

Weddings

It is a great privilege and joy to share in the lives of couples as they unite in Christian marriage. However, not everyone who approaches the church seeking marriage is ready for such a lifelong covenant, nor is every relationship in a position where marriage is wise at that time. This calls for discernment, wisdom, and at times, considerable courage on the part of the pastor to guide the couple with grace and truth, helping them reach the right conclusion.

Some general points to consider

1. Do not marry a couple just because the woman is pregnant. Let them with wise counsel make the right decision.
2. Do not commit yourself to marry a person before you have had a full interview with them first.
3. Do not marry a couple just because they are sleeping together. Ideally a separation of a couple sleeping together until the wedding day makes love making more special even though this is now not a popular practice in some cultures.
4. Generally, do not marry a believer to an unbeliever. Very seldom will one person convert the other to the Christian faith once married.

'Do not be yoked together with unbelievers' 2 Corinthians 6:14

Marriage preparation

Marriage preparation classes are of vital importance for the ongoing success of the marriage, and many excellent courses assist in this way. Topics you need to at least cover, in depth, over a period of several sessions should include - communication, romance, finances, roles, expectations, spiritual values and children.

Several months after the marriage ceremony, the pastor should pay the couple a follow up visit to see how things are progressing. Seek to get below surface level conversation.

Reasons for Marriage

1. It was ordained as an expression of love, including the act of becoming 'one flesh'.
2. For the procreation of children, that they may be raised in the fear of the Lord.
3. That the husband and wife must offer friendship, help and comfort to each other.
4. It was ordained for the good of society, with the family unit as the basis of it.

Legal requirements of the Marriage Ceremony

(According to New Zealand Law at the time of writing).

Only authorised Marriage Celebrants are entitled to perform this ceremony in most countries. A pastor may obtain an appropriate form for this authorisation, from the Department of Justice. Most ordained ministers in Mainline Denominations are automatically included in the recognised Marriage Celebrant's list.

When applying for a marriage licence, give at least three clear days' notice before the intended marriage must be given to a Registrar. This is done by the personal attendance of either the bride or the bridegroom at the Registrar's office, where a written application is completed.

A marriage must be conducted only at the place described in the marriage licence, unless an alternative place is stated on the licence. The place of marriage must also be freely accessible to the public during the ceremony and indoor marriages must be conducted with open doors.

You may solemnise a marriage between 6am and 10pm on any day. Two witnesses, or more, are required to observe what goes on in the marriage ceremony. It is not essential for the witnesses to be adults but they should be of such an age however, that they understand what is going on. Witnesses are required to sign the marriage register.

In the wedding vows, the Marriage Act 1955 requires that during solemnisation of every marriage, each party shall say to the other 'I AB take you CD to be my legal wife (husband)' or words to that effect. Some couples like to make up and repeat their own vows, while others like to use vows already written. There are many meaningful Christian vows around, which are most suitable.

After the service, during which the register is signed, it is customary for the celebrant to hand a certified copy of the marriage registration to the bride or bridegroom. It is then the officiating Minister's responsibility to send back the office copy to the Justice department.