

Privacy, Space, Loneliness and Touch

Frank L. Reed

Privacy

Need to maintain balance between need for personal space and need for interaction with others

Space and distance

Public space – more than 12 feet from person

Group visiting space – 8 feet between persons (living room furniture spacing)

Professional space – 4-8 feet between persons (lawyer or doctor office)

Personal space – 18 inches-4 feet between persons (small group visiting)

Intimate space – 0-18 inches (this is considered private space not to be invaded)

Acceptable “violations” of intimate space

Medical exams or treatment, crowded areas (elevator, bus or aircraft seat, shopping, etc.) romance, affection, brief hugs

Inappropriate violations

Unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact, abuse, inappropriate dress, “breathy music”

“Turf”

Siblings on vehicle seat claim personal space, gang wars, sports teams

Maintaining privacy and personal identity

Difference between neighbors in farming community and “neighbors” in apartment house

Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you.”

Physical Contact

Physical contact is an important component of attachment and bonding between child and parent

Physical contact is important between fathers and daughters at an early age

It illustrates that men are strong, defenders, and can be trusted

Bonding happens before sexuality is a factor in the girl’s mind

Contact must be completely pure and free from any inappropriate touching

This will allow her to make a healthy friendship with a future husband someday

Physical contact is important between fathers and sons

It illustrates that men can show emotion and bonding in physical ways

It illustrates that not all physical contact needs to be aggression or sexual

Other Godly father figures (uncles, grandfathers, brothers) can fill in for unavailable fathers

My grandfather was my “father” in terms of spending time and teaching me

God is the Father of us all and will not fail us even if all human relationships fail

Some families and cultures do not allow for physical expressions of affection

Respect them – do not hug someone who does not want to be hugged

Physical contact can be very healing or very damaging – use with care and not for your own benefit.

Physical contact between unmarried and unrelated persons

Physical contact is something that can cloud thinking. One thing for sure -it should not precede the development of the relationship in other areas. It should follow - not lead the relationship. Some people can handle a bit of physical contact (without it causing problems) and others cannot.

I made lines for myself in dating that I would not cross. I avoided improper contact with girls and that was a blessing to me and to them. Those lines may not be exactly the same for each person. I never really voiced my boundary lines. They existed in my mind and determined my behavior.

One important factor, to me, is that I (as the man) was in charge. I did not place the responsibility for the boundaries on the girl. I assumed that responsibility. If a girl crossed a boundary that I had set, I did not allow her behavior to change my pre-determined decision.

Sometimes girls were vulnerable because of their feminine makeup or their personality. At those times it was important for me to be the protector and defender and not allow those times to be opportunities for unacceptable behavior.

Physical contact, to girls, can be perceived as security. To men it can be perceived as adventure. This seems to be true for most people.

Pornography, of course, presents a different picture. Women are presented as primarily sexual creatures. The reason for this is that men write the porn. They write it for men from a man's perspective. This is one of the reasons it is so harmful. It creates a perception that is neither real nor natural. Of course there are women who behave in pornographic ways (and write porn). This is because they have been conditioned by wrong influences and experiences.

It is impressive to observe the reaction of troubled girls when they experience the presence and influence of Godly men. It reminds me of Jesus meeting the "woman at the well." She had never met a man like this before. He respected her. Her life was changed. It is rare but it is still happening today – Godly men are still respecting women, and women are responding in Godly ways.