

Physical Aspects of Christian Marriage

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

This morning brothers and sisters we're going to spend most of the time trying to share questions and answers about physical relationship at least in marriage and perhaps in courtship also. But I think it would be helpful for all of us to understand the framework within which we're sharing the conversation; otherwise I think we could get some of the wildest questions that we can imagine. So, could I just remind you that we meet here on Sunday morning because we really do believe that Jesus is not just a prophet but is the unique, only begotten son of the maker of the universe. And we believe that what he said about life is true and that on Calvary he did something for us that enables us to be filled with the same spirit that fills him and fills his Father.

And so we believe that our Creator loves each one of us in this room. That he loves you; that he knows your name and he loves you with all of his heart, that he's numbered the hairs of your head and he knows you intimately, and that's where your real happiness comes from. Indeed, happiness is, knowing that the most important almighty person in the whole universe knows you by name and loves you, and has given everything for you. That's what happiness is and no other happiness will be a substitute for that.

And then we believe that he put each one of us here for a definite purpose and he knows why you're here. He knows what you're to do here on earth to bring his world under his will. And once you find that out it gives you such a sense of importance and such a sense of significance that you never are in any doubt again about whether you are important in this universe or not. And then because you know inside that you are doing what he put you here to do, you realize with complete certainty that he has so balanced the world that you will have enough food, shelter, and clothing to see you through these 70 or 80 years.

So there comes to you a great sense of peace about your happiness, your security, your significance in this world. And then there begins to come into you as you develop this relationship with your Creator some of his life and you begin to find that your attitude changes and you begin to have the confident, outgoing, loving attitude that he has and it's because of course, he's beginning to put his Spirit into you, the Holy Spirit. And you begin to find yourself living an outgoing life and suddenly you're not using people any longer, you're being used to pass onto them the life that God has given you. And that's what happens in marriage.

The only other thing that might help to make sense of these diagrams that I'll just flash on the screen for a moment is that God has shown us that you can regard our personalities as having three different levels: the spirit that is innermost and that connects us up with him and his life; the soul that kind of surrounds the spirit like a coat and includes the psychological part of our being our mind, our emotions, and our will; and then our body which encases them all in a physical form. And in God's plan we are meant to work from the inside out. So in a marriage relationship we're meant to work from the love that he is giving us in our spirits, giving that out to the other person so that it is a beautiful relationship of selfless love. Really, you can think of it you know, in that way and I think if you just pause for a moment and really study the thing you will be able to make sense of it, but it is that kind of situation.

There is the body, you see, and then the soul, and then the spirit, and these are only symbolic forms obviously, they're levels of life. And then you can see that the spirit consists of the

ability to commune with God which brings us our real happiness and why most of us are running around trying to get more thrills and trying to get intimately known by some significant other is because we have never really got down to communing with our Creator and knowing him and seeing that of course, all the beautiful things he gives like Mary Tyler Moore, like little dogs, like Mickey Mouse, come from a loving heart of a dear Father. We of course, keep ignoring that fact we think that somebody else has made those things. It's God that's made those, he's a dear loving Father.

And communion with him brings that happiness there. And then, intuition in our spirit is how we know what God wants us to do in life and that influences our mind and enables us to develop the world, brings us a great sense of security. And then our conscience is what governs our will and brings it to act according to God's directives for us. And so we exert God's will in the universe and we sense our own significance so that really results in an outgoing life that expresses joy, that observes God's will, and develops the will according to his plan.

But of course, what most of us have done is reject that whole idea of depending on God's love and Spirit coming into us so we end up like that. Our spirit really diminishes to almost nothing, except for conscience, some of us have a little bit of conscience still alive, but primarily our life becomes ruled by our body. And of course, we have a tremendous sense now of desolation, of feeling of loneliness that we have to overcome so most of us live lives that concentrate on, "We must get happiness, get another experience of some kind," and of course usually we use the body, it's the most obvious form to us to get what we were supposed to get from God. So we use the body to get thrill experiences. So many of us are kind of 'kick' happy especially in sexual relationships, we want another kick, we want another thrill and it never satisfies, never satisfies, however permutations we try out on physical intercourse it never satisfies us because of course what we're really looking for is the happiness of being fully known by the only person who really matters.

