	
<h2>Relationships and Sexuality</h2> <h3>Living with our Humanity</h3>	
11.00	Welcome and Introduction
11.10	First Talk
11.45	Second Talk
1.00	Lunch
2.00	What is a Relationship?
2.15	Testimonies
3.00	Discussion/Seminar
4.00	What has Grace to do with it?
4.30	Conclude
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Welcome

Praise theme on God's compassion, Joy and Grace

Hymn 118 Praise to the Lord the Almighty

(shelters thee under his wings yea so gently sustains thee)

Introduction

- Aim of day: Awareness. Place to talk and share. Support and encourage each other.
- Confidentiality
- Challenging issues. An emotionally safe place to discuss. Support available
- Post it Notes for questions
- Views expressed not necessarily those of the CSN
- Flexibility. Richard Alleyn two talks. Talk on Relationships. Three personal testimonies – anonymous (some flexibility here). Opportunity for discussion



- What relationships? Teenage, Pre marriage, Marriage

Prayer

Reading Psalm 51

Hymn PL71 Just as I am

What do we each come with? We carry our burdens into his presence



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### What is a Relationship?

- A committed relationship
- To meet each other's needs and expectations. To support each other
- Marriage: a couple who have personally, publically and legally vowed to stay together for life

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#### **What is a relationship?**



Context is a committed relationship – to meet each others needs and expectations. To support each other

Marriage is when a couple have personally, publically and legally vowed to stay together for life.

God instituted marriage because He knows his creation and their needs for support and security

So the ideal is given to us

This is why God has provided us with principles of behaviour laid out in the teachings of Christ and the apostles.

## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### What is sexuality?

- Mutual attraction of two individuals usually of the opposite sex
- Someone's ability to experience or express sexual feelings
- Involves the ability to communicate on a very intimate level.

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#### **In the beginning**

#### **What did God intend?**

Genesis 1:27

"God created man in his own image .. male and female he created them."

Man and woman reflect both in their relationship and to others different aspects of the image of God. They are different (discussion point?) rationally and emotionally.

"And God blessed them and said to them Be fruitful and multiply"

Gen 2:24-25

"And they became one flesh and the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

In paradise the garden was created very good yet man was given work to tend and keep the garden.

Before the fall, man and woman were created very good as was their relationship.

Only not good - alone

No shame

Yet same principle to tend and keep.

So what was their relationship like?



Working together

Caring

No shame intimate sexual relationship. God created very good.

Commitment to each other.

Feeling safe with each other.



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### **What are these needs and expectations?**

- Caring
- Sharing
- Affection

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What are these needs and expectations?



In studies the view is that for a relationship to be complete there needs to be three aspects evident:

Caring

Sharing

Affection

We will come back to these shortly

## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### Relationships are dynamic

Difference and change

- Culture and background: families and in laws
- Family life stages: first child; teenage years; empty nest; retirement. Bereavements
- Communication and Understanding
- The Languages of Love

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#### Relationships are dynamic

There can be constant change in our Expectations and needs

When stress affects a relationship, hidden emotions can surface

These can be linked to:

\* Families of origin and culture in laws

\* Family life stages: first child; teenage years; empty nest; retirement.

Bereavements

Work and family stress is a serious problem for couples.

Add in the ecclesia's expectations.

Mental and physical health problems

\* And so good Communication listening skills and Understanding are so important

\* We all have different languages of love; we show our love in different ways and that can lead to confusion and misunderstanding.

Example I show my love by looking after you family and house. I show my love by affection.

Effect of alcohol

## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### **What is Love?**

Being "in love". Powerful feelings of desire and intimacy

Constant Love:

"Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church"

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#### **What is Love?**

Being "in love". Powerful feelings of desire and intimacy



Constant Love:

"Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church"

"I don't love him any more"

Sometimes it means no respect. Not feeling emotionally safe

More about this later



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### What are these needs and expectations?

- Caring:  
The agape love - unselfish given undeserved.  
Support
- Sharing  
Time and experiences. Happy and sad times.  
Working as a team – a partnership against the world and its stress.
- Affection

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The Hard part is understanding what **we need** – this can be different to what we are expecting and seeking



And then to be able to effectively communicate this to our loved one

\* Slides

We all wish to feel emotionally safe with our loved one to share our needs  
Sometimes we need a skilled couple counsellor to help us to do this.

Let's look at Affection in more detail



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### **What are these needs and expectations?**

- Affection

Eros : Sexual desire with intimacy

Phelio: friendship/family love

Different depending on the relationship and age

Different for each individual at different times

Resentment and lack of respect damages intimacy

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Affection is part of a relationship

What do we mean by affection? In Greek there are two particular words used:

\* Eros : Sexual desire with intimacy

\* Phelio: friendship/family love

Affection is different for different couples at different stages in their relationship

Honeymoon period different to a relationship after 40 years

There are differences between Male and female - speaking in very general terms

Man seeks relief through comfort intimacy and tenderness in and through the sexual act

whilst woman seeks safety, tenderness intimacy and comfort first which proceeds and leads to the sexual act.

