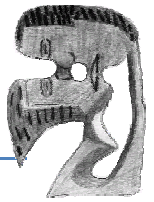


Celebrating Black Marriages: Arusi Style



Key Terms

Arusi

A Kiswahili word that means “Marriage Celebration”

Arusi Network

Network of congregation-based African American marriage support groups within a limited geographical area.

Arusi Retreat

A Christian retreat format for married couples that uses the spirituality and symbols of African American culture.

Marital well-being

The subjective assessment married persons have about the quality of their marriage.

Marriage Support Group

A group of married couples who meet regularly in a structured setting, and share with each other from their marriage on particular topics.

Nguzo Saba

A phrase in the language Kiswahili that means “The Seven Principles.” Each principle is celebrated in the African American holiday, Kwanzaa.

Positively accelerated view

The consensual perception of a married couple that their relationship is moving in a positive direction.

Public dimension of marriage

The mutual accountability between married partners and their communities. Couples are to be signs of God's love. The community protects couples from negative forces that may destroy their relationship.

Relationship awareness

A couple's ability to conceptualize their relationship as a unit.

Sacramental

Pertains to marriage as a reflection of God's presence. That presence is manifested in the permanence, fidelity and covenantal love in the marriage.

Sharing

Expressing one's feelings in the context of a narrative before a group of listeners.

Witnessing

Being a visible sign of Christian values.

Symbols

Earth: grounded-ness, sense of identity and our ability to nurture and support one another.

Water: peace, focus, wisdom and reconciliation

Minerals: helps us to remember our purpose and gives us the means to communicate and make sense out of what others are saying

Fire: is about dreaming, keeping our connection to the self and the ancestors and keeping vision alive

Nature: helps us to be our true self, to go through major changes and life-threatening situations – it brings magic and laughter.

Nguzo Saba

UMOJA (UNITY): To strive for and maintain togetherness in the marriage, family, community, nation, race and humanity.

KUJICHAGULIA (SELF-DETERMINATION): To define ourselves, name ourselves and speak for ourselves as married persons, instead of being defined, named and spoken for by others.

UJIMA (COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY): To build and maintain our marriage together, and be role models of love to our family, other couples and our community.

UJAMAA (COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS): To develop our financial policies and strategies together as a couple and share in the mutual benefits.

NIA (PURPOSE): To make as our collective vocation the building and developing of our community, as a married couple, in order to restore our family and people to their traditional greatness.

KUUMBA (CREATIVITY): To do always as much as we can in whatever way we can to keep our relationship alive and beautiful, and a credit to the African American Family legacy we have inherited.

IMANI (FAITH): To believe with all our hearts in our God, in each other, and the rightfulness and goodness of our marriage.

PEPP

Primacy: Couples need assurances that their marriage is the primary relationship, above friends, extended family, and even children.

Empowerment: Couples need the necessary skills to build intimacy and develop the confidence that they are in a good and right situation, and that it can last.

Protection: Couples need support systems to use as armor to shield them from the negative influences of the world.

Prayer: Couples need to develop and nurture a shared spirituality, and have an awareness of God working in and through their marriage for the betterment of their relationship, their family, community, and society.

God-Couples

Paul Couples – mentors

Barnabas Couples – peers

Timothy Couples – learners

Common Questions:

- Is Arusi just for Black couples?
No. Arusi is an effective marriage enrichment experience for any couple.
- What makes it a Black experience?
Arusi uses elements and practices from the African-American culture. Its processes are designed from an African world-view.
- Is it scripturally based?
Central to the program are Gospel values of hospitality, community, service and marriage.
- What are the outcomes?
 - *Couples feel empowered with marital skills.*
 - *They have a deeper sense of purpose for their marriage and have begun to define their mission.*
 - *They understand the dynamics of couple to couple support.*
 - *They are more aware of stakeholders in the community, and they recognize more clearly their accountability.*

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