

SUPPORTING MARRIAGES IN SPECIAL-NEEDS FAMILIES: A CHURCH'S ROLE

CHALLENGES FACED BY SPECIAL-NEEDS PARENTS

- Raising any child is hard; raising a child with special needs includes:
 - Frequent medical appointments and therapies
 - Navigating complex educational systems
 - Increased caregiving responsibilities
 - Financial and emotional stress
- These demands often strain marriages.
- Parents can become so absorbed in caregiving that they unintentionally neglect their marriage.

THE CHURCH'S OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT MARRIAGES

- Provide inclusive childcare.
 - Ensure your childcare setup can accommodate children with special needs during classes, workshops, date nights, and retreats. Without this, many parents are unable to participate in church marriage events.
- Offer specialized marriage support.
 - Host classes or workshops specifically for couples raising special-needs children.
 - Use existing, high-quality resources—don't feel pressured to create your own.
 - Again, ensure appropriate childcare is available for these events.
- Facilitate access to professional counseling.
 - Some couples may need support beyond what church leadership can offer.
 - Know local, trusted Christian marriage counselors.
 - Offer financial help when possible.
 - Consider a shared-cost model:
 - Counselor reduces fee by 1/3
 - Church covers 1/3
 - Couple pays 1/3

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Marriage is hard; marriage while raising a child with special needs is even harder.

The health of the marriage is as important as the care provided to the child.

The church can be a vital source of support—helping couples not just survive, but thrive.