

A Weekend Away—Without the Kids

Q: *We have three children and we both work outside the home. My husband and I rarely have time to be with each other. My husband thinks we need to get away without the kids. I am apprehensive about leaving our children for a weekend, but I think it would be fun. What are your thoughts on this?*

A: A weekend away is a wonderful idea. Although there is much about your situation we do not know, we are aware it will not be easy to engineer a weekend away. To keep you from getting discouraged and giving up on your husband's idea, we want to insert a positive thought in your mind: it can be done and you can do it!

Your hesitancy to leave your children is a natural response. Most moms find it hard to leave their children in order to be alone with their husbands. However, the most important needs in a marriage are not met well when schedules are full and children are present. It's when you give your undivided attention to one another that you can meet those needs. So the idea to get away and focus on your marriage partner is a good one. Now comes the hard part—making it happen!

Rearranging Your Priorities

When you get away for the weekend, take time to review your priorities as a couple. Don't spend the whole weekend doing this, but do devote some time to talking through what is most important to both of you. That will help put your weekend and your life

together back into perspective.

Raising your children and providing for the physical needs of your family are important priorities. But from our perspective, your marriage must take on an even higher priority. Your children will eventually grow up and leave home, and if you are like most American families, you will move on to another house. Marriage was created by God to be for life. Life has a way of moving the most important behind the urgent. If you continue to neglect meeting each other's needs, your marriage, which is your source of strength in achieving all your other objectives, will weaken. And if your marriage suffers, everything else you value will suffer along with it.

Meeting each other's needs must

*Create a plan to be
alone with each other
on a regular basis.*

take on a greater importance; even more important than meeting the needs of your children; more important than going to work; more important than taking care of the house. We think it's time to rearrange your priorities. We do not say this to be critical; we say it because every couple would be wise to rearrange their priorities on a regular basis. Rearranging your priorities says it is your desire to improve your marriage.

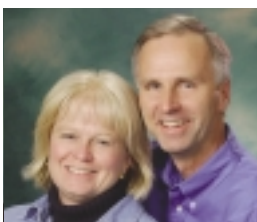
Scheduling Time Together

Before your weekend away is over, make sure you create a plan to be alone with each other on a regular basis. You can't hold your breath between

weekends away or else you'll deprive yourselves of what you need. We suggest you schedule time each week where you can give each other your undivided attention. Then schedule everything else (except emergencies) in your lives around it. Dr. Willard Harley compares couple time together to earning \$1,000 an hour. He points out that it is time you cannot afford to miss. As it turns out, your time together is worth more than that—a lot more. It will buy something \$1,000 an hour could never buy—your love for each other.

The time you schedule to be together should not include children, relatives, or friends. It should be just the two of you, so you can give each other your undivided attention. The purpose of your time together should be to meet each other's most important emotional needs, such as affection, companionship, conversation, and sexual fulfillment. If scheduling time to be together feels less than romantic, consider the reality that you already schedule time for the other responsibilities you have. Time managers tell us 80 percent of our lives are lived according to a schedule. Your children, your house, your job, your church, your friends—they all have a place in your weekly schedule. Why not make sure you have the most important person in your life on your calendar?

The time you spend alone together on your weekend away may be some of the most valuable moments you've had in months. Make this the first of many times when you pull away from the routines and demands of life to give each other undivided attention. ■



Phil and Bev Haas serve with Lakota Christian Church in West Chester, Ohio, in the areas of education and family life. They are the parents of two children.

Send your questions about family life to Phil and Bev Haas in care of THE LOOKOUT, 8121 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45231 (fax 513-931-0950). Letters used for publication may be edited for the sake of space, clarity, or confidentiality. We regret that personal replies are not always possible.