

## **A look at WWME Community**

Where two or more are gathered...  
(third in a series of five articles)

By Jack and Karen Baker

In *Community: Who Are WE?*, we shared an article with you regarding four ways WWME Communities provide ongoing support. They are:

- An environment of acceptance.
- Focus on priority of spousal relationship.
- Help with discernment of gifts.
- Facilitating the Weekend.

In this article, we will share some of our thoughts about how WWME Communities offer support to couples through the focus placed on keeping our spousal relationship a priority. First, we want to explain that the term “spousal relationship” refers to the relationship we have as a husband and wife, and that our priest and religious (sisters, brothers, monks, etc.) have with us, the people they serve, their spouse.

We each began our journey in Worldwide Marriage Encounter on a Weekend while listening to a team encourage us to make our relationship a priority. I (Jack) left our Weekend with hopes and dreams of keeping Karen a priority in my life. I wanted to nurture and protect the refreshed love I gained on the Weekend. But, to tell you the truth without the encouragement of the Community of Paul & Rose, Tom & Val and Paul & Sheri, everything I learned on the Weekend about making Karen my priority would have been placed on the shelf with a lot of other good intentions.

It was being in community with Pat & Juanita, Ed & Karen, and Steve & Diane that the priority of daily dialogue and couple prayer became true relationship values for me and Karen. It is being in community with Fred & Anne, Mike & Marge, Bruce & Judy, Bruce & Jodie, and many other couples too numerous to mention that I continue each day to overcome my selfishness and make Karen my priority. Community for me (Jack) is the family that supports and encourages our relationship through their lived example of Jesus’ love. I realize that Karen and I are Community to others and it is a joy for me to give what I have received. I encourage you to be community to others and to rely on your local community for the support you need to keep your spouse a priority in your life.

I (Karen), also had beautiful dreams of continued renewed love for Jack. But it could not have happened without regular exposure of support from the Community. We were away from the WWME Community for a while. We found that without the support of loving Sacraments, we drifted away from dialogue and into old behavior patterns that drew us once again into disappointments and disillusionment. It was a loving Community that encouraged us to participate in a Share Group that helped us get back on track in our relationship. We have continued to be a committed part of community ever since.

I (Karen) see community gatherings as a unique experience compared to the other meetings in our busy lifestyle. Through the focus on our relationships, the WWME community supports and encourages me to continue to make the “decision to love and be loved” a part of my daily lifestyle. It was through attending presentations and sharing in small groups that I learned how our Personality Styles of a Helper and Thinker can compliment one another. It was through attending the Journey Together that we were able, with the support of the Community, to strengthen our dialogue through the support and commitment of those around us.

Community supporting relationships is a two way street. In order to receive, there must be those who are willing to give. Giving to the Community to support others may be as simple as just attending a gathering together, taking a meal as a couple to a hurting family, or volunteering to give the next presentation at your Share Group or large Community Gathering. Those in our WWME Communities are YES people! They say YES to reaching out to others and YES to receiving the love of others.

Thank you, Companions on the Journey, for supporting Community through your focus on relationships!

Dialogue Questions:

- When was the last time we invited another couple or priest/religious to join us at our Sharing Group or Community Gathering? HDIFAT?
- Is our Share, Core, Image Group, or Love Circle open and inviting to new couples, priests, or religious? WAMFAT?