Similarly, we use the body to get security through things. We think the more food, the more shelter, the more clothing, the more cars we have, the more insurance policy we have, the more security we'll have. It's the same with significance, we often use each other to get significance, if we can get somebody else who respects us and recognizes us. And so many marriages are like that, many marriages are really the joining of two empty people together. Two people who are absolutely empty and are really just living off each other, and so this loved one is trying to pull happiness of some kind, thrills, satisfaction, intimacy of being fully known, eternity of being completely loved, trying to pull that from this poor one here and they're trying to pull it from the other person. And so you get a tremendous sense of there never being enough love to go around, and never being able to get what you wanted from the other person. They never do it right somehow they never give you what you need. And it's the same of course, with the other things the mind is always trying to get security.

So many of us marry for security so that we won't be lonely in old age and we carry that on through all of life and we get mad with him when he loses his job, or the wages go down, or he doesn't seem to be driving the way we think he should. Many of us marry the other person to get happy, to get feelings of happiness, and we get discontented with them when they don't give us the emotional satisfaction that we ought to have. Many of us want recognition, we think if we tie onto somebody else's coattails we'll be important in the world and we get mad when the other person doesn't treat us as important, or appears to treat us as less important than their job, or than somebody else. And so, in a marriage like that, two empty people living as parasites on one another, you have a desperate constant sense of discontent and is of course because they were never meant to get from

each other, they were meant to get from God and to give to each other.

So, the bodies on the whole become a big thing and they try to stimulate each other's bodies to produce these feelings. That's not God's plan of course at all, his plan is the other way completely, that it would be two full people meeting together. Two people who would meet because God wanted them to be joined together, who really sensed that God wanted them to be together and therefore that they would receive each other as dear gifts from God and treat each other with great dignity and a desire to protect each other as a son and daughter of God. That they would see that they were joined together for God's purpose, that God had a purpose in making them one. That he could do something in developing their world that he could do through no two other people, and they'd sense that.

That they'd see that the whole purpose of being joined together was so that they would begin to reflect God's image not just producing a lot of little replicas of their own image, but that they would allow the Holy Spirit in the interaction between this mind and this mind to draw the two minds more into what God wanted them to be. And so really, for people – you remember, we said last Sunday, who come together because God wants them, first of all their spirits experience a great intercourse and they sense the joy of being in contact with their Father and of their Father choosing them from even before the foundation of the world to be together and that gives them tremendous security and so they really enjoy praying, they really enjoy worshipping, they really enjoy studying his word. They really enjoy that deep spiritual intercourse with one another that gives a great confidence that they're never going to part till death parts them.

And then that leads on to the intercourse of two minds, and they begin to enjoy reading books, and sharing ideas, and discussing things together, and their minds grow together the one mind correcting the other at times. Sometimes, the other mind, by the worse features in it driving the other one to despair and into Jesus' arms, but both of them interacting on one another and making them more and more like Jesus as they interact mentally and so there's a great intellectual intercourse. Then, there's an emotional intercourse as they begin to enjoy things like beauty, and painting, and music, and the joy of life together and there's a whole emotional intercourse that takes place. And then that leads on to an intercourse of the two wills as they begin to sense what God wants them to do together and the wife begins to feed into the husband's job, insights that he hasn't himself and the husband begins to share in the wife's responsibilities and her job and her home, and they begin to experience the joy of two wills coming together in intercourse.

So, when you see them holding hands together, the holding hands is only physical expression of a great spiritual intercourse that's taking place already, a great intellectual intercourse, a great emotional intercourse, a great volitional intercourse which is there all the time whether they are holding hands or not. And even when they embrace or kiss, the unity, and the thrill of love, and the intimacy of love is not in the kissing, it's there all the time in the complete universe of unity that they have already developed within themselves, and that exists whether they kiss or embrace or not.

