



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States

Monthly Message for the Priests Wives

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Supportive Individuals

Volume 3

3- Criteria: Flexibility and Adaptability

Scientific Definition: Flexibility and adaptability refer to the capacity to adjust to changing circumstances and environments while maintaining a positive attitude. It involves being open to new ideas and finding creative solutions in dynamic situations. (Reference: Tugade, M. M., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2004). "Resilient individuals use positive emotions to bounce back from negative emotional experiences." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 86(2), 320-333.)

Biblical Story: The story of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem showcases flexibility and adaptability. Despite the challenges of their circumstances, they adapted to the unexpected situation, eventually giving birth to Jesus in a stable. Their willingness to embrace change contributed to the unfolding of a profound event. (Reference: The Nativity Story)

Funny Story: Picture a situation where the priest's wife prepares an elaborate church event, only to have unexpected rain force them to move everything indoors. She handles the situation with grace, transforming the cramped indoor space into a cozy and memorable gathering.

Practical Exercise: Engage in a "Flexibility Challenge" with your husband. Choose a day to deliberately change your routine—try new foods, take a different route, or engage in an unfamiliar activity. Discuss your experiences afterward to explore how you both adapted and what positives you gained from the change.

here are five biblical verses that emphasize the idea of flexibility and adaptability, along with their references in the New King James Version (NKJV):

- 1 Corinthians 9:22-23 "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you."
- Philippians 4:12-13 "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things, I have learned both to be full and to be hungry,

both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

- James 3:17 "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven... A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted..."
- Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

And here are five sayings from Church Fathers that emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability:

- St. John Chrysostom "Fishes live in the sea, and yet they are not drowned. Birds soar in the sky, and yet they are not in danger of falling. Likewise, Christians live in the world, and yet they are not overwhelmed by the world."
- Reference: Attributed to St. John Chrysostom
- St. Basil the Great "The goodness of God is the highest object of prayer, and it reaches down to our lowest need. It quickens our soul and gives it life, and makes it grow in grace and virtue."
- Reference: "On the Holy Spirit" by St. Basil the Great
- St. Augustine of Hippo "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity."
- Reference: Attributed to St. Augustine
- St. Ignatius of Loyola "Love consists in sharing what one has and what one is with those one loves."
- Reference: Attributed to St. Ignatius of Loyola
- St. Cyril of Alexandria "As the branches of a tree bend and adapt themselves to the blowing of the wind, so must we be able to adapt ourselves to all the different dispositions of men."
- Reference: Attributed to St. Cyril of Alexandria

A priest's wife who lacks flexibility and adaptability can have a significant impact on her husband, especially in the context of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Here are a few ways in which her lack of flexibility and adaptability might affect her husband:

- Ministry Challenges: In the Coptic Orthodox Church, the role of a priest's wife often involves supporting her husband's ministry and engaging with the congregation. If she is inflexible and resistant to change, it could hinder her ability to connect with parishioners, adapt to evolving needs, and contribute effectively to the church community. This might strain her husband's ability to carry out his pastoral duties smoothly.

- **Limited Engagement:** The wife of a priest is often seen as a vital source of support and comfort for parishioners. If she is not adaptable and open to engaging with various individuals from diverse backgrounds, it might limit her husband's ability to connect with a wide range of congregants. People may feel hesitant to approach the priest's family if they perceive his wife as unapproachable.
- **Community Dynamics:** The dynamics of a church community can change over time due to shifts in demographics, societal trends, and cultural influences. A priest's wife who is inflexible might struggle to relate to these changes, leading to a disconnection from the evolving needs and interests of the congregation. This could potentially create tension and hinder the church's growth.
- **Role Model for Congregants:** The wife of a priest often serves as a role model for other women and families within the community. If she is not adaptable to changing times and circumstances, her actions and attitudes might be perceived as out of touch or unrelatable. This can impact her husband's effectiveness as a spiritual leader, as congregants may struggle to see his family as a positive example.
- **Stress on the Husband:** A lack of adaptability in the priest's wife could lead to added stress on her husband. He may find himself torn between his responsibilities to the congregation and the challenges within his own family life. This could hinder his ability to provide effective spiritual guidance and support to both his family and his parishioners.
- **Missed Opportunities:** The Coptic Orthodox Church, like any religious institution, evolves over time to address the changing needs of its members. A priest's wife who is resistant to change might miss out on opportunities for personal growth, spiritual enrichment, and positive contributions to the church's ongoing development.

Overall, the wife of a priest in the Coptic Orthodox Church plays a crucial role in supporting her husband's ministry and maintaining a positive connection with the congregation. Her ability to be flexible and adaptable is essential for creating a harmonious and effective environment within the church community. Without these qualities, her husband's ability to fulfill his pastoral duties and provide meaningful guidance could be hindered, and the overall growth and vitality of the church could be compromised.