

# Family Traditions

## Chapter 5: Understanding Your Family's Way of Doing Things

**Instructions:** This worksheet helps you identify and examine your family's traditions — the visible customs and the hidden patterns that shaped your understanding of "normal." Complete Part One on your own, then share everything with your partner. Finally, work through Part Two together to decide what traditions you want to establish in your own marriage.

**Remember:** The goal is not to judge whose family was "better" but to understand the different backgrounds you each bring to your marriage.

### Part One: My Family's Traditions

#### 1 Authority and Responsibility

Who was the "boss" in my family? How was authority shared between my parents?

How were problems solved and decisions made in the family?

How did family members deal with anger? How did people "argue" and "fight"?

How were children disciplined? Was physical punishment used? Was this helpful or harmful?

Did any kind of abuse (physical, emotional, verbal) take place in my family?

#### 2 Core Family Traditions

What were the most important traditions in my family? What did we always do?

### 3 Extended Family

What role did grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins have in our family life?

How did these extended family members affect my own life as a child?

Were there any "adopted" family members (close friends treated as family)?

### 4 Gatherings and Celebrations

What were the most important gatherings in my family? How did we celebrate them?

How did we celebrate birthdays? Holidays? Religious occasions?

Who was invited to family gatherings? Was anyone excluded? Why?

### 5 Substances and Addictions

How did my family use alcohol, tobacco, drugs, or food? Was any of this harmful?

Did any family members struggle with addiction or overuse of anything (substances, screens, gambling, etc.)?

How has this affected me?

## 6 Faith and Spirituality

What were my family's traditions concerning Sunday worship?

What were my family's traditions concerning prayer? How were children taught to pray?

What was I taught about God? About trusting or relying upon God?

What did my family teach about death and life after death? How were funerals handled?

## 7 Society and Community

What did my family teach about politics, government, and voting?

How was my family involved in church or community events?

What was I taught about serving others and helping those in need?

## 8 Work, Money, and Responsibility

How did my family think about work? How important was making money?

Was it more important to buy things or to save money? How were bills handled?

How were children taught about studying, homework, and getting good grades?

## 9 Intimacy and Sexuality

How did my parents express affection toward each other? Toward the children?

What was the attitude of my family about sex? How were children taught about sexuality?

Was sex education handled well or poorly in my family? What was taught about chastity before marriage?

Was I or anyone in my family ever sexually abused? How did this affect me and my family?

What was taught about the meaning of sexual intimacy? About family planning? About abortion?

## 10 Core Values

What were the key values I learned from my family (including any that I now see as negative)?

Which of these values do I want to pass on when I am a parent? Which do I want to change? Why?

## Summary Reflection

After completing this worksheet, what have I learned about my family that I had never consciously considered before?

## Part Two: Building Our Traditions Together

**Instructions:** Complete this section together with your partner after you have both finished Part One and shared your answers with each other. This is a dialogue — listen to each other, seek to understand, and make decisions together.

1. Where are our family traditions most similar? How might these similarities be a strength for our marriage?

2. Where are our family traditions most different? How do we feel about these differences?

3. What traditions do we want to establish in our own marriage and for our children?

4. If any of these traditions are different from what either of our families practiced, what skills might we need to learn? How will we learn them?

5. What unhealthy patterns from our families do we want to consciously avoid? How will we support each other in this?

6. What traditions do we want to establish around faith and prayer in our home?