So you remember, last Sunday I shared that for them the physical intercourse which the Holy Spirit leads them into in great relaxation and great peace at times is no big thing in their lives, it's just a beautiful byproduct of a great unity that they already have with each other. Indeed, as the years pass the physical intercourse becomes less and less an adequate expression of the deep infinity of unity that they have with each other inside until when they're old they can sit on each side of the room together and they can be as thrilled and intimate with each other just looking into

each other's eyes as when they first got into bed.

And so the physical thing for them is not a big deal. Orgasm or no orgasm, it doesn't matter, children or no children it doesn't matter, for them marriage is something that is more lasting than an old body like this that will soon crumple up after about 70 years. And so that's what real Christian marriage is and of course, you know that we've turned it all upside down so loved ones, I'll stop there and then would you like to just ask questions? I can switch that on if you want at times. So, trying to zero in on physical relationship in marriage or in courtship? That's good we'll just close. I know you've all got to straight.

Question from the audience:

How do you know when two Christians are being drawn together by God?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

I think we touched on it maybe two Sundays ago when a brother asked that and I think the best thing that we can do to ensure that it will be God's will that draws us together is to come to a real death to trying to get security from other people, significance from other people, happiness from other people, to come to a real place where we're content to receive all these things from the Father. In other words, where we're content with God alone and then there comes a great peace into your spirit and you know when that has come.

You remember when Elijah was caught in that cave and God was not in the earthquake and was not in the fire, but was in the still small voice? Now, the Hebrew translation of that is he was in the sound of gentle stillness. Now, that's the sound of gentle stillness that comes into deep parts of your spirit when you are at last content to have what God wants you to have and then sis, it seems God is able to just easily and gently lead the two together and you could talk about lots of symptoms besides that, but that is the basic one.

One of the other symptoms would be that it is a mutual leading together it is not one chasing the other or forcing the other, it is a mutual thing. It's the same loved ones, if I could push it a little further; it's the same with physical relationships. It's the same with intercourse. When intercourse comes from the depths of Jesus' Spirit is a beautiful thing it is not a forcing thing. It is not a technique of some kind; it is a beautiful fulfillment of something that is already taken place inside. Indeed, you're almost unconscious of it; it is such a byproduct of a deeper unity. Sis that would be it.

There's a great relaxation when you find God's will, a great ease and sense of flowing and peace. Utterly different loved ones, I have to tell you, utterly different from the lust of the heathen that is talked about you remember, in 1 Thessalonians, "Do not choose a wife for yourself as the heathen do out of lust but in holiness and honor." It is utterly different than that passionate roaring of the emotions that will not be controlled, absolutely different from that.

Question from the audience:

How does a Christian family deal with things like birth control and that sort of thing?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

First of all loved ones, it does seem that the very fact that God has connected the begetting of children with physical intercourse which is the expression of our intimacy together as man and wife, does suggest to you that he wanted them to be connected in some way for some purpose. And so I would first of all ask you to look at the possibility that God is concerned that you see the consequence of physical intercourse as a reason or a method of modifying the frequency of intercourse itself.

So, I think it's important for us first of all to see that if God made having babies almost an automatic result of physical intercourse then we better first look at the possibility of loving self-discipline as a method of birth control. Now I'd first of all set that before you and just set myself here beside dear old Pope Paul and say that first of all we shouldn't ignore it just because so many of us here who are Catholics suffered it and hadn't it explained to us. We should see first of all that there is a very real possibility that the fact, the natural law that means children result from physical intercourse would suggest to us, unless we want to fill the world with children of course and double the population over the next year or two, unless we want to do that, we ought to see that loving self-discipline is a fairly reasonable option for sons and daughters of God.

