

Performing Weddings

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I. Do everything you can to promote the sanctity of marriage in the life of the church.

- A. It is a covenant made before man and before God.
- B. It is a public witness of their covenant love.
- C. It is symbolic of Christ's relationship to the church (Eph. 5:23-32).
- D. It is part of God's eternal purpose for the man and the woman (Gen. 1:28).

II. Be sure a proper foundation is laid in the local church for successful marriages.

- A. Public teaching of dating and courtship principles.
- B. Pre-marital counseling of marriage candidates.
- C. Working in close association with the parents in the engagement process.
- D. Possibly training a wedding coordinator in the church to help couples through the process.

III. Settle for yourself those whom you will marry and those whom you will not marry.

Develop a written policy so that your decisions in these matters will not seem personal or arbitrary with a particular couple (See: Wedding Guidelines under its own title).

As a pastor, you must be able to answer the following questions:

- A. Would you marry people who were previously married, but are now divorced? If so, under what circumstances?
- B. Would you marry an unsaved couple? Why have you come to this decision?
- C. Would you marry anyone who came to you? Does a pastor have any responsibility before God for his or her function in the ceremony?
- D. Would you marry mixed situations?
 - 1. Protestant/Catholic
 - 2. Racial Differences
 - 3. Believers/Unbelievers

4. Charismatic/Non-Charismatic
- IV. Be familiar with the laws in your area so you can guide the couple on the proper time line.**
- A. Physical exam?
 - B. Marriage license?
 - C. Waiting period?
- V. Be a resource to the couple as they make wedding plans.**
- A. Help them remain balanced in their perspectives.
 1. In finances
 2. In extravagances
 3. In length of ceremony
 4. In wedding participants
 5. In venue options
 - B. Help them to have realistic expectations as the date approaches.
 1. In their budget
 2. In their relationship
 - C. Help them make decisions concerning the ceremony itself.
 1. Attendants
 2. Involvement of Parents
 3. Singers/Songs
 4. Musicians
 5. Vows
 6. Officiant (s)
 7. Reception
 8. Date/Time
 9. Other elements in the service
 10. Congregational concerns
 11. Pictures
 12. Taping (audio or video)
 - D. Help them develop an order of service to their liking (Note: When disagreements occur, encourage the groom to let the bride have her preference.).

VI. Schedule a rehearsal a day or two before the wedding.

- A. Be punctual in all of your duties.
- B. Make sure all audio-visual personnel are present.
- C. Meet and be prepared to minister to relatives and other participants.
- D. Double check that all of the legal documents are in order.
- E. Keep the rehearsal flowing smoothly and efficiently.

VII. Make the ceremony as meaningful as possible.

- A. Spend time getting your part down well.
- B. Be punctual in everything that you do.
- C. Be prepared for the unusual.
- D. Do your best to keep everyone relaxed.
- E. Make your exhortations meaningful, but brief.
- F. Be sure to say their names properly.
- G. Make sure all legal documents are properly signed and registered.

VIII. A Traditional Model

- Musicians playing as people are seated
- Parents and grandparents seated
- Candles are lit by acolytes
- Groom and groomsmen enter at front (pastor enters with them)
- Bridesmaids process
- Bride enters with father (congregation stands)
- Father and mother give the bride to the groom
- Couple join pastor at the altar
- Song is sung
- Exhortation by the pastor
- Vows exchanged
- Candle ceremony while song is sung
- Wedding prayer (couple kneeling)

- Pronouncement of “Husband and Wife”
- Kiss
- Recession
- Musicians play while people ushered out
- Reception