

Wedding Ceremony Planner

Westview Community Church

The following is a general planner for your wedding ceremony. Each section has a variety of options from which to choose and you are encouraged to make the service something that is personal and meaningful for you as a couple. The order of service must remain as it is, for the most part, but choices, changes in the wording and even newly written material can be used in any of the parts. Any major decisions must be approved by the pastor, however. We want your wedding to be your expression of commitment and an event that truly glorifies God. Feel free to be as creative as you desire.

I. GIVING OF THE BRIDE

A. FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Minister:

“Who gives this woman to be married to this man?”

Father of the Bride:

“I do” or “Her mother and I”

B. FAMILIES OF THE BRIDE AND GROOM

[Families stand]

Today, _____ and _____ begin a new life together. As they unite, two families also are joined in the couple. As the families of these who are to be married, do you offer your prayer blessing and loving support to this marriage covenant?

**If so, please say, “We do.”

II. INTRODUCTION

A. REGULAR VERSION:

My friends, we are gathered here in the presence of the Lord for the purpose of uniting in the bonds of Holy Matrimony _____ and _____. It is truly significant that these two people have freely chosen to be united in the presence of God.

In the beginning, God said, *It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a companion for him, a helper suited to his needs.* (Gen. 2:18)

The creation account in Genesis is a remarkable story. It is simple, yet profound in the theme found there. Consider... God did not take woman from man’s head (that she should not be his overlord), neither did He take her from his foot (lest he trample upon her), instead He took her from his side, near his heart; that he should love her, cherish her and respect her as having infinite worth in God’s eyes.

The apostle Peter encourages the man and woman to approach their marriage together with an understanding of the spiritual nature of their covenant. He states in the third chapter of his first letter that: *The beauty of the wife should not merely be outward adornment, but that of the inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth to God. Husbands, likewise, are to treat their wives with honor as a chosen fragile vessel and fellow heirs of the gracious gift of life...*

So let us approach this solemn and happy time with reverence for God and a deep sense of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

B. COVENANT VERSION:

My friends, we are gathered here in the presence of the Lord for the purpose of uniting in the bonds of Holy Matrimony _____ and _____. It is truly significant that these two people have freely chosen to be united in the presence of God.

God instituted marriage as a covenant. In the Old Testament the cutting of a covenant established a compact between two people who pledged mutual commitment and support. A covenant means more than a contract, where there is merely an exchange of goods and services; it is a commitment of all that one is and ever will be to all that he or she knows and ever will know of the covenant partner.

This has been God's design since the very beginning: *"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."*

Covenants are not to be taken lightly. The marriage covenant is a walk unto death... where a man and woman become one in a solemn promise, never to be broken. This walk is a testimony of each person's intention to die to their own independent living, and live in special consideration of the other. It is a walk of love in total commitment to another person.

God's strength and power provides the resources necessary to fulfill this compact of sacrificial love. The apostle Paul wrote: *"Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."*

Peter states: *"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."*

Today we will participate in the cutting of a marriage covenant before God. The vows made today will be sealed by Him, recognizing that He, too, will provide the power to sustain the agreement where a husband and wife will grow up into Him in all ways as individuals and as man and wife.

Let us join together as witnesses of this sacred event. Be assured that God is present, bearing witness Himself, as _____ and _____ enter into covenant.

C. TRADITIONAL VERSION

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together in the sight of God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to join together this man and this woman in Holy Matrimony, which is an honorable estate, instituted by God, and signifying unto us the mystical union which exists between Christ and His Church. This holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with His presence in Cana of Galilee, and the Apostle Paul commended as honorable among all men. It is not, therefore, to be entered into unadvisedly, but reverently, discreetly, and in the fear of God.

[Move to platform for ceremony]

III. CHARGE

A. REGULAR VERSION

_____ and _____; you have come to me signifying your desire to be joined in Holy Matrimony and knowing of no just cause why you should not be so united, I will ask you to join right hands.

[Man takes woman's hand]

_____, in taking the woman whom you hold now by the right hand to be your lawful and wedded wife, and _____, in taking the man who holds you by the right hand to be your lawful and wedded husband, I will require you to promise to abide by God's standards for husbands and wives. Hear the words of God's counsel:

The Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day shall be in your heart; and you shall teach them when you lie down and when you rise up.

In the New Testament, the husband is admonished to "love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it". And the wife is to "be faithful to her husband even as the church is faithful to Christ in all things." In following these rules laid down by God, two people not only learn to live together in harmony, but become one. Above all else remember the words of the Apostle Paul:

You are the people of God; He loved you and chose you for His own. Therefore, you must put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be helpful to one another and forgive one another...and to all these add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. (Col. 3)

Know what God expects, and you can rest assured that trusting Him will bring you the greatest possible happiness and joy.

