

*So you want
to get married?*



*Marriage Policy
and
Application
of
Pastor Will Hunsaker*

So you want to get married? What an exciting time! I rejoice with you as you experience one of the most important times of your life. I appreciate you thinking of myself and /or the church to have an involvement in your wedding. In addition to the appreciation I feel, I also wanted to share with you the responsibility you have asked of me.

Most couples do not realize that when they ask a pastor to marry them, they are placing a responsibility upon him. A marriage is more than just a wedding. A wedding can take place in as little time as it takes to repeat the marriage vows. But to get two people ready for marriage is a much more difficult task. Consider the following percentage: 50% of the couples that are married for the first time will have their marriage end in divorce. For individuals who are going into their second or more marriage, the percentage of them getting a divorce is even higher. As the one whom God will hold accountable for the couples I have married, I am very concerned about those statistics. I feel a heavy responsibility to do everything I can to properly train every couple whom I marry. Someday I will give an account to God concerning your marriage. Please read in your Bible Romans 14:12 and Hebrews 13:17. I have also witnessed how families are shattered when a divorce happens. Who can properly describe the hurt that a child feels when mom and dad separate? Many never recover from the effects of divorce.

Therefore, due to the responsibility it is to marry a couple and that I will someday give an account to God for your marriage, and due to the ill effects I have witnessed caused by divorce, I have the following policies for those who would like me to marry them:

1. It is mandatory for every couple to participate in premarital counseling. This will involve reading Strike the Original Match, looking up verses in the Bible and taking a Premarriage Awareness Inventory Test. There is a total of seven one hour sessions. Please find child care if you have children. It is absolutely necessary for the couple to be by themselves when they come to each session. If you cannot secure child care, call me and reschedule the appointment. These sessions need to be in person.

2. I need at least a six month notice of your wedding date, a year is even better. My schedule is such that I do not have that much time to devote to one marriage in less than a six month time period. Also, it takes time for you to absorb what is taught in the seven sessions and for you to do the required reading. Also, most of the sessions will need to be between Monday and Thursday. My day off is Friday and I do not schedule any on my day off. I will allow 2 of them to be on Saturday. Sunday is already a full day for me.
3. Also, the issue of being “unequally yoked” needs to be addressed (II Corinthians 6:14-18). If one individual is a born-again Christian and the other is not, this is being unequally yoked. The Bible forbids such a union. I would encourage you, if you are Christian and you are wanting to marry a non-Christian, to stop pursuing the marriage until both of you are born-again believers.
4. It is mandatory that you both attend church weekly at the Open Bible Church in Clear Lake. It is essential that every couple is feeding their soul by regular church attendance. If I may be blunt, without God’s help, your marriage doesn’t stand much of a chance of making it. The Bible speaks of the value of meeting together at church in Hebrews 10:24-25. If you are attending church at another church, I encourage you to ask that Pastor to marry you. If circumstances are such that, that is not an option, please talk to me about this.
5. If you have been previously married, I will need to discuss with you the circumstances regarding that marriage and why it ended. This is not because I am “nosy.” The Bible speaks about divorce and when it is permissible to remarry with God’s blessing. Divorce and remarriage is a common thing in our society and I want to make sure Biblical guidelines are not being violated.

6. Very few couples that are planning on getting married are not sexually involved. If you are one of the few, I applaud you and encourage you to keep yourselves for your wedding night. If you are sexually involved, you have crossed biblical lines and are in dangerous territory. I would encourage you to stop your involvement till your wedding night. You won't be able to gain everything back that you have lost by being sexually involved, but you can gain much of the moment back for your honeymoon. God put a fence around sex. It is called marriage. When done outside of marriage, sex does all kinds of harm.

7. The vows that I ask you to make are as follows:

For the groom:

_____, do you agree before God and these witnesses to take this woman to be your lawful and wedded wife; to love and respect her; honor and cherish her; in health and in sickness; in prosperity and in adversity; and leaving all others, to keep yourself only unto her, so long as you both shall live?

I _____, take you _____ to be my wedded wife and I do promise before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

For the bride:

_____, do you in a like manner agree to receive this man as your lawful, wedded husband; to love and respect him; to live with him in all faith and tenderness; in health and in sickness; in prosperity and in adversity; and leaving all others to keep yourself only unto him so long as you both shall live?

I _____, take you, _____ to be my wedded husband, and I do promise before God and these witnesses, to be your loving and faithful wife, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live.

These are the vows that I ask couples to make. You may make additional vows if you like, but I will require these to be made. These

are required because of our society's changing understanding of how long a marriage lasts and it's understanding of who a marriage can be between. Please know that a true biblical marriage is "as long as we both shall live" and between one man and one woman, husband and wife, male and female. Genesis 1:27, 2:24

I realize the last seven points are very pointed and may seem harsh. Of the weddings I have performed, about 41% have ended in divorce. Words cannot express how I feel when I hear of a couple that I have married getting a divorce. It tears me up inside. And I wonder, did I do all that I could to prepare that couple?

