

Bible and the Headlines: Domestic Partner

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Recent headlines highlight the usefulness of the word “endonym.” Endonym is “The native name for a place or group, used by the people who live there.” The place where these endonyms live is the state of domestic partnership. The endonyms chose this name for their location as distinct from those who live in the state of marriage.

Way back on November 3, 2025 the wedding publication Brides explored relationship geography in its the article, “3 Alternatives to Marriage—And How to Choose the Best One for Your Relationship.” The piece consulted a matrimonial attorney for the pros and cons of domestic partnerships, common law marriage and cohabitation agreements. The lawyer opined, “Too many couples think in terms of their current situations when planning for the future, ignoring that the future could bring a change in circumstances that need to be considered.” These circumstances include pregnancy, interstate relocation and possible relationship failure.

Massachusetts’s hometown news publication The Reminder on February 18 featured, “Agawam Residents Speak Out Against Councilor’s Comment on Municipal Benefits for Domestic Partners.” The council voted against extending benefits to domestic partners on February 2nd. What some Agawan residents objected to during the February 18th meeting was one counselor’s comment that, “. . . having a domestic partnership option might even discourage people from getting married.” These residents characterized such comments as, “outdated.”

On March 1, the New York Times carried, “Don’t Call It a Wedding. It’s a Domestic Partnership Party.” The article looked at an Empire State trend where couples host a reception after formalizing their domestic partnership. A wedding trade spokesperson stated she, “. . . has seen a 15 percent increase in domestic partnership celebrations, particularly from Millennials and members of Generation Z, even as traditional wedding submissions have declined slightly.” The party is intended to acknowledge a transition from simply dating or living together.

The Bible features alternatives to marriage. The distinction can be seen in the life of King Solomon who “. . . had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines” (1Ki 11:3). A concubine had some marital rights, but she also was expendable as seen in Judges 19:25 and 2 Samuel 15:16. Even more vulnerable was the woman Jesus met at Jacob’s well (John 4:7). The woman asked Jesus how to access the living water he offered. Jesus told her, “Go, call your husband and come back” (Joh 4:16). She confessed that she had no husband, but Jesus already knew about her ‘domestic partnership.’ Jesus told her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband” (Joh 4:17-18). The Bible does not reveal whether the woman stayed in her nebulous relationship.

The book of Hebrews makes explicit God’s opinion on non-marital relationships, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral” (Heb 13:4). This is God’s invitation to endonyms who live in the state of domestic partnership to change their state of residence.