

Reading

Ecclesiasticus 26: 1–4. 13–16

Like the sun rising is the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus.

- ¹ Happy the husband of a really good wife;
the number of his days will be doubled.
- ² A perfect wife is the joy of her husband,
he will live out the years of his life in peace.
- ³ A good wife is the best of portions,
reserved for those who fear the Lord;
- ⁴ rich or poor, they will be glad of heart;
cheerful of face, whatever the season.
- ¹³ The grace of a wife will charm her husband,
her accomplishments will make him stronger.
- ¹⁴ A silent wife is a gift from the Lord,
no price can be put on a well-trained character.
- ¹⁵ A modest wife is a boon twice over,
a chaste character cannot be weighed on scales.
- ¹⁶ Like the sun rising over the mountains of the Lord
is the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.
- The word of the Lord.

Looking at the Text

M O-8 Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 26:1-4, 16-21

Like the sun rising is the beauty of a good wife in a well-kept house.

The Book of Ecclesiasticus (or 'Sirach')

Ecclesiasticus, otherwise known as 'Sirach' is a book in the 'Wisdom' literature of the bible. 'Wisdom' could be described as the art of living out, every day, the prayer at the heart of our Christian faith, the 'Lord's Prayer' or 'Our Father'. Through our lives bringing God's way 'on earth as it is in heaven', whatever our circumstances, with all the grace and skill that takes. It has little to do with 'knowing' things or being clever, and much to do with the way we conduct our relationships with trust and respect, how we treat other people around us, how we lead, how we spend our money, how we grow as loving, kind people, capable of being peacemakers, witnessing to a life of faith.

In Ecclesiasticus, we learn about humans seeking meaning and purpose in life, and recognising that we cannot become fully human, fully the people we are created to be in isolation from God or others. We can't live a full and happy life through selfish pursuits, on our own terms.

This piece of sacred writing comes from a time and culture so very different from our own. Read 'between the lines' to find some deeper message.

Reflecting on Scripture together

Use the 'Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way' in the introduction 'Choosing your Wedding readings'.

Further Reflection

Following the 'slow reading' process, here are some questions for further reflection:

- What for you are the characteristics of a good husband? And a good wife?
- You might like to tell your fiancé(e) what the things are that you love about them.
- What do you think it takes to be a 'good' husband or wife? How are you going to show your love for one another each day?
- How do you think you can be 'content' as a couple in whatever circumstances you find yourselves, rich or poor?
- What would you say are the basic foundations or building blocks of your lives together? How are you going to share the tasks of putting these foundations in place, and developing your home and lives together?

Note about the Reading

M = this indicates that this is a reading which speaks explicitly about Marriage. One of the chosen readings must be taken from those which are about Marriage.