B. COVENANT VERSION

_____ and _____; you have come to me signifying your desire to be joined in Holy Matrimony and knowing of no just cause why you should not be so united, I will ask you to join right hands.

[Man takes woman's hand]

_____, in taking the woman you hold now by the right hand to be your lawful and wedded wife, and _____, in taking the man who holds you by the right hand to be your lawful and wedded husband, I will require you to make a covenant to abide by God's standards for husbands and wives. Hear the words of God's counsel:

The Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart; and you shall teach them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

In the New Testament the husband is admonished to "love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it." And the wife is to "be faithful to her husband even as the church is faithful to Christ in all things." On following these rules laid down by God, two people not only learn to live together in harmony, but become one. Above all else remember the words of the Apostle Paul:

You are the people of God; He loved you and chose you for His own. Therefore, you must put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Be helpful to one another and forgive one another... and to all these add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. (Col.3)

Know what God expects, and you can rest assured that trusting Him will bring you the greatest possible happiness and joy.

**** ARE YOU ABLE TO PROMISE WITH SOBER REFLECTION UPON GOD'S REQUIREMENTS; THAT YOU WILL GIVE EACH TO THE OTHER, YOUR BEST, SO LONG AS YOU LIVE?**

****DO YOU SO PROMISE, _____? ("I DO")**

****DO YOU SO PROMISE, _____? ("I DO")**

C. TRADITIONAL CHARGE

I require and charge you both, as you stand in the presence of God, to remember that love and loyalty alone will avail as the foundation of a happy and enduring home. No other human tie is more tender, no other vows more sacred than those you now assume. If these solemn vows be faithfully kept, and if steadfastly you endeavor to do the will of your Heavenly Father, your life will be full of joy, and the home you are establishing will abide in peace.

(To the Groom)

_____, will you have this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

(Groom responds: "I do")

(To the Bride)

_____, will you have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love him, comfort him, honor him, in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto him, so long as you both shall live?

(Bride responds: "I do")

D. OPTIONAL CHARGES

1. Parental charge – same used in giving of the bride

Today, _____ and _____ begin a new life together. As they unite, two families also are joined in this couple. As the families of these who are to be married, do you offer your prayer blessing and loving support to this marriage covenant?

**If so, please say, “We do.” (“We do”)

2. To children in a remarriage situation:

(Names) _____.

Your home is going to be different after today. You already know _____ pretty well as he has been with you a lot over the last many months, but there will still be some changes as he and your mom become husband and wife.

_____ will be the head of your brand new family. He has promised to love your mom and you forever. He also has taken over a part of the responsibility for your growing up. That means there will be times when he will discipline you because he wants to help you become good young men and women.

Remember, your mom has a new husband. She will be giving him some of her attention as well as you. You’ll have to share her with someone again. This may be hard to understand, but you will see that by giving her time to be with _____, she will be happier and your home an ever better place to be.

You’ll probably notice that they will be spending a lot of time with you, too. Your new family will be the source of special times – things to do...places to go...with two people who love you and are excited to be with you.

Do you promise to do your best to keep love in your family; and to help make a happy and loving home? Do you promise to try your best to love and respect both your mom and your new dad?

**If so, answer “I (we) do” (Children: “I (we) do”)

3. Congregational Charge

Today, _____ and _____ will begin their new life together. As they unite, this new relationship will require encouragement and support from the fellowship of those who are their brothers and sisters in Christ. Do you offer your blessing, prayers, and loving support to this marriage covenant? If so, answer “We do.”

IV. VOWS

Note: vows may either be repeated after the minister, or read from cards (especially if you want to personalize them and make them somewhat longer). Only in extreme circumstances will the minister allow the bride and groom to memorize their vows. This is heavily discouraged!

A. REGULAR VERSION

[Bride and Groom facing each other]

Will you now repeat the vows that you are making this day to each other in the sight of God and His People?

(for the Groom)

I, _____, take you, _____ to be my lawful and wedded wife; before God and these witnesses present, I promise to cherish you, and sustain you in times of sickness or health, if we are wealthy or poor, in the bad times that may come and in the good that may lighten our way. I promise to forsake all others and regard you dearer than myself, to find my joy in your triumphs and to share your grief as my own; to live with you as we are one, after the ordinances of God...because I love you.

