

See also Psalm 119:133; Colossians 3:5.

Pray that all guests at the AOM will turn from sexual sin and run from all temptation. Pray that any bondage to sin would be broken (emotional and/or physical relationships outside of marriage; homosexuality, pornography, romantic fantasies, etc.).

WEEK 6

Day 26 – Psalm 103:2–5

*Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,
who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

See also Psalms 34:4–5; 147:3.

Pray that AOM guests would be healed of any sexual abuse, for He is the Lord who heals. Pray that He would “bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, / the oil of gladness instead of mourning, / and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair” according to Isaiah 61:3 (NIV). Pray for release from any shame and fear resulting from sexual sin or the sin of others that has affected them. Also ask the Lord that the husbands and wives will not deprive one another of sexual intimacy.

Day 27 – Genesis 2:23–25

Then the man said,

*"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."*

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

See also Romans 12:1–2; Hebrews 13:4.

Pray that all of the couples will recognize that sex is a gift from God and that an attitude of giving establishes oneness. Pray God will prepare the hearts of the couples to be able to appreciate, affirm, renew, and rebuild intimacy. Pray that the marriage relationship will truly reflect God's plan for the family. Pray also for those who may not be able to be intimate with

each other and that couples will truly surrender their sex life to the Lord, that their thinking about sex will be aligned with God's thoughts and purposes.

Day 28 – Proverbs 31:10–12 (NIV)

A wife of noble character who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies.

*Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.*

*She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.*

See also Genesis 2:18; Galatians 3:28.

Pray that all women attending AOM will personally embrace God's design of their roles as wives and mothers. Pray for women to prioritize wisely. Pray that Jesus Christ will be each woman's first love. Pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit for each woman to love Jesus, her husband, and her children with all her heart. Pray for the women to have open hearts regarding the definition of "helper." Pray that each woman would be genuinely awed by the honor God has bestowed on her.

Day 29 – 1 Corinthians 11:3

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.

See also Ephesians 5:28–30; 1 Peter 3:7.

Pray that every man attending AOM will accept God's design for marriage. Pray for husbands to love like the Savior and lead like a servant. Pray that husbands will understand their role as the family leader and ask the Lord for godly character and wisdom. Pray that men will commit to live their lives submitted to the control of the Holy Spirit.

Day 30 – John 13:34

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

See also Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13.

Pray that each person attending the AOM will choose to love in obedience to Christ. Pray they will choose to be generous with forgiveness and will offer encouragement to those who need it.

WEEK 7

Day 31 – Joshua 24:14–15

"Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

See also 2 Thessalonians 3:5.

Pray that every couple will commit to leaving a godly legacy. Ask God to guide them in a commitment to influence the next generation of believers. Pray that the Lord will give them the courage to persevere through all challenges and difficulties.

Day 32 – John 15:4 (NIV)

"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."

See also Romans 12:1–2.

Pray that every guest will commit to pursuing Christ, both as an individual and in partnership as a couple. Ask the Lord to draw them in to a closer walk with Him and with each other.

Day 33 – Ephesians 6:10–13

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

See also Proverbs 3:5–6.

Pray that each couple attending the AOM would have an understanding of God's spiritual armor and the importance of being armed as they lead their families through the battles of

daily life in our fallen world. Pray that couples will lean on the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with the challenges they will face.

Day 34 – Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

See also Matthew 28:19–20.

Pray that every AOM guest will have a desire to reach out to the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pray that all would rely on the Holy Spirit to lead them in sharing what God has done in their own lives. Ask the Lord to give them boldness to share biblical principles of love, repentance, confession, forgiveness, and restoration.

Day 35 – Matthew 6:33 (NASB)

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

See also Psalm 119:105; 2 Corinthians 6:14.

Pray these scriptures over any AOM guests who are engaged or soon to be engaged. Pray for each person to seek God’s will for his or her life and marriage. Pray that these couples will seek and listen to wise counsel. Pray that they will honestly evaluate issues from past relationships that could become stumbling blocks. Pray that they will be set free from any bondage or wounds so that they can truly understand the will of God for their lives.

WEEK 8

Day 36 – Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

See also 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8.

Pray that every person will have ears to hear the Bible's instruction about the sanctity of the marriage bed. Again, pray for any couples that are engaged to be married, that God will grant them purity and self-control.

Day 37 – James 1:5 (NASB)

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

See also Proverbs 8:17; Titus 3:5–7.

Pray that any AOM guest who does not yet know Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior will come to this knowledge and receive His free gift of eternal life. Also ask the Lord to remove any deceptions that might hinder the truth from speaking to anyone in need of salvation.

Day 38 – Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

See also John 14:27.

Pray for those providing child care during AOM. Ask God to provide willing and competent helpers so that the guests will not be distracted by this concern.

Day 39 – Psalm 29:11

May the LORD give strength to his people!

May the LORD bless his people with peace!

See also Deuteronomy 7:13; Ezekiel 34:26.

Pray that all of the leaders, helpers, and participants in the AOM will graciously receive the blessings that God chooses to give to each and every one. Ask the Lord to enrich and encourage them as they serve the attendees.

Day 40 – Psalm 100 (NIV)

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

*Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.*

Know that the LORD is God.

*It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.*

*For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

See also Psalm 145:1–7.

Pray this scripture on behalf of the AOM hosts, all other workers, and the guests. Rejoice in what God will do in hearts and homes through this event.