For a man, making love can be quick and relief immediate and usually leads to feeling close and intimate.

For the woman making love is part of the overall relationship.

So if the relationship is difficult, sex can be difficult and unfulfilling.

With some couples it is sex that keeps them together and covers up problems in the relationship.

And when the honeymoon period is over ..... This is why marriage preparation is

so important.

Not meeting sexual needs can result in feelings of rejection and disappointment – often anger and isolation.

When one partner gives to the other to meet their expectations, this can result in their feeling used and just an object to satisfy.

It is common to avoid showing affection as this leads to the others expectations of sexual activity when that is not wanted.

These difficulties can damage respect. A major cause of resentment

Relationships full of anger and resentment become vulnerable to outside relationships

– an attractive good listener can lead to emotional and physical relationships outside marriage

Minimal caring and sharing lead to resentment

\* Resentment destroys intimacy

So what can be done?

## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

#### Healing damaged Relationships

- Acknowledge there are difficulties. Pray about it
- Choose to change. You can only change yourself and the way you react to your partner.
- Change the way you show care and share time together.
- Ask what your partner needs from the relationship
- Can't talk? Get professional help.

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#### Healing damaged Relationships

- Acknowledge there are difficulties. Pray about it



There is healing through awareness, grace and forgiveness

- There has to be a decision . Choose to change.

You can only change yourself and the way you react to your partner.

We cannot change our partner but we can change the pattern of our communication and relationship

- Change the way we show care and share time together.
- Ask what your partner needs from the relationship
- Can't talk? Get professional help.



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

### The Perfect Relationship

There is a God given ideal for us to aim for:  
The pattern of Christ and the Church  
Our humanity gets in the way.

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### **The Perfect Relationship**

There is a God given ideal for us to aim for:

The pattern of Christ and the Church

But our humanity gets in the way.



Thank God for grace

PL 299 Your grace is sufficient for me



## Relationships and Sexuality

Living with our Humanity



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

# Is there an Unforgiveable Sin?

What if I keep sinning?

It is our sin nature that separates us from God.

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- “What if I keep sinning? I feel a hypocrite to keep repenting and asking for forgiveness”.

This makes an assumption that we are generally Ok but we do things wrong or omit to do things and these need to be individually confessed.

These are usually something to do with meeting the needs of self often involving powerful emotional desires and needs which can overrule the mind logic and values.

Grace overflows in the sacrifice of our Lord and brings about reconciliation because of our sin nature.

- It is our sin nature that separates us from God.

We can personally view this from three points:

## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity



Three ways of looking at this:

1. I'm never going to be good enough
2. I will continue to sin that "grace may abound"
3. I will stand in God's grace

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We can personally view this from three points:

1. I'm never going to be good enough so I choose to walk away. To walk away from grace is a tragedy. It's like the people of Israel leaving the safety of the Passover room to go out into the darkness of Egypt.
2. The other extreme is to sin that grace may abound – Paul's response is "God Forbid"
3. So what is the third way?



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand;*

Romans 5:1-2

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We stand in God's grace through faith – not because we are good enough. Those of us who have not experienced the trials of sexual temptation cannot understand or appreciate the struggle. Sex addiction temptation is not something that can easily be denied or overcome. Often it can involve a form of self medication to give comfort for an emotionally injured mind. The physical relief is part of an cycle commencing with

- Desire and need moving through compulsive behaviour
- escape from reality
- Relief of tension
- Despair, shame Guilt and need for comfort

And the cry is "How can I come to God again and ask for forgiveness?"



## Relationships and Sexuality



### Living with our Humanity

*I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. **But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.***

*For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it **Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.***

Romans 7: 21-25

The Apostle Paul we would describe as a good man.  
For his constant reoccurring sin he blames sin that dwells within him.

## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

*So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.*

*Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Romans 7: 21-25

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The Apostle Paul we would describe as a good man.

Paul acknowledges his sin nature and how wretched he feels. Failure is constant. This is so difficult to understand and accept as we need to feel “good enough” for grace.

What is important is the attitude of mind “God have mercy on me a sinner”. The broken and contrite heart. God desires our need.



The only unforgiveable sin is a sin against the Holy Spirit.

My understanding of this is to deny we can be forgiven for what we have done.

To deny the power of Grace.

How wonderful are these words:

Romans 8:1 “therefore there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”



## Relationships and Sexuality

### Living with our Humanity

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 7: 21-25

Brothers and sisters need support  
Someone to come alongside  
Can that be you?

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How wonderful are these words:

Romans 8:1 “therefore there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”

Brothers and sisters need support and help to stand in God’s grace.

Often it is one person who they trust who will come along side and “hold them”, non-judgemental

Prepared to listen.

Are you one of these?