

Planning the Wedding Service

A wedding is, first and foremost, an act of worship to our loving God who calls two people together in marriage. Therefore, only those actions appropriate to worship are permitted. The following is the standard order for marriage.

Seating of the Parents

The service general begins with the parents of the bride and groom being seated. If there will be a unity candle as part of the service this is generally when the mother's light the taper candles.

Processional

- The groom enters. This is the musicians signal to start the processional music.
- The groomsmen and the bridesmaids enter from the rear doors and process down the aisle to the front.
- The pastor asks the congregation to stand and the bride, generally escorted by her father or another family member, follows.
- Generally one piece of music is chosen for the entire procession.
- After everyone is up front the pastor will ask the congregation to be seated and continue with the worship service.

Greeting

Declaration of Intention

-The minister addresses the couple in these or similar words, asking each person in turn:
Name, will you have name to be your wife/husband, to live together in the covenant of marriage? Will you love her/him, comfort her/him, honor and keep her/him, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her/him as long as you both shall live?
Response: I will.

- The minister address the assembly in these or similar words. *Will all of you, by God's grace, uphold and care for name and name in their life together? **We will.***

Prayer of the Day

Wedding Party is seated in the front pews for the scripture reading and sermon message.

Optional: Special Music if desired.

Scripture Readings

- You should **choose two or three scripture readings** to be proclaimed.
- This is an appropriate place to include others in your wedding service as scripture readers, perhaps baptismal sponsors (godparents) or friends or family that have good speaking voices.
- See the suggested scripture readings list

Optional: Special Music if desired.

Sermon Message

Optional: Special Music if desired.

The Wedding Party returns to the front

Vows

- You will be asked to join hands and declare your promises to each other.
- The standard wedding vow is as follows: *I take you, name, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.*
- You may also choose to write your own vows. They should be consistent with the biblical understanding of marriage and should make clear that the promises are a life-long commitment.

Giving of Rings

Acclamation of Marriage

Optional: Symbols of oneness in marriage may be used such as a unity candle.

- You are responsible to provide your own unity candle along with two tapers (side candles). There is a stand available for you to use.
- Special music is recommended during this time
- Two witnesses will be asked to sign the marriage license during this time

Prayers

A service may include Holy Communion at this point.

Lord's Prayer

- The congregation will be invited to join in praying the Lord's Prayer. The words to the prayer should be included in your wedding bulletin:
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Benediction

Introduction of the couple

Kiss

Recessional

- Music is played as the wedding group processes out.

Receiving Line

- Generally the Bride and Groom along with their parents greet the wedding guests in the entry way. The rest of the wedding party is not usually a part of the receiving line. It is suggested that you stand near the offices so that guests can easily get to the bathrooms or the coat racks on the other side of the entry area.

Suggested Scripture Readings

You should select two or more scripture readings to be read during the wedding service.

*The following is a list of scripture passages couples frequently request. **You do not have to pick from this list.** It is merely suggestions to stimulate your thinking.*

Old Testament Readings:

Genesis 1:26-31

Genesis 2:18-24

Ruth 1:15-18

Ecclesiastes 4:9-11

Psalms 33: 1-5

Psalms 34

Psalms 67

Psalms 100

Psalms 103

Psalms 117

Psalms 128

Psalms 136

Psalms 150

Song of Solomon 2:8-16

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

New Testament:

Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 19:4-6

Matthew 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9

John 15:9-17

Romans 8:31-39

Romans 12:1-2, 9-8

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

Ephesians 3:14-21

Ephesians 5:2, 21-33

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-19

Guidelines for Music

Whether you are selecting special music or congregational hymns, remember that your wedding is a worship service. Therefore it is important to choose music that speaks of your Christian commitment to each other and God's presence in your relationship. There is room for personal taste and variety of music styles, of course, but **all music should be appropriate for worship.** Purely secular music is best left to be used at your reception or wedding dance.

If you are wondering about whether or not a music selection is appropriate for your wedding, here is a tip: If you can answer "yes" to any of the following questions, the music is probably appropriate:

- 1. Does the music/text reflect praise and/or thanksgiving to God?**
- 2. Is the song based on, or does it reflect a scriptural theme?**
- 3. Is this song in the form of a prayer?**

If you are not sure your music is appropriate, check with the pastor.