So first of all, loving self-discipline which for most of us I think means not a safe period of eight or 10 days, but maybe a safe period of three or four days and maybe even then great care is needed in the light of what the woman has been doing that month. So first of all we should look at the possibility of loving self-discipline. Secondly, probably all of us look at the birth control pill and we probably see first of all that the birth control pill taken over a long period does suggest that there may be some dangers. At the moment the dangers are no greater than pregnancy itself but there is some suggestion in medical circles that taken over a long period, which I take it is 10 or 15 years, that there is danger there.

So, the birth control pill presumably is an alternative for some of us over a short period of time. May I remind you that some of us use the birth control pill and other methods, most of which we'd all agree are very questionable aren't they and very unreliable, probably the birth control pill is the only certain method. But many of us use birth control methods as an excuse for licentiousness. Do you see that? So, it would be wrong to say, "Oh, the birth control pill we can use it." If you use it in a licentious way, in other words, let's have fun without the bad consequences, see if you have that kind of attitude to it, in other words, if you cast – if you use the birth control pill as an excuse for ignoring completely loving self-discipline then I think you may be missing a beautiful self-control in your relationship that God wants to bring so I'd just ask you to think of that when you think of the birth control pill.

And then thirdly, presumably, and it would be only those of us here who perhaps have long decided that we're not to have children, presumably then some of you would consider surgical methods and would consider tubal ligation or vasectomy, and some of us I think just wouldn't consider those at all. But I think it's important for me to try to voice what really a thousand of us here might see as kind of reasonable even though I may not necessarily go with every one of them. But I would say brother that those would be three approaches to birth control.

Loved ones, no I'm not saying this is right or this is wrong, I'm trying to set before you some of the approaches to it that most of us would maybe consider reasonable and I'm trying to put before you some of the advantages and some of the disadvantages of each.

Question from the audience:

What would be our attitude to abortion?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

It seems loved ones, that many of us in Jesus would differ very, very strongly on abortion, but among some of the views that some of us would have is abortion may be acceptable if there is danger to the woman's life. Abortion may be acceptable if there is danger of deformity in the child, though even then I think some of us would see even that as possibly something God could use in our lives. And then presumably, some of us would see that abortion is reasonable in the case of rape and though even then, many of us would believe that God can use even difficult circumstances to draw us closer to himself.

And I think some of us, though I would question where we stand on this, but some of us might see abortion as a possibility for unwanted pregnancy but that seems something that we would all be very hesitant about. But I think brother that might be attitudes that all of us would feel, or different ones of us would feel we could justify even as people in Jesus. Brothers and sisters, I know many of you wouldn't and I know many of us wouldn't and I understand that, but I'm trying to share all the different views that could possibly be defended in Jesus. I think there are many other things that I'm not mentioning that I presume can't be defended at all.

Do by all means push me loved ones. I'd far rather we be patient with each other and I'd rather go out on a mad limb here and be branded a heretic, and at least let's share the things because I'd say to the older brothers and sisters, though probably I don't, probably you're in the same boat as the rest of us is that what Satan has used is the conspiracy of silence on these issues and so most of us have taken the way of least resistance which is playboy and that whole approach.

Question from the audience:

There's a lot in scripture that talks about bringing people together in marriage. Is there anything in scripture that talks about population control?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

I would always brother go back to the original commission that God gave us which was be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. And the primary reason for being fruitful and multiplying was to fill the earth and subdue it. And so in the early frontier days when you needed 10 guys to ride the range with you obviously, it was very important to be fruitful and multiply because that was part of filling the earth and you couldn't subdue it, you couldn't subdue 500,000 or 2,000 acres without a good family of sons behind you. So, obviously the two were connected up together. But loved ones, I would point out to you that you have to – with the apologies to Bible belt Republican Christians - I think you have to really be very determined to ignore facts if now we keep on with that approach brother.

I would say if we have any love of people at all and we see the chaos in India with 850 million people, if we have any love for people at all and realize that only a quarter of the world's population are even nominally Christian, we would see that no longer is it helping to subdue the world and bring it under God's will to have large families. And I would certainly hope that the

younger brothers and sisters here would begin to see that too often the church and I think I'm glad we don't think of ourselves as a church we're just Christians, but so often the church, in women's lib or women's rights, or anything that is progressive, has been behind the world. And I would hope that we would be the first to be responsible about the control of our own families and about fulfilling the original commission that God gave us to subdue the world. I'm not saying no children but I'm saying pray, pray about it. For goodness sake see that the situation is different now to what it was even 20 years ago.

