



Shepherd Care®

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To Care for People Where They Live and Work

COMMUNITY Care TOPIC

Making a Long-Distance Relationship Work

There come times when travel, employment, logistic, and family reasons cause geographic distance to happen in relationships. First, it is important to respect the boundaries inherited in any relationship. For example, a long-distance friendship is different than a courtship, and both of these relationships are quite different than a marriage or family relationship.

Here are some keys to make the relationship work:

- Communication, communication, communication. A large volume of quality correspondence is important.
 - Share about big things: birthdays, anniversaries, future plans and hopes.
 - Share about daily things: family events and good and bad happenings.
 - Share about heart matters: character and feelings.
 - Appreciate and encourage each other.
- Receive well. Take time to listen and to process what the other person is saying to you. Comment and ask questions. This lets the other person know that you are hearing them.

- Technology allows almost instant communication today. There is a variety of mediums to use: Letters, packages, emails, phone calls, text messages, and even video chats can take place relatively easily.
- Schedule. Respect that there will be times that is not convenient to talk. There may be work demands and time zone differences to consider.
- Give Grace. Communicating over long distances cannot always convey subtle body language or voice tone. Someone that “sounds” short and disinterested may mean that they could be sick or tired from a long day of work. It is important to let the other person know what is going on and not to expect them to intuitively know where you are coming from.
- Travel. There could be an option of budgeting money for a special visit.
- Keep mementoes like pictures and reminders nearby so it will not be, “out of sight out of mind.”

Relationships require work, but especially ones separated by barriers of distance. By applying these keys, you *both* can be assured that the relationship will not only stay intact but thrive!

Introducing your Community Chaplain

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“Assumptions are the termites of relationships.”

Henry Winkler

“Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.”

Song of Solomon 6:1-3

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