

BIBLICAL DATING: FRIENDSHIP & INITIATION

Clifton Baptist Church

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Stages of a Dating Relationship

1. Friendship
2. Initiation
3. Growth
4. Engagement
5. Marriage

Friendship

1. Godly friendships between men and women honor God and encourage one another

- a. Fellowship based on unity in Christ

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20-21)

- b. Brothers and sisters in Christ called to encourage one another

"Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity" (1 Tim 5:1-2).

- c. Covenanted together in the local church

2. Friendships among men and women need to be handled with special care

"... younger women as sisters, *in all purity*" (1 Tim 5:2).

3. Friendship is a helpful context for initiating dating relationships

Initiation

1. Who starts it?
2. Who else is involved?

3. Should I date? (= Am I ready to pursue marriage?)

- Am I a Christian?
- Am I growing in godliness? Do I have proven character?
- Am I committed to leading a wife/submitting to a husband (Eph 5:22-33)? Am I willing to commit to pursuing his/her sanctification for the rest of my life?
- Are my motives for dating selfish and worldly or to honor God? Am I desperate or do I have godly desires tempered by contentment?
- Am I teachable and respecting of authority?
- How am I involved in the church? What are my gifts and ministry areas?
- Can I provide financially? What does it mean to adequately "provide"?
- Am I ready/willing to have children?
- What do my parents, pastors, and trusted fellow believers have to say?

4. Who Should I Date?

A word about attraction . . .

A word about guidance . . .

General Considerations

- Is he/she *clearly* a believer (2 Cor. 6:14-15)?
- Does he/she show evident love for God (in how he/she spends time, money etc.)?
- Does he/she exhibit the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)? – Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control
- Is he/she fruitful in ministry?
- Does he/she show clear regard and care for others?
- Is he/she faithful and consistent in the Christian life (prayer, scriptural study, church involvement, etc.)?
- Does he/she have the same view and valuation of marriage as you?
- Is his/her life marked by a fundamental humility/teachability?

Questions for Women to ask

- Is this a man you respect? Could you envision yourself submitting to and following him over the course of your lives together? (Eph. 5:22-24)
- Do you believe he will care well for you and your children? Will he serve you and encourage your spiritual growth? (1 Tim. 5:8)
- Is he growing in godliness and in the characteristics of biblical manhood? (see 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 3)

Questions for Men to ask

- Do you believe she will care for you well and be a good mother and discipler to your children (as biblically defined)? (Titus 2:4-5)
- Is she growing in godliness and in the characteristics of biblical womanhood (see Proverbs 31 and 1 Peter 3)?
- Do you envision her being supportive of you and the God-given task of marriage? (Gen. 2; 1 Peter 3)