Question from the audience:

If you're talking about loving self-discipline is that pretty much the rhythm method?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Well, that's why I talked about the safe period. That's why I said for most of us it seemed that the safe period was even very limited and that's what I was referring to, the rhythm method and I just thought that for most of us down through the years, the safe period has had to be much less than is normally talked about in the books and so it does require a great deal of love, and restraint, and understanding, and kindness to each other to practice it. But, I would brothers and sisters, from experiences that many of you have had, I would suggest to you that you be very, very wise and I would think that if you're just getting married the wise thing is to use the birth control pill at least for the first three to six months until you begin to get to know each other.

And even then, I have seen a lot of you not able to practice the rhythm method or even the ovulation method which I don't want to start a debate here, but to me it's just an elaboration of the rhythm method, you know, which concentrates more on the secretion of fluids and it seems to me still a flawed system and one that you have to use with great care.

Question from the audience:

A report in California said that the mothers who were on birth control pills now their daughters are aborting their babies....

Yes, so I see you're suggesting that the pill has some bad consequences? Alright, loved ones, I could maybe state where my position would be when sis says that. I have my wife in the wings here, she's a dentist and I know she'll contradict me at any moment, so I suspect that there are some other doctors in the congregation and I'm anxious that though we listen to that, that we be wise about it because that may be true. It may be true with five mothers; it may be true with 75. Let's be wise.

Certainly what sis is saying is we ought to read carefully what is being discovered now about the birth control pill and be wise about it. And loved ones, do you not think, do you not think that the heart of love is concern for the other person? Isn't that true? And would you not rather do without intercourse for the rest of your life than that the other person would be hurt? Isn't that the spirit of love that Jesus has given us? So, it seems to me if you err on the side of that law of love, then God can lead you into even a satisfying physical relationship that is something beyond which even you can even understand.

Question from the audience:

What if you prayed that the Lord would give you children or not give you children?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Ah, yeah, the old trust the Lord theory, you know. Yeah. Sis says, what if you prayed that the Lord would give you children or would not give you children? Do you see that our dear Father is a God of order and he has set up a law of gravity so that I can say, "Lord, would you lift me up to the ceiling?" And he is just dear and good and he knows that if he lifted me up to the ceiling it would just spoil any sense of security that any of us had in this auditorium.

And loved ones, God has set certain laws of nature in our bodies and it is just a fact that except in some circumstances, when that dear old sperm is fertilized, the baby results and God will not suspend his natural laws just for us. He will suspend them as he did in scripture for his own glory but he will not suspend them just for us and he certainly refuses to encourage us to ignore his laws and to try to override them. He wants us rather to respect his laws so sis, that's what I would think, would be Jesus' way.

Question from the audience:

What safe alternative is there to the pill if you don't want to get pregnant?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Yes, well sis that's why I tried to – maybe you aren't all catching the comments that I'm making, but that's why I commented on the third method that some of us might even consider with birth control, that is vasectomy or tubal ligation which is sterilization. It seems that there are some of us here that just would not think of it, would not consider it at all. But I think anybody here even that considers it, any doctor that is here would certainly say, "Look, be sure that you have had nine or 10 years of marriage together and are sure you don't want children. Or, if you haven't nine or 10 years of marriage be absolutely certain that you do not want children again because except in a very few cases it cannot be reversed."

Question from the audience:

Is this something that should be prayed about between man and wife, or is it something you really should consult someone in spiritual authority about?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

It would seem to me it would always – even if you go – I understand even if you go to a doctor for an operation like that he or she will take great trouble to counsel you and find out where you really stand. So sis, yeah I'm with you I think it's very important for those of us who are in Jesus' body to talk this over with one of the elders or with a pastor so that we really are sure that we're getting God's mind for our situation because loved ones, let me share with you again as I tried to protect the poor old nurses and doctors here a moment ago, many of us here would not consider that. Yeah, that's true.