(for the Bride)

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my lawful and wedded husband; before God and these witnesses present, I promise to cherish you, and sustain you in times of sickness or health, if we are wealthy or poor, in the bad times that may come and in the good that may lighten our way. I promise to forsake all others and regard you dearer than myself, to find my joy in your triumphs and to share your grief as my own; to live with you as we are one, after the ordinances of God...because I love you.

B. ALTERNATIVE VERSION

(for the Groom)

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my lawful and wedded wife. I promise to be steadfast in my love for you from this day forward. I promise to cherish you, respect you, and stand by you in our journey through life together. I will live with you as one in the eyes of God until death do us part.

(for the Bride)

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my lawful and wedded husband. I promise to be steadfast in my love for you from this day forward, I promise to cherish you, respect you, and stand by you in our journey through life together. I will live with you as one in the eyes of God until death do us part.

C. ALTERNATIVE VERSION

(for the Groom)

I _____, take thee, _____, to be my lawful and wedded wife. I promise to stand by you through all of our times of joy and through any times of sadness. As I stand before you and God, I give you all of my love...a love that will last from now to eternity.

(for the Bride)

I, _____, take thee, _____, to be my lawful and wedded husband. I promise to stand by you through all of our times of joy and through any times of sadness. As I stand before you and God, I give to you all of my love...a love that will last from now to eternity.

D. TRADITIONAL VERSION

(To the Groom)

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish 'til death do us part, according to God's holy law; and thereto I pledge you my faith.

(To the Bride)

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my lawful and wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in

health, to love and to cherish, 'til death do us part, according to God's holy law; and thereto I pledge you my faith.

E. VOWS PERSONALIZED BY THE BRIDE AND GROOM

These are written by the bride and groom themselves and then given to the minister to put into final form.

V. RING CEREMONY

A. REGULAR VERSION

In the book of Ruth there is a beautiful expression of abiding love. Just as this scripture has been used for centuries to picture love's enduring qualities, so the ring has been a symbol of friendship and love. The golden circle comes to its loftiest pinnacle at the marriage altar. For here the untarnishable material and the unique form signify a love that is both pure and true and one that has no beginning and no end.

[Take left hand, place ring...repeating these words]

(Groom gets ring from Best Man)

(Groom)

VOW – With this ring I thee wed, with loyal love I give and all my worldly goods I share. Where you so, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God, my God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Bride)

RESPONSE – I take this pledge from you, and in return I give a wife's best love so long as God may grant us life.

(Bride get ring from Maid-of Honor)

(Bride)

VOW – With this ring I thee wed, with loyal love I give and all my worldly goods I share. Where you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God, my God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Groom)

RESPONSE – I take this pledge from you, and in return I give a husband's best love so long as God may grant us life.

B. COVENANT VERSION

In the book of Ruth there is a beautiful expression of abiding love. It says: "*Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God, my God.*"

This scripture describes the love and commitment that abides between this man and this woman and just as this passage has been used for centuries to picture love's enduring qualities, so the ring has been a symbol of friendship and love. The golden circle comes to its loftiest pinnacle at the marriage altar. For here the untarnishable material and the

unique form signify a love that is both pure and true and one that has no beginning and no end.

[Take left hand, place ring...repeating these words]

(Groom gets ring from Best Man)

(Groom)

VOW – I give this ring as a symbol of my abiding love and faithfulness in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Bride)

RESPONSE – I take this ring as a symbol of the covenant we have made with each other.

(Bride get ring from Maid-of-Honor)

(Bride)

VOW – I give this ring as a symbol of my abiding love and faithfulness, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Groom)

RESPONSE – I take this ring as a symbol of the covenant we have made with each other.

C. TRADITIONAL VERSION

(Groom gets ring from Best Man)

(Groom)

This ring I give thee, in token and pledge, of our constant faith and abiding love.

(Bride get ring from Maid-of-Honor)

(Bride)

This ring I give thee, in token and pledge, of our constant faith and abiding love.

[Option: Lord’s Prayer may be sung or said here]

VI. SEALING THE VOWS

A. REGULAR VERSION

Having pledged your faith in...and love to each other, and having sealed your vows by giving and receiving the rings; acting in the authority vested in me as a minister of the gospel and according to the laws of the state, and having looked to the Father for Divine Sanction, I pronounce you husband and wife.

Let all men take care, for the vows you have taken today shall always remain sacred before God. A new day has dawned in your lives, for now you are one and you can never do or be anything that does not involve the other. With Christ in your home, your joys will be multiplied a thousand-fold and you will be a great blessing to all who know and love you.

