

# Couples Date Night

*An Easy and Effective Way to Support Healthy Relationships in your Community*

## **A Vision for Healthy Couples:**

From my early teen years, I remember thinking about marriage. I recall looking forward to the day that I could date one person for the rest of my life and move beyond the uncertainty, dare I say insecurity, of finding the one. Anybody relate?

Fast forward a decade, my wife, Lauren, and I were through our first five years of marriage, were growing a family, working multiple jobs, and interacting with friends who were in committed relationships (dating, engaged, married). I had completed my Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy and we were trying to figure out how to love one another in a meaningful way and how to help other couples discover a similar passion for their own relationship.

The Vineyard Church Pearland, where I serve as one of the Pastors, values Small Groups and runs groups as a central rhythm of community and transformation. Lauren and I began to dream of a group that we could run that would meet us in our phase of life and encourage couples to experience the love of Jesus in their couple connection. We had friends who were newer to church and the idea of small groups. We were interested in creating space for couples to enrich their investment in one another and gather with other couples who were growing in their individual relationships as well.

Being people of the presence, we believe that God's is at work and pursuing us in our life. As we developed Couple's Date Night, we focused on three key areas: share a healthy relationship topic that connects to the life of Jesus, serve dessert and have each couple go on a mini-date, and make time to pray for any needs in the group. All three aspects are about experience: experiencing health through community and welcoming God's presence through prayer.

Having run this group many times and having multiplied this group, we have found Couple's Date Night to be one of our favorite small groups we have ever led. Personally, our marriage benefits from participating. Creating intentional space for connection during the Mini-Date proved fruitful for our relationship. Dedicating time, attention, and availability even for 15-20 minutes matters for enriching friendship as a couple. We have seen our friends participate in a group that values healthy couple dynamics. People receive prayer, support and encouragement. One final observation: couples learn how to date each other as a result of the group. They make time and take time for focus on one another. They experience the gift of investing in their relationship and they experience it in the context of community!

We invite you to join us in using this resource in your community. Use it. Share it. Make it better. We believe that the kingdom will break in as we serve and support healthy couples in our churches, church plants, neighborhood, and work places. Below are some details of how we structured Couples Date Night in our context.

### **Kurt Attaway**

*Associate Pastor at the Pearland Vineyard Church  
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist*



## How It Works:

**Group Goal:** Create space for couples (dating, engaged, married) to discover healthier connection with one another and to benefit from a community participation.

**Group Perspective:** Couples Date Night is a great way to introduce people to the love of Jesus and connect healthy relationship content with the truth of scripture. The mini date is intended to allow each couple to focus on their own bond and to practice dating one another. We conclude the night with prayer, making space for the loving presence of God to meet real needs in a safe way. This group can be a great group for couples exploring faith.

**Meeting Frequency:** Flexible. Could be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. We recommend meeting every other week to balance busy schedules and continuity of people coming back.

**Gathering Structure:** 90 minutes total

15 min — mingle/friendship building

35 min — Large Group Topic Share

25 min — Mini Date with Dessert

15 min — Large Group Prayer

## Large Group Topics:

During Large Group Share, highlight a topic and connect it to Jesus as you invite the group to share their perspective on the topic. Work to engage the group to share and invest in the conversation. In a gracious way, introduce how Jesus might see the value and how we are invited to a good and life giving connection. We have begun to sketch out what a few of these topics could look like with some discussion question and vision. These can be reordered based upon the needs of your community. Feel the freedom to take this and build upon it.

### Topic 1 — Shared Experiences:

While love is often experienced as a feeling, it truly is a choice, an action, and a movement of one's life toward another. Relationships blossom and thrive through life giving experiences. Shared experiences help shape connections. How do you like to connect as a couple? What are some life giving experiences you have shared as a couple? (*Consider the community of the early church in Acts 2:42-47 as an example of shared experiences enriching relational bonds*)

### Topic 2 — Friendship:

Research from the Gottman Institute highlights friendship as the most important trait of healthy couples. Why do you think friendship is so important, yet so many couples struggle to be best friends? What characteristics are important in healthy friendship? How has friendship benefitted your relationship? God's kingdom is a relational kingdom; it seems fitting that friendship is central for healthy couples. How might a vibrant friendship with God benefit your couple relationship? (*Proverbs 17:17*)

### Topic 3 — Kindness:

Not only is kindness a fruit of the spirit, it also creates a fruitful connection. We all need kindness from our significant other. How do you show kindness to your significant other? Can you recall a time when you experienced kindness from your partner and it made a difference? What are some ways we can show kindness in our committed relationships? What are barriers to being kind? (*Proverbs 3:3-4*)

**Topic 4 – Gratitude:**

Couples need to celebrate the good things in their life and relationship. When you focus on what you have as opposed to what you lack, you will strengthen the bond you do have. The focus and attention of our thought life makes a significant difference in how we experience relationships. As couples, we must think good thoughts about our spouse. Philippians 4 encourages us to think about things that are right, true, noble, and worthy of praise. Take time to make a list of “praise-worthy” qualities you see in your mate. (*Philippians 4:8*)

**Topic 5 – Fear versus Hope:**

We are called to be people of hope. Yet, it’s our fears that often drive us. If you take time to shine light on your fears, you might discover some of your greatest hopes. John 10 tells us that the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy, but Jesus came that we might have life! This highlights the reality of fear v. hope; light v. dark; life v. death. Where do you notice fear tries to impact your relationship? How does fear impact you personally? Could you imagine sharing your fears more regularly with your partner? As a couple, when was the last time you dreamed together and cultivated a hopeful picture of your future? How can we cultivate love that is always hopeful? (*1 Corinthians 13:7*)

**Topic 6 – Communication:**

In a study by Prepare-Enrich of over 50,000 couples, they discovered communication is the most important factor in a satisfying relationship. Communication is the space we create connection. We share who we are with another and we open our lives up to receive what is shared in return. This happens through speaking, listening, tone, facial expressions, attention, interest, care...and the list goes on. Communication is ultimately about caring for one another. What makes communication difficult for couples? What helps you communicate as a couple? If you were going to give advice to a couple who is struggling, what are key communication tips that have benefitted you? (*Ephesians 4:29...communication within the context of putting on your “new-self”*)

**Other Possible Topics:**

- Forgiveness
- Trust
- Transparency
- Vulnerability
- Humility
- Peace
- Patience
- Expectations
- Laughter & Crying (connecting in the ups and downs)
- Love as a choice
- Love as sacrifice
- Love as action

## Contact us:

Kurt Attaway is the Associate Pastor at the [Pearland Vineyard Church](#). Kurt and his wife, Lauren, are enjoying life with their son Canten, daughter Emersen and son Jaden. Kurt and Lauren were married in 2006. In 2007, Kurt joined the staff at The Vineyard. Kurt has a Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy and is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in the State of Texas.

Kurt specializes in speaking on:

- Cultivating a healthy marriage and family life
- Creating a thriving marriage and family ministry in your church
- Dealing with conflict and developing healthy relationship dynamics

Kurt is available for coaching, consulting, training, and speaking with your church. You can contact him at: [kurt@pearlandvineyard.org](mailto:kurt@pearlandvineyard.org)

## For more resources:

### **Multiply Vineyard**

1533 W Arrowhead Rd

Duluth, MN 55811

Email: [office@multiplyvineyard.org](mailto:office@multiplyvineyard.org)

Website: [Multiplyvineyard.org](http://Multiplyvineyard.org)

Phone: 218-525-3462

### **Find us on social:**

[Multiply Vineyard Blog](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#)