

Cohabitation and Sexual Relationships

Christianity and Cohabitation

Christianity has become increasingly more tolerant of cohabitation. Liberal Christians, such as some Church of England Christians, accept cohabitation where it is part of a **committed relationship**, although they still believe that **marriage would be the ideal**.

Some denominations, e.g. **Roman Catholic**, **disagree with cohabitation** as they believe it devalues the special and sacred nature of sex, which would only take place within marriage. The Catholic Church do not accept cohabitation and expect a couple to not have sex before marriage. Some Baptist Churches may refuse to marry a couple who are cohabiting.

Changing Attitudes

Sex is a powerful human instinct and drive. It is linked with procreation, but the development of successful and widely available contraception, e.g. the contraceptive pill, has allowed the act of sex to be divorced from the act of procreation. Therefore people are able to have sex without becoming pregnant. This has significantly changes attitudes towards sexual activity.

The Bible

God said to "be fruitful and multiply", implying that having sexual relationships for the procreation of children is a good thing.

Although Adam and Eve were the first 'couple' and the first example of a relationship that the Bible gives us, Genesis does not tell us that they were married, only 'partners'. Some people believe this to be a reasonable argument for being in a loving, committed relationship that includes sex.

Cohabitation

Cohabitation: to live together in a sexual relationship, without being married or in a civil partnership

Some couples choose to cohabit rather than marry, whilst some couples will marry after a period of cohabitation. In 2012, there was 5.9 million people cohabiting in the UK and it was the **fastest growing family type**.

Christianity and Sex

- Promiscuity is not acceptable
- Sex should take place within a marriage
- Sex is a gift from God. It is holy and sacred
- Sex should only be done with the person you love
- Casual sex devalues people and devalues the sex itself (it becomes meaningless)
- Concerns from some Christians about children being born outside of a stable home environment

Chastity

- The promise to not have sex until marriage
- Traditionally in Christianity, a person would remain chaste (a virgin) until marriage
- In America, Christians wear a ring on their wedding finger as part of the 'Silver Ring Thing' or 'True Love Waits' movement, which highlights a person's choice to not have sex until marriage. When married, the person will replace this silver ring with their wedding ring

Sexual Relationships

Sexual relationships are an important part of being human. **Sex is a gift from God** and part of God's creation. It allows for the continuation of the human race and is an important part of human **identity**. It is also a **physical expression of love** for others.

Promiscuity (having a number of casual sexual relationships) is regarded as wrong or a **sin** in Christianity, because sex should be part of a committed relationship between two people who have deep feelings for each other. As sex can result in children, fidelity in sexual relationships is really important for the upbringing of children by two parents.

Celibacy

- The decision to never have a sexual relationship
- In the RC faith, priests, monks and nuns take a vow of celibacy. It is made as a positive choice of lifestyle in order to dedicate one's life to the service of God

The Bible

Hebrews 13:4 *God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous*

1 Corinthians 6:18 *Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.*

Genesis 2:24: *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."*

