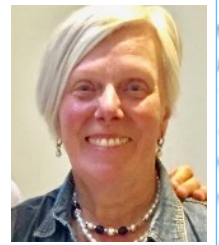


Canopy of Prayer

January #58-2019

contributor

Romkje Fountain



Dear praying friends in Europe

Genesis 2:18-25

Genesis makes it clear that God created people to have relationships. These poetic verses tell us how when Adam was asleep God made a woman out of his ribs. When Adam woke up he discovered "this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"; the beginning of "becoming one flesh", an exclusive new relationship.

We all know what happened next: sin and relationship breakdown. This is particularly true for marriage, where people can experience God's full intention for relationships, but also tremendous pain. Every marriage can be improved. Sustaining a healthy marriage is a skill that can be learned. Forgiveness, communication, transparency, time spent together, sharing common interests—these are some of the skills we can all learn and practice.

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Marriage Week

Some 20 years ago, a young Englishman named Richard Kane stood in line at the check-out counter of a do-it-yourself shop, observing the many other young couples buying paint, wallpaper, lamps and other household items to make their homes more beautiful.

Suddenly the thought struck him: how much money and time do these people spend on their relationship? The idea was born to have a 'marriage week', one week a year between February 7th and 14th, the week prior to Valentine's Day, to encourage those fortunate enough to be married to give special time and attention to their relationship.

Marriage Week, now held in many nations including England, Albania, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Ukraine, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, draws together media, business, government, faith groups and in fact anyone who cares about marriage. Thousands of local events are held each year in bars, restaurants, churches and homes.

Marriage Week wants to encourage people during that week to do something special for their relationship. As Richard Kane tells people: *"Even if you do not do anything special all during the year, do it during Marriage Week. Go for a walk. Go skiing or skating together. Cook a special meal, go to a restaurant, or watch a film together."*



Marriage Week encourages sustainable relationships. Therefore they have made alliances with many other groups who promote this as well, like Marriage Encounter, Alpha Marriage Course and many other such courses. In the Netherlands, Marriage Week partnered in establishing a professorial chair in one of the universities to conduct research on Sustainable Relationships. This professor and her researchers investigate the effects of broken relationships in the work place, and on children who have become victims of their parents' divorce. In the last few years more attention has been given to this.

Let's pray

- for young couples, especially when they have small children and both parents have to work. Pray for them as they seek to be good partners and good parents.
- for older couples. Often when their children have left home, they discover that there is not much love left behind in their relationship. Pray they have the courage to work on their relationship and on themselves.
- for people who would like to be married. Pray for wisdom to find the right partner.
- for all the courses that provide couples with help to make their relationship better.



Bulgarian Parliament

Update : Bulgaria

Thank God that the Bulgarian government did not impose restrictions on minority faiths, which would have severely restricted Protestant churches. The most feared amendments to the Religious Denominations Act were dropped after weekly protests and much prayer.

Additional prayer points:-

1. **Brexit:** Pray for all those people and businesses who are unable to make important decisions as they continue to wait for clear guidance. Pray also for the second "meaningful vote" due to take place in the UK parliament on 14th February.
2. **Europe's economy:** Many European countries are finding the economic situation challenging at the moment. Please pray for good solutions and unity between nations.

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