

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE**

Your wedding is the Christian celebration of your love and commitment to each other and to God. I want to minister to you through your wedding service. The sacred ceremony, in which you enter into a covenant with God and one another, creates the foundation for your marriage. By choosing to use a representative of God and God's Church, you are inviting God's presence in your wedding and purposely asking for God's blessing upon the marriage. I am thankful that you are considering me as the minister to perform your wedding. I also rejoice in both your decision to be married and your future together as husband and wife.

The institution of marriage is beautiful and sacred, therefore very serious. As a minister I take my part in the ceremony with gravity and soberness. We all must give an account to our Lord for the things we do in this life. (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; Revelation 20:11-15**). As a minister I am privileged to be able to marry couples. But it is neither a necessity that I personally marry people or is it my occupation. Many people ask a minister to marry them for the same reason they want to be married in a church, tradition and God's blessings. Traditions are fine if it is according to God's will. And of course we all want the blessings of God, but they come with the stipulations of obedience to His word.

In our society there are options for a legal marriage, such as ministers, a Justice of the Peace or a judge. If the above and below seem too stringent, then one of these alternatives might be better suited to your desires. Again, being responsible to God for what I say and do, this includes who and how I marry people. I must uphold the standard given in the scripture. I realize there are those who will interpret the bible differently and therefore might marry when I would not. But I am comfortable with the knowledge of the judgment I will face.

## **SCRIPTURAL CONVICTIONS**

In this day and age marriages are difficult to hold together. The scriptures have the answers to all of life's greatest questions. The standard that God has given to us on the home and marriage in the bible is for the best. God wants the best for you, me and all of society. So based upon God's inerrant word, I have set up some basic requirements that are prerequisites to my performing a marriage ceremony. My policies concerning weddings are based on the following Scriptural convictions (and will be discussed in greater detail in Session #1 of premarital counselling:

- God does have certain spiritual requirements in regards to marriage in regards to one's spiritual status before Him.
- God does have certain principles in regards to divorce and/or remarriage.
- God Word does give us information in regards to what constitutes a biblical marriage.

## **QUESTIONS REGARDING DIVORCE**

The question of divorce is perhaps the most difficult and complex question regarding a new marriage. I am under no obligation to officiate the marriage ceremony of anyone,

but I am open to counsel those who choose to marry. I find the scriptural grounds for dissolving of a marriage are three in number:

- A. The death of one's mate (**Romans 7:2** and **1 Corinthians 7:39**)
- B. The sin of sexual immorality (fornication/adultery) (**Matthew 5:32; 19:9**)
- C. The unwillingness of a mate to live with the other because of Christian living (**1 Corinthians 7:12-15**)

I believe that if one has divorced on the grounds recognized by Scripture, they are without question qualified for re-marriage. Each situation will be treated individually, compassionately and redemptively. The following principles apply to remarriage after divorce:

- A. No remarriages after divorce will be performed if there is a possibility of reconciliation with either person.
- B. No remarriages after divorce will be performed until at least one year from the date the divorce is final.

### **QUESTIONS REGARDING COHABITATION**

Any couple "living together" would be required to move out of the living arrangement and practice sexual abstinence until the marriage ceremony. In cases where there is a willingness to correct the situation and a desire to live in obedience to the authority of God's Word, I will be more than happy to work with the couple and talk with them about scheduling the marriage ceremony.

A marriage is not merely the union of two individuals, but also the union of their families. I will not officiate a Christian wedding if the parents of the bride and groom do not approve. Therefore, it is expected that the couple have the full blessing of both sets of parents before preparation for marriage.

### **PREPARATION FOR WEDDINGS**

I do not care to be a part of any "hurried" marriages. Marriage is to be a Christian union for life. This requires much thought, soul searching and planning. Therefore, I request I be contacted sufficiently in advance of the wedding date.

### **PREMARITAL COUNSELING**

I require all candidates for marriage to participate in pre-marital counseling. I will meet with you at least three times (possibly 2) before the wedding ceremony to discuss your relationship as well as your expectations of one another and marriage (each approximately 30 minutes in length). We will also plan the details of your ceremony during Session #3. Ample time should be given in preparation for these sessions.

I do not commit myself to perform any wedding until after we have met for Session #1. It is expected that both marital candidates be at each session. There are many who have the authority to perform legal marriages and this is fine; but if you choose to invite me to have this privilege then I trust you will understand my insistence upon the instructions of the Word of God (as I understand them) being met.

## **MARRIAGE LICENSE**

In addition to my expectations, there are some other items you should note. If you have not done so already, contact the County Clerk as soon as possible to begin the process of applying for a marriage license. I will need the marriage license at the rehearsal. I will fill out the license, obtain the required signatures and mail it to the Clerk. If you do not have a license, there will not be a wedding.

## **PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS**

I requests that all photographers and videographers use taste and discretion in regards to the wedding ceremony (they should not be a distraction). I treat all weddings as a worshipful experience.

## **MUSIC**

The music used in the wedding must be within the standards of worship and dignity of the ceremony. There is a wealth of beautiful and fitting music, both vocal and instrumental, suitable for the wedding ceremony. It is the wedding party's job to secure music, singer(s) and instrumentalist.

## **SOUND EQUIPMENT**

The church sound equipment is available for use during weddings; however, it is the job of the wedding party to secure a person to run the sound that is acceptable to the church.

## **FEES**

I would like to say that I welcome the privilege of serving you in marriage as in other areas of the Christian ministry. I do not charge for this service, but when people ask I just leave it up to them on a love offering basis.

Please remember those you engage as singer(s), musicians or sound technicians for your wedding. These folks need to know their services are appreciated. They put in time and practice to be able to perform these services.