

Religion and Family Relationships*

“And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and Prophets.’” Matthew 22:35-40

The two great commandments help each other. Your closest neighbor is your spouse. Social science research shows that:

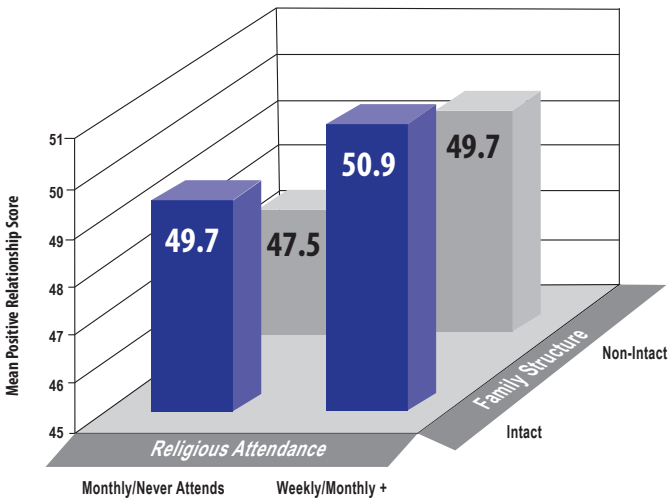
- Couples who share the same religious beliefs have greater marital satisfaction.
- Couples who pray together have greater levels of satisfaction with their relationship.
- Husbands with greater levels of religious practice are more likely to express higher levels of satisfaction and to have better habits of communication and conflict-resolution.
- Couples who read the Bible have an easier adjustment to marriage.
- The more religious a father is, the more positive his impact on his adolescent’s mental capacity and social responsibility will be.
- Religious adults are more likely to support their elderly parents than are their less religious counterparts.

Given the benefits of religious practice for all members of the family, what can you do to strengthen your relationship with God in worship, family prayer, or Bible readings?

Quality of Parent-Child Relationship

by Religious Attendance and Family Structure

Children Aged 6-17, 2003. Source: National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH, 2003)



This chart shows that parent-child relationships are strongest when the family attends church regularly. Church involvement can be good medicine for strained relationships, and prevent future conflict by building a strong familial foundation.

For links to the research behind these statements, please visit www.marri.us/one-pagers/

*It bears emphasizing that these patterns hold for the groups involved, not for all the individuals who make up each group. There is naturally a wide variation among individuals.



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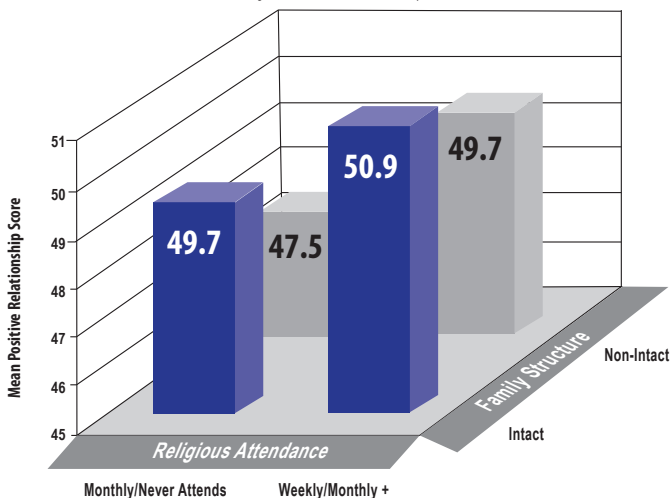
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