I know that you may be upset with me by the time you get to this point. Please know that these policies were not made because I'm on some "Power Trip". I established the guidelines because I want to make sure that I am doing everything I can for the couples I marry.

If, after reading this, you would like to talk to me about the possibility of me being involved in your wedding, please fill out the attached Premarriage Information Application and return it to me. Then, I will set up a time to talk about the possibility of me marrying you.

Regardless what you decide, please know that I wish the best for you and your soon to be spouse! Thank you for considering me to be a part of your wedding.

God Bless,

Pastor Will

WEDDING EXPENSES & RULES PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

A. Members of the church

1. Pastor - no charge, but this doesn't mean my time is not valuable. As a part of our church body, this is one of the various ministries you can expect free of charge when you become a member.
2. Janitor – As a voting member, the church pays this 224.00 fee to janitor on your behalf. No weddings are allowed past 4pm on Saturdays.
3. Church - no charge
4. Musicians and Specials – This is the responsibility of the wedding party. It is recommended that each receive at least 50.00.
5. Sound Booth Person- As a voting member, the church pays this 50.00 fee on your behalf.
6. Use of the church must have prior approval of the Board of Elders

B. Non - members of the church

1. Pastor – no set charge, but this doesn't mean his time is not valuable. It does mean that there is a group of people who through their faithful giving provide his salary so he can do your wedding free of charge. Keep in mind he will have approximately 15 hours invested into having your wedding. If the pastor does not have the wedding, there will be an additional charge for overseeing the church while the rehearsal and wedding is going on.
2. Janitor- 224.00
3. Church- ?
4. Musicians and Specials- This is the responsibility of the wedding party. It is recommended that each receive at least 50.00.
5. Sound Booth Person- 50.00
6. Before a wedding will be put on the church calendar, a deposit must be paid.
7. Use of the church must have prior approval of the Board of Elders.

C. Rules containing use of church

1. No rice, bird seed, alcohol, or smoking inside the church.
2. No food or drink in the sanctuary.
3. No weddings will be allowed in the church without the approval of the Board of Elders.
4. Due to the nature of our current church structure, it is not conducive to wedding receptions. Should a wedding party desire to use it for a reception, they can make their request to the elder board to use it.
5. If the Pastor of the church is not performing the wedding, the couple must meet with him 2 months previous to go over the details of the wedding.
6. No unauthorized person will be allowed to work the sound booth of the church.
7. Only dripless candles can be used- absolutely no exceptions!
8. Only music that is appropriate for a church and that is respectful of the church being the house of God may be used. This doesn't mean that all the music has to be "christian", but it cannot be profane nor irreverent in nature. All music must be given to the pastor for approval 1 month before the wedding.
9. Any moving of altar furniture and instruments must have approval of the Pastor and must be done by church staff.
10. The church expects children to be properly supervised at all times. The church has sound equipment, musical instruments, computers, projectors, etc. that are used each week and that are in various places of the church. Should something get broken, it will be responsibility of the wedding party to replace it

D. Size of the Sanctuary

The sanctuary seats 225 people.

Order of Ceremony

Processional

Greeting

Marriage covenant

Giving away of bride

Charge to bride and groom

Declaration of intent

Marriage vows

Unity candle

Ring vows

Declaration of marriage

The Kiss

Presentation of bride and groom

Recessional

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 ST SESSION | Informational meeting where the Premarriage Information Application is gone over. At this time you will be informed whether I will perform the wedding or not. |
| 2 nd SESSION | The couple takes the Premarriage Awareness Inventory Test and the Introduction through Chapter 2 of <u>Strike the Original Match</u> is covered. |
| 3 rd SESSION | Chapters 3 and 4 from the book and I and II of PAI. |
| 4 th SESSION | Chapters 5 and 6 from the book and III and IV of PAI. |
| 5 th SESSION | Chapter 7 from the book and V and VI of PAI. |
| 6 th SESSION | Pastor Will's teaching on finances and VII and VIII of PAI. |
| 7 th SESSION | Chapter 10 through the conclusion of the book and IX and X of the PAI. Also, the wedding ceremony is gone over with the couple. |

Wedding Party

PREMARRIAGE INFORMATION APPLICATION

1. Bride Information

_____ Last	_____ First	_____ Middle
_____ Address		
_____ Telephone		_____ Birth date

Bride's Family

Father	_____
Mother	_____
Siblings	_____

Have you been married before?

If yes, how long have you been divorced and explain the reason for your divorce?

If you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity and why?

Briefly explain your church background:

2. Groom Information

_____	_____	_____
Last	First	Middle

Address		

Telephone		Birth date

Groom's Family

Father	_____
Mother	_____
Siblings	_____

Have you been married before?

If yes, how long have you been divorced and explain the reason for your divorce?

If you were to die tonight, where would you spend eternity and why?

Briefly explain your church background:

3. As a couple:

How long have you been dating?

Proposed date and time of wedding:

Proposed place of wedding:

Proposed place of reception: