



Empty Nest

If you have recently become empty nesters, you are probably being asked, “What’s it like?” or “Are you coping alright?” Many parents begin to become anxious at the thought of an “empty nest” once their youngest child has vacated the home. It is definitely a change in lifestyle, the empty-nest syndrome, but it doesn’t have to be negative.

Benefits

The first thing most empty nesters notice is that the house is quieter. You can get to bed earlier because there’s no more loud music, the clatter of young people arriving and leaving, the TV or talking keeping you awake. And it’s easier to fall asleep when you’re not worrying about whether your teenager will make it home safely. An added benefit—the car is available when you need it!

One extremely noticeable difference is at dinner: you and your spouse alone, facing each other across the table, wondering what to talk about.

Becoming Friends

In Song of Songs 5:16, his lover calls Solomon her “friend.” The empty nest can be a time to become “friends,” to renew and deepen your friendship with your spouse. Without interruptions from children, you can have longer and more meaningful conversations. Since you are no longer attending school activities and meetings, you can use evenings to go on dates again. You might start traveling by yourselves and rekindle the romance of your pre-parenting years! Another upside is simplified meal preparation (e.g. one meal is enough for two nights of dinners). Eating out can be spontaneous and will cost less.

The empty nest is generally not the same experience for dad as it is for mom, especially if dad is still at his job all day and the mom is primarily a homemaker. For her, the added time can be used to resume or start a career or to

pursue hobbies and projects she didn’t have time for with children underfoot.

Dads get phone calls from fledglings whenever one of them has a computer problem or needs advice on technology purchases (digital cameras, iPods, mini-disk players, cell phones). Moms get the calls during peak emotional times (roommate crises, boyfriend/girlfriend concerns, stress overload). Fortunately, our generation benefits from technology that allows us to stay connected with our children via e-mail, cell phones and online chats!

Continued Prayer

You can spend some of your newly-found extra time praying more for your children. Job “would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ This was Job’s regular custom” (Job 1:5b, NIV). You might also consider spending more time in ministry, finding new ways to serve the Lord through church or community involvement.

A blessing you may experience is seeing your grown children making responsible choices and wise decisions. Many will see their offspring walking closely with the Lord and making their relationship with Him a priority, even though they no longer dwell at home. You can breathe a sigh of relief when you see your positive influence being lived out in their lives, as Proverbs 22:6 suggests: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” (NIV)

Adapted from focusonthefamily.com



RELATED SCRIPTURE

The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he

will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing” (Zephania 3:17).

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart (Psalm 37:4).

Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in obedience to him. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Yes, this will be the blessing for the man who fears the LORD. May the LORD bless you from Zion; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life. May you live to see your children’s children—peace be on Israel (Psalm 128:1-6).

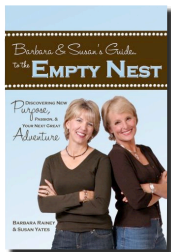
that characterized your relationship before heading down the parenting.

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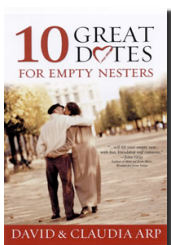
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Barbara Rainey and Susan Yates
ISBN 978-1602000605

You're done . . . but you're not finished! And one more thing. You're not alone. Feeling unsure? Scared? Expectant? Maybe even giddy? Is your nest empty--except for a bundle of mixed emotions? As you grieve what's behind and daydream about possibilities, you'll feel young again, ready for new challenges and adventures. Yet you may not know what to pursue or how to discover what's next. Many women in this season of life wonder: Who am I now? And what should I do? How will my marriage be affected? Does anyone need me? How do I relate to my children? Is it okay to feel sad? Or thrilled? What's next? Barbara and Susan can be the friends you need to walk you through these new experiences. They'll guide you to answers, and together you'll discover a new purpose and passion for your next life adventure.



10 Great Dates for Empty Nesters

David and Claudia Arp
ISBN 978-0310256564

If you are drifting into the empty nest phase with little thought or planning, this may be the book to read. The authors provide guidance to help reestablish the friendship and oneness