**Marriage Enrichment Session Seven**

**Relationship Development**

**Communication (3)**

**Introduction:**

Communication is to love what blood is to the body: without blood the body dies and without good communication, the relationship dies likewise. (Howe)

**I. Guidelines of c*ommunication in conflict resolution***

 A. Commitment to *give rather than to take*

 1. Don’t come to a conflict pre-determined to **win**

 2. In marriage life decisions are not made individually

 3. Be prepared to *give up* rather that *to force down*

 B. Commitment to *handle anger instead letting anger handle you*

1. Anger is typical human emotion

 a. anger mostly complicates or destroys good

 communication

 b. agree to an *exit strategy* to control anger

 C. Commitment to *listen long and to speak slow*

 1. Prov. 18:13 *He that answereth a matter before he*

 *heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*

 2. Listening isn’t same as hearing

 3. How am I to listen?

 a. Concentrate on what is being said

 b. Accept what is said without judging

 c. Concentrate on repeating what was said

 d. Reflect back what you heard

 e. Observe the non-verbal communication

4. How am I to speak?

 a. Respectful – non-demanding

b. Speak the truth in love

D. Commitment to *total honesty*: Eph. 4:15, 25

 1. To know someone is only when the other reveals

 him/herself

 a. 1 Cor. 2:11: *For what man knoweth the*

*things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?*

 2. Dysfunction in communication is due to fact that

 we don’t share *our deep feelings*

E. Commitment to *be problem instead of person focused*

1. Feelings are often *deeply stirred* in conflicts

2. Be sensitive to each other’s feelings by consciously

 focusing on the *problem* while nurturing the

 feelings

F. Commitment to *refuse to use negative control*

 1. Excuses of ill behavior is negative control

 2. Retreating into silence or make threats is negative

 3. Working on emotions to manipulate

 G. Commitment to *find the right times to deal with conflict*

1. Seek the right time: Prov. 15:23, 28; 25:11-12

 2. Determine the *right place*

3. Prepare an agenda: *what needs to be discussed*

 H. Commitment to come to a *mutually* agreed solution

 1. Find solutions that will honor the emotional needs

 of each other

 2. Making *sacrifices* to reach a solution must remain

 the exception and mutual

 3. Commit to come to a ‘win-win’ solution

**II. Giving and Receiving of Criticism**

 A. Anyone in *leadership* will face scrutiny or criticism

 1. Reasons for criticism

 a. leaders encourage change and growth which

 could make people uncomfortable

b. leaders may overlook facts *on ground level*

B. How handle criticism?

 1. Seek it before you get it

 a. be open to grow

 2. Don’t be discouraged by it through exaggerating it

 3. Don’t be de-moralized by it

4. Don’t be ruled by it

5. Don’t personalize it

6. Don’t dismiss it

C. How to give criticism?

 1. Educate each other about the *good of criticism*

 a. develop strategies how to deal with

 *disappointment – frustration* that occur in

 any relationship

 2. Don’t begin with *criticism*

a. use the sandwich approach

 3. Share criticism with *suggested path to a solution*

**Reflection:**  *The axle-wheel bearing* and *wheel-lug-nut* analogy

Thanks to God for His help &

you for the encouraging feedback

Follow up: *If any questions or requests, please e-mail me at* *atvergunst@charter.net*