



NC photo by Denise Walker
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Lawson stop in at their parish church, St. Mary's in Annapolis, Md., to offer some prayers. Judith Tate O'Brien, marriage and family therapist for Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral in Oklahoma City, believes that shared prayer deepens friendship and strengthens commitment to the marriage vows.

Spouses find new intimacy through praying together

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. (NC) — Married couples who have had a spat can't stay angry for very long if they follow the advice of Judith Tate O'Brien, marriage and family therapist for Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral Parish in Oklahoma City.

In a phrase, Mrs. O'Brien's formula for marital harmony is: Pray together.

Shared prayer, she said, deepens friendship, strengthens commitment to the marriage vows and brings about a conversion which enables the couples to reflect on and change actions which may have damaged their relationship.

Mrs. O'Brien is an expert on shared prayer. She and her husband, Gene, a retired credit manager for an oil firm, are co-authors of three books on marriage, the latest of which is "Couples Praying — A Special Intimacy," published by Paulist Press.

"The depth of friendship," she said in an interview, "is in direct correlation to the depth of communication."

Shared prayer, she said, sets up a three-way communication, and because it demands utter honesty and is without pretense it gives couples a knowledge of each other that would be impossible to gain in ordinary circumstances.

"Just as sexual intercourse is self-revelation and self-sharing, so, too, prayer can be another form of intimacy," she said. "It takes some doing to think of intimacy without thinking of sex. Marital friendship or intimacy includes sex, but that isn't total intimacy."

She continued: "How we stand before the Lord is unique for each one of us, and when we share that with our partner, it becomes real self-sharing, a revelation."

In the book, the O'Briens interviewed six couples who gave personal testimony to the value of shared prayer.

Mrs. O'Brien believes the couples' accounts are all the more inspiring because "they are plain, ordinary people in the pews, without fancy degrees, who have secular jobs, and live in and give witness to the world."

She also notes the husbands and wives interviewed for the book attest to the fact that "prayer affects a marital relationship in all areas, including their sexual and emotional lives."

The couples use various prayer formats, including reading Scripture passages from the day's Mass, choosing any Scripture reading that appeals to them, or praying the Liturgy of the Hours, the church's official prayer.

"Some couples are frightened unnecessarily at the idea of sharing prayer because they think they have to be Scripture scholars," Mrs. O'Brien said. "Marital prayer has to find its own form, and it's much more elastic than the prayer of a professional Religious. Some husbands and wives have tried to imitate the public prayer of the church. That's okay if it works. They have to find their own way of sharing."

The couples also prefer different places for their prayers. Some pray in

Continued on Page 19A

GLEMBY

He proposed, You said yes ...



And since that moment, you've been caught up in a whirlwind of activity — setting your wedding date, finding a caterer, making the guest list, sending out invitations — all to make your wedding day a very special one!

You've heard the saying that all brides are beautiful. Being especially radiant and beautiful on your wedding day requires proper planning just like the other details of your wedding. Let our expert team of Glemby Stylists create a look that's just "right for you."

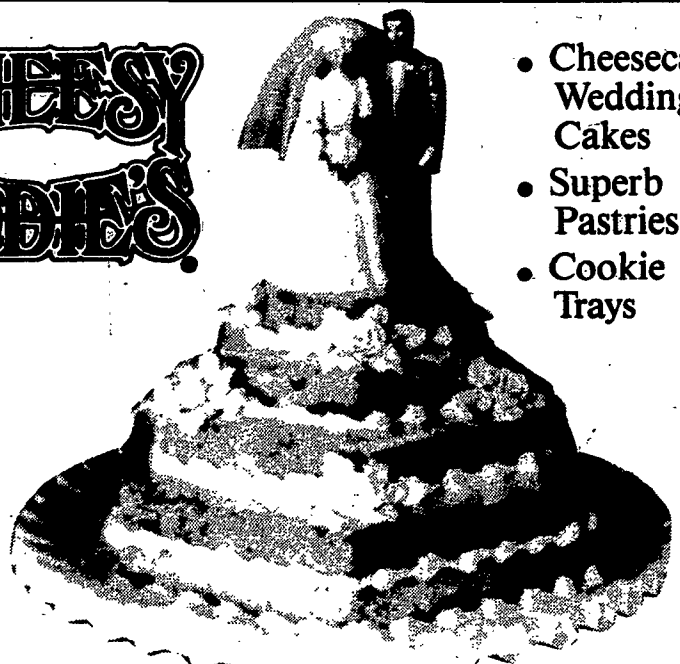
Make an appointment for a free consultation soon.

Present this ad and receive 50% off for yourself, 20% off for your Bridal party.

Downtown 423-2581
Greece 225-0790
Irondequoit 266-7040
Eastview 223-1507
Eastway 671-0102



CHEESY
EDDIE'S

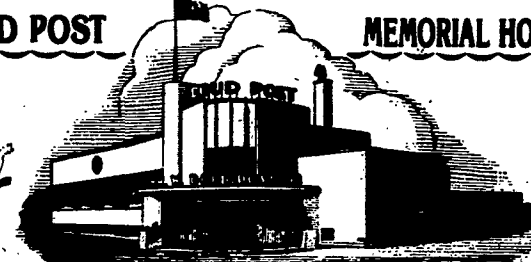


- Cheesecake Wedding Cakes
- Superb Pastries
- Cookie Trays

602 South Ave. Rochester, N.Y. (716) 473-1300

WM. W. DOUD POST

MEMORIAL HOME INCORPORATED



GETTING MARRIED?

We have the reputation for making your big day one to remember at a cost you can afford.

We also specialize in Private Parties

898 Buffalo Rd.
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

Call us for Details!
235-3775