

Roles in the Family

Roles rarely get discussed — they get inherited, assumed, or fought over. After many years, the goal isn't to assign blame for what's been uneven. It's to finally say out loud what's been silently negotiated all along.

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor."

ECCLESIASTES 4:9

That's the aim here — a return, not a rehash.

◆ How to Use This Guide

Start with Questions 1–5 over coffee, not all at once. Let one honest answer lead to the next question — you don't have to finish a section in one sitting. Write your answers in the space provided, then trade guides and read each other's before you talk.

◆ What This Guide Covers

- **Warm-Up** — Questions 1–5 — easy entry points about habits and history
- **The Everyday Load** — Questions 6–10 — who actually does what, and why
- **The Harder Truths** — Questions 11–15 — resentment, invisibility, and the mental load
- **Rewriting the Roles** — Questions 16–20 — what changes, starting this week

The point isn't to answer all 20 in one sitting — it's to let the honest ones surface, and follow those.

◆ Ground Rules for This Conversation

- ◆ No scorekeeping. This isn't about who has done more — it's about seeing clearly.
- ◆ One voice at a time. Let each other finish before responding.
- ◆ Curiosity before correction. Ask "tell me more" before you defend yourself.
- ◆ It's safe to say "I didn't realize that." That's the whole point of this guide.

Warm-Up

1. Growing up, who did the dishes in your house — and did you expect that to just carry over into our marriage?

2. When you think “grocery shopping is normally her/his job,” where did that idea actually come from?

3. What’s one task you’ve been doing for many years without either of us ever actually agreeing you’d be the one to do it?

4. Is there a chore you secretly resent doing? Which one, and why have you never said so?

5. What’s a task you’d happily hand off tomorrow if I offered to take it?

The Everyday Load

6. What's a task you'd never want to give up, even if I offered?

7. When the kids need something in the middle of the day — homework, a ride, a fight to break up — whose name do they call first, and why?

8. Do we divide cooking by skill, by time, or just by whoever got there first? Has that ever felt fair to you?

9. When the house is a mess, who notices first — and does the other person actually not see it, or just not feel responsible for it?

10. Is there a role you took on early in our marriage “temporarily” that quietly became permanent?

The Harder Truths

11. When something breaks or needs fixing around the house, who decides it's "their" problem to solve?

12. Who manages what the kids eat, wear, and need for school — and does that person ever feel like the default parent?

13. When we host people or plan family events, who carries the mental list of everything that has to happen?

14. Is there a task you do that you assume I don't notice or appreciate? Tell me about it.

15. Have you ever felt like you were parenting alone in a task, even though we're both in the house?

Rewriting the Roles

16. What's one thing about how we currently split responsibilities that genuinely still makes sense to you?

17. If our roles today were reset to zero and we divided everything fresh, what would you want to change?

18. Whose standard usually wins when we disagree on how clean, organized, or done a task needs to be — and why does that happen?

19. What would it look like for you to feel like a teammate in this house instead of a task-owner?

20. What's one specific role we'll actually rewrite this month — not just talk about — and who's doing what differently starting this week?

This Month's Commitment

Question 20 asked what you'll actually rewrite — not just talk about. Put it in writing below so it doesn't quietly slide back into old habits.

1 The role we are changing

2 What each of us will do differently, starting this week

Husband

Wife

3 How we'll check in on this

We will revisit this on: _____

Signed, together

Husband

Wife

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor."

Lloyd Allen | Marriage Educator, Family Coach and Theologian

◆ One month from now, revisit this page and ask each other:

- ◆ Did we actually follow through on what we wrote here?
- ◆ What surprised us about how this went?
- ◆ What's the next role worth talking through together?