So loved ones, I'm trying to present to you alternatives that some of us here would consider but

many of us here would just oppose utterly vasectomy or tubal ligation. And of course, it's quite important I think, for me, to present several possibilities that probably most of us would consider. It seems to me very important to keep out of this my own personal opinion. I don't think that that is fair.

Question from the audience:

As someone who had marital relationship before there was ever a pill there are many other methods that are very effective.

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

I'd just repeat your words, but I'm 43 and I've been marriage counseling for 20 years now and it's tricky. Just be wise, be very wise. I'm for you sis, but there have been lots of us here – loved ones, do you see we're all built differently? There are couples here that would find the diaphragm method absolutely fool proof and some other dear ones would end up with a baby in nine months' time. So you have to be really wise to see that you are all – God is so good, he's made us all such individuals and he's made every relationship so individual and all I would say to you is there is a beautiful way to go that you can go and if God has guided you not to have children you can live together in complete joy and happiness without children.

My wife should come up here. Oh well, stand anyway. You hate it. Yes, do stand, so that they can see your smiling face. She's not really that small she's just – sure, we have no children and early on God guided us not to have children and yes, we're as much in love as when we met, sure.

Question from the audience:

Where does the responsibility lie of the church, the home, and the school in developing the sexuality of man and woman?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Brother, I mean, I just think that it's endless probably if you start trying to fraction them out you know, percentage wise. I just think all of us blast away with all we've got. It seems to me there has been a lamentable failure on the part of everybody, church, school, and home. And so trying to deal with a realistic situation it's time probably we stopped saying, "Well, they should do it," and just let us do it and that's why I'm doing these talks and sharing this on Sunday mornings.

I'm sure – and I really appreciate brothers and sisters, those who love expository preaching, I really appreciate your patience as we do these sermons and I'm looking forward to getting back to Romans 9 too. But it's just important that we do what seemingly isn't being done and just be sensible about it and at least brother, these things will be on video cassette as well as the audio tapes that are available after the service and at least we'll have a selection of materials in the library for loved ones to listen to and watch.

Question from the audience:

What suggestion would you have for overcoming that self-consciousness as a Christian couple not praying together?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Brother points out the difficulty that many of us have who don't start daily prayer the first day we get up, in other words, the day after the first night of marriage. Those of us who fail, who make the terrible mistake of not starting daily prayer together that first day, how do you overcome the self-consciousness that then develops and prevents you having prayer together? And eventually brother, most of us undoubtedly have allowed that self-consciousness to operate until we were just so desperate that we had to get down on our knees and pray in some crises situation together.

But I would suggest that there is a way. I think loved ones, you should say to yourselves even as you go out of this auditorium this morning, "We're going to start praying together. Now tonight at 10:30, or 11, whenever we go to the bedroom we'll kneel down on each side of the bed, or we'll sit on the bed," and then get a book like Oswald Chambers "My Utmost for His Highest". It's a daily Bible study book with one verse of scripture at the top of the page and then an explanation and one of you read that explanation. That at least enables you to stop preaching at each other which I think a lot of us have found rather frustrating when we say – especially, us men you know who are so good at telling our wives what to do, we take a verse of scripture and we start expounding on it.

Then we find they're asleep and then it's their time next night and they try to get their own back on us. And so having a daily Bible study book of some kind where the explanation is there helps because then you can read it. And then just bow your heads and then just pray quietly. If neither of you wants the other to hear the other person praying then just pray quietly. Or, maybe you can join in the Lord's Prayer together, or perhaps one of you can pray sometime. But I think it is important to avoid one person praying night, after night, after night because the other person has a lot of Jesus in them that the other partner needs to see.

