



## ❖ Tips for Managing Household Together

One of the challenges for busy dual-earner couples is carving out enough time to get the necessary household work done without cutting into personal, couple, and family time. This problem is a source of stress in many relationships. While one solution would be to hire someone to help clean the house, most couples can't afford this. Here are some tips on managing the "second shift."

**Tip #1 • Prioritize.** What really needs to be done and when? Some jobs are clearly more important than others. What must get done each day? What can wait until the weekend? What can children do?

## Tip #2 • Make a plan.

A little planning can go a long way. Working out a plan of responsibility for household jobs—like the one suggested on pg. 23—can benefit both spouses in terms of their personal well-being as well as the health of their relationship. Making a plan can also help clarify who is doing work that the other may not know about.

## Tip #3 • Divide tasks by abilities, interests, and needs.

Divide tasks by abilities, interests, and needs rather than simply by "men's work" and "women's work." Most couples today are dual-earner couples, and the pattern of women doing all the "inside work" and men doing the periodic "outside work" is not often viewed as fair. A wiser division of tasks allows for balanced sharing and individual preference.

**Tip #4 • Ban micromanaging.** Make a rule that whoever does the task can do it his or her way without criticism. In the case of different standards, partners can work to reach a compromise that both can live with.

**Tip #5 • Be flexible.** Switch household jobs every now and then to minimize boredom. Also, allowing the other person to take responsibility for a household job might reveal some hidden talent or creativity.

