

From the Parish Nurse

Love

February is a time when we think of Valentine's Day and of doing something special for those we love. As I thought about this I recalled a verse from Genesis 29:18 (NIV) where Jacob was in love with Rachel and said to Laban, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." How many of us know a love this deep that we would dedicate seven years of work, not necessarily easy work, to achieve the 'one we love'? Yet the Bible goes on to say in Genesis 29:20 "Jacob served seven years to get Rachael, yet they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her." But there were other obstacles ahead for him—the younger daughter, Leah and seven years more of service for Laban (the soon to be father-in-law) in order for Jacob's true love, Rachel, to be his. There are a lot more obstacles that Jacob and Rachel faced. Rachel's barrenness was certainly one of their challenges, yet in Genesis 30:22 ..."God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and opened her womb." Have you ever felt like the Lord has left you? Challenges in life are ever present, yet how we face them seems to be the answer to joy or sadness. And as you think back on your marriages isn't it true that every marriage, even so-called

"good ones" have obstacles that need to be worked through. Remaining faithful to each other and God, provides stability for your lives. Sometimes we think God has forgotten us, but God is faithful. He is always present. But God doesn't always work on our time schedule. I wonder if Jacob wouldn't have liked his life to be simpler.

But love exists outside of marriage and again God teaches us about this. Leviticus 19:18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but **love** your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD." Look around your neighborhood. Who do you know who doesn't need joy and love? May you could think of something special to do as a surprise for a neighbor for Valentine's Day. Perhaps it could be a neighbor you don't know well and doing something special such as delivering a plate of homemade cookies might open the door for a future relationship. This would provide an opportunity to show the love of God to another person.

What are you doing as a family to celebrate your love for each other? Plan a love party with your children. You don't have to give expensive gifts. How about making a book of

“favors” you’ll do for each other— a free day from washing dishes, brush each others hair, give a foot massage or a back massage, play games together. Become inventive and wrap the gift in a personal way that reflects your love for each other. Make Valentine’s Day a date night with the family.

Plan a “special date” with your wife or husband for a time other than Valentine’s Day to go to restaurants when they are not crowded which pressures you to hurry. Or, simply get a baby sitter and talk to each other — that could be something you haven’t done in a long time!

Rediscover each other and your family for Valentine’s Day this year.

Finally, Deuteronomy 6:5 (NIV) “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” Celebrate with the Lord on Valentine’s Day and every day. Pray together as a family, have devotions and a special reading from the Bible. Let the children chose their favorite Bible story to read to the family. God loves you. Love him openly with praise and thanksgiving. Have an open chair at the dinner table for the Lord.



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Champs is funded by a grant from
the Alegent Health Community Benefit Trust