So brother that's what I suggest that you try to formalize it in such a way that it becomes a habit first and then get freedom into it after weeks or months. But you do brother – yeah, loved ones there's no way unless you set a time. You have to decide, "When I come home, or when we both come home and suppers on the table, then I get out the book and I read it and then we bow our heads in prayer." And you have to set a time limit, a minute or two minutes at the beginning, or you have to decide, "We do it once we get up in the morning at breakfast table," or at night when you go to bed."

But brothers and sisters really, there'll be no progress in your marriage until you do it. Honestly, there won't be because do you see the agony of living together is that you don't have a third person commenting on both your lives. Now, that's what you do have when you begin to go before God together, God gives you light about each other and about your attitudes to each other that you can't receive in those endless discussions and debates. So, it's vital to have daily prayer if you hope to have a Christian marriage at all.

Question from the audience:

How much prayer? Can you give a guideline?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Well, it's as much as the traffic will bear. That's usually it. It's as much as we're able to take

at the beginning because most of us need to – when we're starting something we need to start small and brief. And I would recommend that loved ones, we have a little track that is called Seven Minutes With God and the suggestion is that if you just do seven minutes including the Bible study and the prayer time, just seven minutes every day, every day not three days a week, not four days a week, not five days a week, but seven days a week, if you do that every day you'd soon begin to see it grow. But, you start small.

Question from the audience:

Going back to the size of the family, wouldn't you say that sometimes the reason people want a large family is for a sense of social security, and fellowship, and life around them? Shouldn't Christian couples use their homes to draw others into it and provide a family relationship for others and shouldn't we be feeding into the body of Christ so that it becomes more and more an intimate family together?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Of course. The tragedy is that so many of our churches have not received life from the families in them but have rather received death because each family has been a closed unit on its own that has been utterly claustrophobic. And loved ones, dear brothers and sisters, don't you see it is death to have children for any reason other than that it is God's will. It destroys the children. If you have a child to fulfill the life you have failed to live, or to fulfill the frustrations that you feel, or to live over again now that you feel you're getting beyond new achievements, or if you want children so that you'll have some kind of security in your old age, or you want children so that you'll have a sense of life in your home, that is an insult to God and an insult to the children, and just an insult to your dear partner. Loved ones, those are no reasons to have children.

The only reason to have a child is that you believe, you've both prayed about it and you believe God wants you to have a little one. If I could just say in closing, don't you see that we're in a dear old lonely world? Don't you? Don't you just look around and you see the wee souls walking in the streets and you see how much they need a family and a home, and you see how close we keep our own possessions to us? You see how close we've kept our own homes to us?

Brothers and sisters, there is a need for a new generation of God's people who will not concentrate on making their own little homes for their own satisfaction but will see themselves as being joined together by God to provide a home, and a picture of heaven to thousands, and thousands of people not only in this country but in the other countries of the world. God is dying for a generation of his children who will have that attitude rather than what has often become a very selfish claustrophobic attitude.

We get children so that we will have a little fortress of our own and we'll be able to have our own heaven. Do you remember, there's an old English poem that ends, and they did that and they found themselves in hell. You know, after they got everything around them it became a hell of selfishness. The very opposite really of God's plan for us, you know. Let us pray.

Dear Father, we thank you for each other and Lord, we brothers would thank you for the sisters in this room, those to whom we are married and those whom we just know. Father, we thank you for them. And Lord, those of us who are sisters here would thank you for our brothers, those to whom we are married and those who are our friends. And Lord, we want to come into your full plan for us as men

and woman and as husbands and wives and Father, we tell you we want to learn Lord. We're tired of the old society's ways with all its shadowy ethics and all its uncleanness, and its selfishness, and its lust. Lord, we're tired of it. We want a new clean way, your way.

So we ask you Holy Spirit, to begin to show us that way, each one of us in our own marriages and in our own relationships that we'll begin to live in that atmosphere where we think of whatsoever things are true, and lovely, and of good report and we're filled with that beauty and holiness that characterizes your heaven and your love for us. Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with each one of us now and ever more. Amen.