

## 17th May 2021 Remaining Friends With John & Ruth McNeill

### Takeaways

- Togetherness is key. Are we in this relationship *together*? What does togetherness look like for us? How could we be more together?
- What if we don't feel 'together'? What can we do? Very often it's the small changes that make a difference. What small changes can you make as part of a bigger process of taking one step at a time in growing in togetherness? Don't be discouraged and persevere with each small step.
- If we have separate jobs/roles, what opportunities do we make to connect with each other on a regular basis?
- There will always be ways in which we can grow as individuals and as a couple. In what ways are we thinking about how we can improve things?
- Regularly consider *what can we improve in our relationship?*
- Think about what season of life you are in, how have things changed from a previous season? How have each others' needs, differences, strengths and weaknesses changed? How can you support one another in these changes?
- Making time for each other regularly is key for maintaining togetherness. For John and Ruth, this means touching base daily (5pm G&T), weekly (Saturday brunch) and twice yearly (marriage retreat). Don't save up all you need to talk about for one big session, connect regularly so you know each other well and are able to chat about things as they come up.
- Have a regular date night! Here are some great ideas from Marriage Week UK:
  - <https://marriage-week.org.uk/date-idea/>
- Understand each other's differences. Why not try the [Toucan Together app](#) to help you appreciate and work with your differences.
- Christian faith is key. The foundation of John and Ruth's marriage is their faith in Jesus. Is this something you have considered? If you want to explore the christian faith more, please get in touch or find a christian friend who can talk about this with you.

Inspired to take a marriage retreat? John and Ruth have shared with us some great questions you could use for your time together on a retreat:

1. What are you learning about us & about me?
2. The elephant-in-the room question - What are we not talking about (can be anything - sex-life, finances, jobs etc)?
3. What would make our friendship even better? - give one action point.

4. Is there anything coming up, short or longer term future, that we need to be talking about or planning for?

*On our April retreat, we chose to discuss how we want to handle the lifting of covid restrictions -an important topic, given that one of us is an extrovert and the other an introvert!*

5. What are our priorities in the next six months?

We choose ahead of time, or on the journey, which topics we will work on as that helps us to be focused. Usually a maximum of three topics.