

## Long Distance Relationships .....how do you express love to your spouse

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In the world that we live in today, it is a fact that many families live apart for a greater part of the year. Many reasons are responsible for this, the most important being the issue of income and resources to sustain the family. Sometimes either the wife or the husband, usually the husband gets transferred by their very important, or not so important job to another place, or either one gets a job offer that is desperately needed to keep the family going financially or that would further their career, like a promotion. For people who are involved in the work of missions to other nations or regions, there may be occasions when both cannot travel together, and each have to be separate for long periods of time. True love does not mean being inseparable; it means being separated by distance and nothing changes. What about when you actually live together, but work long hours, and only see each other briefly in the morning and connect occasionally in the bedroom at night?

*How do we express love to our partners in these circumstances to keep the fire of love burning?*

It is impossible to love someone without expressing it one way or the other. When we say **communication**

, many people automatically think speech. Communication is so much more than talking to someone. It could be a look, a touch or an action but most importantly putting words together. One preacher talked about thirteen meaningful touches a day! When the home base is solid, it becomes very easy to show love to the world around us.

*When was the last time you used a term of endearment for your spouse?* This is very important for him or her to hear especially when you are not together. Do not argue or nag every single time you pick up the phone, because it will make the other party to become withdrawn. Why would you kill that line of communication? Many couples who have been married a long time have a string of terms of endearment like; my dear, darling, honey, or a special one they coin up for themselves. Yours truly has my husband's number saved as my 'essential commodity.' I like the Yoruba version of 'my love' which is 'Ololufe mi' or simply, 'Oko mi' meaning 'my husband' Just calling him that, or a man calling his partner 'my wife' carries a lot of affection in it. I had the opportunity to minister to a group of women in a night vigil while on a retreat a long while ago and the discussion centered on issues like these. A woman who is well educated told us that

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she could not remember ever telling her husband 'I love you' because she never heard her mother say it to her father. There are positive things that may not have happened between your parents which you may need to inculcate to improve your own relationship. If you feel it, you must be able to express it in every way possible.

In a long distance relationship, it is even more important to speak to each other as frequently as possible. Thank God for all the means available for this; telephones for calling, text, the internet to send e-mails etc. There is also other social media through which you can privately send messages without incurring any expenses. When at a distance, talk about the people you relate with on a daily bases, mention names of those who compliment your work or aggravate you so that you do not become strangers in each others lives. Pray together.

Couples who live together can make use of this also during the day to keep their relationship alive so that they don't become just room mates. In this times when the average family struggles with paying the bills, we can still do nice things for one another like buying the occasional gift, not just waiting until his or her birthday. Surprise him with his favorite meal, not just having him help himself in the kitchen, but set up nicely on the dinning table. Everyone loves to be treated like a queen or king for a day, not to talk of the fact that this is who we are to each other on a daily bases. A relationship that is just full of complaints cannot go anywhere. Our Lord Jesus Christ's expression of His love for us is stated in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" That right there is the greatest expression of love! Tell your spouse today, "Close together or far apart, you are forever in my heart"

Grace Eledan is the founder & Executive director of Women Aflame Intl, a women & youth empowerment ministry. She is also the Publisher of Morning Glory Magazine. She is married to Apostle Israel Eledan with whom she pastors at Leaders' Church Intl. She can be reached on 1 718 503-2580 or [graceeledan@yahoo.com](mailto:graceeledan@yahoo.com) Like Women Aflame International on face book.