



CARIBBEAN BRETHREN ASSEMBLIES CONFERENCE 2017  
Cascadia Hotel, # 67, Ariapita Road, St. Ann's, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

## **Workshop Title: 'Developing Healthy Marital Relationships'**

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### **Developing Healthy Marital Relationships**

Strong marriages lead to strong families which make strong churches which create strong communities. One of the ways in which we can impact our communities, therefore, is by developing healthy marriage relationships.

Creating and cultivating a thriving marriage ministry is one of the most practical investments in human resources a church can make. However, thriving marriages don't just happen. They require intentional planning. If we are to have healthy and strong churches we need to help couples grow in their relationship with the Lord and with each other.

We need to teach men to be men and women to be women. Traditionally we have taught our young women to be good church goers and good servers; we have taught our young men to be good at public prayer and public worship, even good preachers; but we have not always taught believers to be good and godly husbands and wives. A well thought out and well organized marriage ministry can go a long way toward developing healthy marriages and healthy communities.

### **Objectives of Developing Healthy Marriage Relationships**

Without clear objectives and goals, enthusiasm and motivation can quickly dissipate. As a result, objectives must be clear at the beginning. Who is our target audience? Is it members of the church, couples in the community, or a combination of both? Is it people preparing for marriage, young married couples, couples needing marriage enrichment, couples in crisis or all of the above? Knowing our target audience allows you to better determine the what, where, when, why and how of our marriage ministry planning.



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### Some objectives could be:

- (a) **Preparing singles through pre-marital counselling.** Too many engaged couples spend all their time and energy preparing for the wedding day and too little time preparing for the long-term benefits of their marriage relationship. Every marriage officer should seek to equip himself to do pre-marital counselling and insist on it before agreeing to marry a couple.
- (b) **Establishing newly-weds** through mentoring, teaching and organizing couples' activities.
- (c) **Enriching working marriage relationships** through workshops, seminars, support groups and retreats.
- (d) **Restoring troubled marriages** through prayer, counselling and spiritual direction.
- (e) **Developing and networking with referral services** for cases in which professional intervention may be needed.

### Steps to Developing Healthy Marital Relationships/ Establishing a Marriage Ministry

- (1) **Prayer for God's wisdom, guidance and direction.** (John. 15:5) "Without Me you can do nothing". Pray for a vision for the ministry; pray that your vision will be shared by the leadership of your church. Pray for leaders for the ministry and interested couples.
- (2) **Spend time developing your vision for an effective marriage ministry.** Make sure it is in line with the vision of your church. Share it and get important constituents to buy in. Make sure your program fits into your church's calendar to avoid competing interests.
- (3) **Identify and recruit consultants and leaders for the ministry.** Leaders should be passionate about healthy marriages and currently in healthy marriages. The size of your team will depend on availability of suitable personnel and the size of the congregation. Get them involved in developing plans and assuming responsibility for the ministry.
- (4) **Assess the marital needs of your church and the wider -community** through interviews, questionnaires and focus groups and develop a plan to meet these needs.
- (5) **Provide a variety of activities to deliver the program:** devotions, small groups, sermon series, retreats, video presentations, date nights, couple to couple mentoring etc.
- (6) **Provide training for small group leaders and mentors.**



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- (7) **Advertise your services.** Marriage ministry can be a great evangelism and discipleship tool.
- (8) **Create an atmosphere of respect and confidentiality.**
- (9) **Partner with groups providing similar ministries.** You do not have to go it alone.  
Partner with others with similar beliefs and values to maximize the use of resources.
- (10) **Consider providing child care for couples who would like to be involved but who have young children**

**Constantly evaluate the effectiveness of your ministry to couples.** Make adjustments where necessary. Stay ahead of your game. "Bathe" the ministry in prayer. Make sure there is a Biblical foundation.

**You don't have to reinvent the wheel.** Abundant resources are available out there. Access them, evaluate them, invest in them and utilize those that meet the needs of your community.

Resources:

Right Now Media

American Association of Christian Counsellors: [aacc.net](http://aacc.net)

Couple Talk: [info@coupletalk.com](mailto:info@coupletalk.com).

You and Me Together

Shop.FamilyLife.com

Family Life Ministries of Jamaica

Married By Design