

Appropriate ways to interact with the opposite sex (II)

Do's and don'ts within the interactions between the opposite sex

I. Respecting the roles of men and women assigned by God

1. The role of men

Men are to make women feel respected and protected. This is not complicated at all; you would only need to treat women like a gentleman would. Your goal is to show respect to women through your actions, who need occasional help and protection from men.

2. The role of women

- a. Treating men around you like a sister would: when you face a Christian brother, you should not categorise him but to treat him as a brother (i.e., a family member). Treating men in your life with a sister's mentality indicates that you can pray for their needs and be their friend.
- b. Developing godly characters and inner beauty: if you would like to gain respect and cherishment from godly men, please do not follow the standards of outer beauty and sexual appeal that the current culture promotes; such attitudes would associate with the motives inside you and be reflected on your appearance and what you do when interacting with me. Peter teaches Christian women that real beauty comes from the adorning of the heart (1 Peter 3:4) with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. The Church should become the real beauty salon because it encourages sisters to adorn their lives with good deeds.

II. Boundaries must be set in the adequate interactions between men and women

Because of the delicate changes found in the relationship between men and women, we need to date with wisdom, especially among brothers and sisters who are young.

1. Love each other with purity: the two must respect each other. The heart and the mind must be clean, and so do your spoken words and actions.
2. Care with a boundary: we need to identify clearly what conveys a primary friendship between brothers and sisters, and what leads to the development of a romantic relationship.

III. Boundaries in friendship (regardless of your marital status)

1. Unless you officially develop a romantic relationship, it is unhealthy to express to multiple brothers or sisters that only a certain person in the opposite sex would best understand and help yourself.
2. Regardless of the time of the day, if a person frequently spend time alone, pick them up or drop them off, or connect in depth with someone in the opposite sex for a long time (even if it is on WhatsApp or WeChat), it is hard not to develop any intimate connections. Here, it is necessary for the both of you to solemnly figure out the true feelings of yourself and the other person in order to avoid misunderstanding and hurt.

3. Of course, there should be a certain restriction to the extent of physical contact and physical distance. Close friends of the opposite sex would not tap on the other person's shoulder, pat their heads or hold hands, but would at least greet each other, smile towards each other, say 'good morning' and 'goodbye, or nod at each other.
4. When playing games, it is inappropriate for brothers and sisters to chase after each other. We should avoid such situation when designing the game, and take considerations of what kind of physical touch the game might lead to, thus providing corresponding instructions and arrangements. We should be aware of the clothing, movements and postures in the game in order to avoid any unwanted exposures or embarrassments.
5. A few non-believers would group themselves with friends in the opposite sex (not necessarily their partners) to go on trips together. We should be aware of the room arrangements: men with men, women with women. Don't gather everybody into the same room because of cost or convenience because this would put you in temptation.
6. It is certainly inappropriate for two people in the opposite sex to meet at homes or in a room to do homework, prepare for cell groups or wait for the start of a cell group gathering. If needed it is better to change the venue of gathering to the library or elsewhere. In fact, we should all avoid being alone in a room with someone in the opposite sex in generally; not only to run away from temptation, but also to minimise unnecessary misunderstandings.

These are a few examples in life; more are to be discussed in details. It is important not to be overly sensitive and restraint, but also not to be too lenient with yourself. Let's keep our hearts away from temptations: you would rather be too reserved than be too opened in relationships.

IV. What we shouldn't do

1. What sisters shouldn't do to brothers
 - a. Tone in speaking
 - Too gentle
 - Sharing emotionally deep things at late night
 - Speaking in a soft and alluring tone
 - b. Voluptuous or curvaceous outfits
 - c. In terms of behaviour
 - Overly attentive to a certain brother
 - Overly caring (which gives room for imagination)
 - Frequently gather or date with a brother alone
 - Frequent physical touch with brothers
 - Flirtatious and sexually provocative
 - To be too emotionally open to different guys
2. What brothers shouldn't do to sisters
 - a. Tone in speaking
 - Honey-tongued
 - Overly intimate nicknames (different from other people)
 - An especially gentle tone
 - Sharing emotionally deep things at late night

b. In terms of behaviour

- Tapping the girl's shoulder or back, touching her body
- Always looking into taking photo for her, or sneak a photo of her
- Speaking to each other at a close distance, whispering at each other's ears, having physical contact
- Frequently calling the girl to find topics to talk about
- Deliberately make pranks or jokes to the girl in order to catch her reaction or attention
- Overly caring – offering gifts or services
- Eyes fixed on the girl's certain body parts
- Deliberately initiate physical contacts with the girl on the streets
- Overly observant about the girl – e.g. brows, outfits etc.
- Having their whole thoughts and attention devoted onto the girl, or even to start fantasising