
SEVEN WAYS TO KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE STRONG DURING SEMINARY

by Sandra Glahn, Th.M.

I've spent fourteen years of my life either as the spouse of a DTS student or as a student myself. Yes, you're right—I probably need to get a life. But I tell you that to tell you this: my husband and I still like each other. A lot. And you can emerge from seminary with a decent marriage, too. Here are some suggestions for how:

1. **Marry well.** I mean, commit yourself to someone who loves the Lord and can do self-sacrifice. Then thank God daily for a spouse who makes it a joy to be married. In other words, get lucky. (Or blessed, in our theological system.) If it's too late for this, the next six suggestions might help.
2. **Don't stay here if your other half doesn't like the thought of doing ministry.** Take a break. He or she might change if you quit insisting and take time instead to come to a place of oneness. This is more likely to happen if you are willing to lay down your life—or in this case, your school plans. Forget arguments about who “makes the final decision.” Go for unity instead.
3. **Cut back on your hours if school is killing you.** When my husband took Greek and Hebrew both in the same semester, the load landed him in the hospital. Our seminary years are not the prelude to “out in life.” They are part of life itself. If we don't manage time well now, it won't get better when we exchange term papers for life-and-death needs demanding our attention. After his visit to the Baylor Hospital, my hubby changed from a four-year plan to a five-year plan to finish his Th.M. But—you say—that costs more. Yep. It sure does. And another thing: get your spouse's opinion before filling every winter and summer session with class work.
4. **Don't let your spouse go to sleep alone night after night.** If you go to bed at night with your sweetie and then rise alone at 4 a.m. to study, she will think you a saint. If you let him fall asleep alone every night so you can both arise at the same time in the morning, you get no points. Same amount of sleep, fewer points. You do the math. Seminary can be a lonely time for the “supporting” spouse, and lying there alone can accentuate the pain.
5. **Do what you can to get your husband or wife into the classroom.** Encourage your spouse to take a class with you (Spouse Audit – \$30). Grow together intellectually and spiritually.
6. **Go to church together.** Duh? Not really. Some DTS couples make church attendance a low priority, reasoning that they get their needed spiritual input and community involvement on campus. But remember: the church, not the school, is The Bride. People who claim to be Christians may have a high divorce rate, but the statistics look much

different for couples who *practice* Christianity, including church attendance. So don't send your spouse off to church alone while you cram for a language test.

7. **Pray together and for each other.**

It is possible to end your years at DTS with a stronger marriage than when you began. I encourage you to view your marital relationship as a place of spiritual formation, a place to keep you accountable for loving your neighbor. After all, as Martin Luther once noted, your spouse is the nearest neighbor you've got.