B. COVENANT VERSION

Establishing a marriage covenant is the work of God; He has heard your vows and witnessed your pledge of faithfulness through the giving and receiving of rings. It is He who unites – in flesh and spirit you are one in Him. Acting in the authority vested in me

as a minister of the gospel and according to the laws of the state, and having looked to the Father for Divine Sanction, I pronounce you husband and wife.

C. TRADITIONAL VERSION

Forasmuch as _____ and _____ have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have pledged their faith each to the other, and have declared the same by the giving and receiving of rings; I pronounce that they are husband and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Amen.

By seeking the ministry of the church, you have expressed your conviction that marriage is more than a legal contract, but rather a bond of union sealed in heaven. Henceforth, you shall no longer be two but one. Your paths will be united; your responsibilities will increase, but your strength and your joys will be multiplied if you are sincere and earnest in your relations one to the other, and with God who has witnessed and sealed this covenant. Let us pray.

VII. PRAYER: Possible alternatives

A. BY PASTOR

B. CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER OFFERED BY SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

C. DESIGNATED PERSON TO PRAY

VIII. OPTIONAL CEREMONIES

A. CANDLE CEREMONY

When two people marry, they do not lose their individuality, but rather bring together all that they are; to form a larger whole. They unite their souls, hearts, minds, dreams, desires, hopes, and frustrations. Together they will be able to be and do things greater than either could ever do as individuals. _____ and _____ will now take their separate candles and light the one central candle to signify this unity between themselves and with God.

B. HOLY COMMUNION

When two people marry, they do not lose their individuality, but rather bring together all that they are to form a larger whole. They unite their souls, hearts, minds, dreams, desires, hopes, and frustrations. Together they will be able to be and do things greater than either could ever do as individuals. _____ and _____ will now receive Holy Communion to signify this unity between themselves and to seal their oneness in covenant with God.

C. CANDLE CEREMONY/COMMUNION

When two people marry, they do not lose their individuality, but rather bring together all that they are; to form a larger whole. They unite their souls, hearts, minds, dreams, desires, hopes, and frustrations. Together they will be able to be and do things greater than either could ever do as individuals. _____ and _____ will now take their

separate candles and light the one central candle to signify this unity between themselves and in the giving and receiving of Holy Communion, they will seal their oneness in covenant with God. (Couple will light candles and then give communion to each other.)

D. DECLARATION OF FAMILY/CANDLE CEREMONY

_____ and _____ have declared their love for one another and vowed their commitment to each other signified by the rings that have been given and received. Today, we also declare the formation of a family. The children form the third part of this new relationship. (He/She/They) will not only continue receiving the nurture from (his/her/their) natural parent, but from a new parent as well.

The love (he/she/they) now receive(s) symbolizes (his/her/their) rightful place in the fabric of this new family.

(Move to table with candles)

When two people marry, they do not lose their individuality, but rather bring together all that they are; to form a larger whole. They unite their souls, hearts, minds, dreams, desires, hopes, and frustrations. Together they will be able to be and do things greater than either could ever do as individuals.

When a new family structure begins, each member is committed one to another and together to God. A father and mother are to raise a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, a child is to honor his or her parents. They are bonded one to another for growth and strength in life.

_____, _____, and _____ will now take their separate candles and light the one central candle to signify this unity between themselves and with God.

******Instrumental or vocal music is usually offered during candlelighting or communion ceremonies.***

X. BENEDICTION

A. REGULAR VERSION

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always. Amen.

B. ALTERNATIVE VERSION

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing His will, and may He work in you what is pleasing to Him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

C. TRADITIONAL VERSION

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with His favor look upon you, and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that you may live together in this life, and that in the world to come you may have life everlasting. Amen.

X. KISS

You may kiss the Bride...

X. PRESENTATION

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me introduce to you, Mr. and Mrs._____.

XII. INSTRUCTIONS BY MINISTER

Please note: There are many other additions you may bring to your ceremony, placing them in the order of service wherever you desire. Here are some ideas to get you going:

- SPECIAL MUSIC: Either vocal or instrumental
- SCRIPTURE READING: Something that is a favorite verse of the couple or some designated readers during the service.
- HYMN and WORSHIP CHORUSES: While praise choruses are many times used as pre-service music, it is totally appropriate to have a hymn(s) or praise chorus(es) sung by the congregation during the service.
- RECITING OF THE LORD’S PRAYER: This can be done by the couple as an optional ceremony or in an optional ceremony. Also, the congregation may join the couple if desired.