

# Southern Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

## “Principles for Spiritual Intimacy”

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*“Often our expectations of spiritual intimacy are unrealistic or simply vague.” —Louis McBurney*

Spiritual intimacy is one of the top 5 love needs of men and women in the US.

The 5 Love Needs of Men and Women	
Wife’s top 5 love needs	Husband’s top 5 love needs
#1: Unconditional love and acceptance.	#1: Unconditional love and acceptance.
#2: Emotional intimacy and communication.	#2: Sexual intimacy.
#3: <b>Spiritual intimacy.</b>	#3: Companionship.
#4: Encouragement and affirmation.	#4: Encouragement and affirmation.
#5: Companionship.	#5: <b>Spiritual intimacy.</b>

The most important factor in Spiritual intimacy is the mutual connection with Jesus Christ. Couples will find it easier to be spiritually intimate when both fully engage in their faith with Christ.

Spiritual intimacy requires vulnerability. Without vulnerability, there can be no true intimacy in the relationship.

James 5:16 (NIV84) Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

In many relationships, there isn't corporate prayer time.

### A Relationship of Three

Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NIV84): Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

A marriage with faith at the center is a resilient marriage.

One is strong when the other is weak.

Deuteronomy 32:30 - One puts 1,000 away, 2 chase 10,000, exponential power.



## 5 Five Barriers to Spiritual Intimacy:

1. Couples are not focused on their individual and corporate relationship with God.
2. Couples avoid spiritual intimacy – they never talk about their faith.
3. Couples have disharmony – They have different approaches to life.
  - a. One is a morning person; the other is an evening person.
  - b. One is laid back; the other is hyper or serious.
  - c. Interpretation is a challenge because they seldom agree.
4. Couples resort to spiritual name-calling and stone-throwing.
5. Couples are spiritually unequally yoked. One is disciplining the other instead of being friends.

Both marriage partners want spiritual intimacy with each other and with God (together), a wife wants emotional intimacy (to feel ready for physical intimacy), and a husband wants physical intimacy (to feel open to emotional vulnerability). What enhances one, enhances all. That's why we want to break down the barriers to intimacy and make the art of devotion a win-win-win on all fronts.<sup>1</sup>

Sexual intimacy is part of his design, and we need to look at that design in the context of intimacy after betrayal. After all, marriage and intimacy are God's doing. When you are ready to say yes to sexual intimacy with your husband, it should be because you already have emotional and spiritual intimacy.<sup>2</sup>

Friendship doesn't solve the problem of loneliness so much as it shifts its coordinates. Just as marriage isn't a magic bullet for the pain of loneliness, neither is friendship. We hope it pulls us out of ourselves, orienting our vision to our neighbors.<sup>3</sup>

### Steps to Strengthen Spiritual Intimacy:

1. Date for a lifetime.
2. Compliment your partner daily.
3. Frequently tell your mate you love them.
4. Ideally, husbands and wives are best friends, as well as lovers.
5. Spend time together. For many, love is spelled TIME. Love is not self-sustaining.
6. Pray together.
7. Worship together.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Renfroe, Anita, and John Renfroe. 2007. *Songs in the Key of Solomon: In the Word and in the Mood*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.

<sup>2</sup> Tiede, Vicki. 2012. *When Your Husband Is Addicted to Pornography: Healing Your Wounded Heart*. Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press.

<sup>3</sup> Hill, Wesley. 2015. *Spiritual Friendship: Finding Love in the Church as a Celibate Gay Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

<sup>4</sup> Alsdorf, Debbie, and Ray Alsdorf. 2010. *Beyond the Brady Bunch: Hope and Help for Blended Families*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook.

### Application:

Do you have spiritual intimacy with anyone? If so, which barriers were the toughest to overcome?

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What steps will you take to immediately foster a deeper level of spiritual intimacy with others (spouse, friends)?

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What have you learned from this study that you will implement in your life concerning relationships? \_\_\_\_\_

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