

Annual Couple Planning Retreat

Session #1

1. Pray together for minds and hearts open to God's leading and for a loving, bonding experience for you as a couple precious to God.
2. Brainstorm the **Values** important to you and list them. (Examples: Relationship with God, relationship with spouse, health, friends, family, recreation, education, financial security etc.)
3. **Prioritize** these values as to which ones are most important to least important to you. (Discuss these priorities with your spouse as to why each is important and why you gave it the priority you did. Change the priority, if you change your mind from the discussion. It will really help if you can both agree on the priority. It could very well cause conflict in your future decisions if you can't agree on your values.)
4. Individually, brainstorm the **Roles** God has given you this year. (Examples: Father, mother, sister, uncle, friend, neighbor, Small Group Leader, employee, supervisor, etc.)
5. Share these lists with each other and see if you've forgotten some. When the lists are complete, prioritize your lists from the most important to the least important to you.
6. **Compare** your priorities to see if yours and your spouse's lists disagree in areas that could bring conflict into your life. Discuss these in a loving way without arguing. Remember you love each other and this is to be fun. (Example: The 3rd priority on your wife's list is being a daughter and being a son-in-law is 14th on your list. This may or may not be a problem. As you plan through the day, keep in mind how important this role is to your wife and honor that. Change your priority if necessary or simply be sure to honor each other's differences by accommodating them as you schedule activities for your year.
7. At this point, look back over the past year at your goals if you had any, or think about what was good and what was not so good in the past year. Keep these notes handy and use them as you plan this year so you can repeat the good stuff and correct, or improve on, the other things.
8. Starting with your top priority role, **Review** each role in light of your values priorities in #3 above and answer the **Question**, "What would God want me to be or do in this role?" "What should my **goal** be?" (Example: As a son-in-law, encourage my mother-in-law to travel this year and make sure she feels important and loved by me.)

Session #2

1. After your lunch break, starting again with your top priority role, review your goal statement for each role, and ask yourselves, “What **actions** should I take this year to accomplish this goal?” **Brainstorm** it together. (Example: Son-in-law – Call her occasionally to just check on her and let her know I care about her, go visit her at least twice this year, pay for my wife to visit her alone, invite her to our house for Christmas.)
2. Do the above for your top priority role; then for her top priority role. The actions you choose may include both of you or only one of you. Your part in her role could be to join her, to simply encourage and support her, to hold her accountable or merely to pay the bill for her necessary action. Do this for each role you’ve identified from the top priority to the bottom.
3. **Incorporate timing** into the actions. (Example: Son-in-law – Call her every other month starting this month. Visit her once in the 1st Quarter of the year and once in the 3rd Quarter. Invite her for Christmas.) As you complete this portion of your planning, consider the financial impact of these actions to be sure you can budget the money to carry them out.
4. Each of you take a calendar, your Day Timer or palm pilot and, working together, start with your top priorities (his and hers), **schedule the actions** you’ve decided to take. (Example: Son-in-law – Actually schedule one day each month to call and check on her. Write it in on your Day Timer! Pick out the days to go visit her and write them in your Day Timer! Select a time for your wife to visit her mother by herself and write that in your Day Timer!) If, when you call to coordinate your schedule with her, your selected days aren’t good for her, negotiate another time that is good for all of you.
5. Start a list of **“Things to do”** items starting with, “Call your mother-in-law and coordinate your schedule of visits with her schedule.”
6. Go through all your planned actions in priority sequence scheduling each one and writing them down in your Day Timer. Once these are actually scheduled in your Day Timer they will most likely be accomplished. If they are not scheduled, many won’t get done. As you’re going through the year and you find you must change something you’ve scheduled, don’t delete it, move it to another day and don’t change it a second time. Also, try never to change a scheduled action to accommodate a lower priority action.

Session # 3

1. If you were unable to complete your scheduling, continue it now.
2. Discuss your **current financial situation** including current income, expenses, savings and investments, debts and any concerns either of you may have. (Be very aware that this can be an emotional discussion, so, before you begin, **pray** for understanding of each other's ideas and emotions and for unity in spirit as a couple.)
3. **Discuss** things you would like to do in **the future**; i.e., vacation trips, get out of debt, save for kids' education, replace the car, etc. Look at your current financial picture, and any changes that are most likely to occur in your income or expenses, and determine the changes that must occur if you are to accomplish any of these.
4. **Prioritize** these and make a **budget** to achieve your plan. Make a priority list of those items you would like to do, but cannot work into your budget for this year.
5. **Review** all you've done and talk about how it makes you feel. If your plan for the year already feels overwhelming, identify those things of lowest priority and reduce or delete them. You don't want to walk away from this process with a negative feeling.
6. **Pray together.** Ask God to bless the plan you believe He helped you prepare.

ANNUAL COUPLE PLANNING RETREAT

(Friday through Sunday Schedule)

Friday:

5:00 - 6:00 PM Arrive and settle in.
6:00 - ???? Romantic dinner and evening. Have fun!

Saturday:

7:30 – 9:00 Get up, have breakfast and pray together.
9:00 – 12:00 Session #1
12:00 – 2:00 Eat lunch & take a hike, nap, whatever, have fun.
2:00 – 5:00 Session #2
5:00 – 7:30 Eat supper.
7:30 – 9:30 Session #3
9:30 - ???? Relax and Have Fun!

Sunday:

7:30 – 9:00 Get up, have breakfast and pray together.
9:00 – 11:00 Worship God together through Bible reading, prayer and song. Then talk about how you feel about your plan.
11:00 - ??? Check out and head home.

Sunday Afternoon:

Begin coordination and implementation.