

Guidelines for Marriage by a FBC Pastor

Let us begin by congratulating you on this exciting decision and your upcoming wedding ceremony. We believe that marriage is a beautiful gift of God that pictures the gospel and God's everlasting, enduring love for His Church. As you prepare for your wedding day, please consider the guidelines below:

1. **Complete the pre-marriage questionnaire found below.**
2. **Review of your questionnaire:** A FBC pastor will receive your completed questionnaire and we will contact you with any questions and next steps. Before a pastor can confirm that he can perform the wedding he may request an initial meeting with the couple. In this session, you can expect the pastor to ask you about information supplied in your questionnaire including:

Your Christian faith: When did you become a Christian? What does it mean to be a Christian? What is the place that Christian faith has in your life? Are you both actively involved as members in a local church?

The nature of your relationship: What is the history of your relationship? How do your friends and family feel about it? What do you perceive to be the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the relationship? Are you living together? Have you maintained sexual purity? Have there been relationships in the past that are unreconciled (i.e. if you've been married before)?

3. **Preparation with a FBC pastor:** Once a FBC pastor has been confirmed to preside over your wedding, you should coordinate schedules as early as possible to ensure that he is available for your wedding date and to allow adequate time to complete the premarital seminar and premarital counseling process, allowing no less than four months between the time of the initial contact and the actual wedding.
4. **Premarital counseling:** Depending on the couple's background and level of readiness, a pastor will provide three-to-six counseling sessions with the couple. Some pastors employ diagnostic tools or surveys to supplement their counseling, which may entail additional cost.
5. **FBC Worship Center Usage:**
For additional information, please see supplemental documents concerning facilities.

If you are getting married in another church, be mindful that certain churches have restrictions concerning officiating pastors so make sure to verify their policies.

6. **Wedding licenses:** FBC pastors are not responsible for the processing of wedding licenses. You are responsible for ensuring the proper processing of necessary wedding documents.
7. **Out-of-town weddings:** Some pastors will perform out-of-town ceremonies and others will not. You must contact the pastor to see if he is available for such a wedding. Whether the ceremony is in town or not, you should plan to pay for any necessary travel expenses and accommodations, and provide clear directions and the precise address to the wedding facility. (Please understand that an out-of-town wedding is a significant commitment on the part of the pastor!)
8. **Wedding rehearsal and reception:** The pastor will generally conduct the wedding rehearsal at the agreed upon rehearsal time. Regretfully, pastors are not always available to attend rehearsal dinners and receptions. It is our sincere hope that such inability is not taken as an offense.
9. **The wedding:** Usually a meeting will be required to discuss the actual details of the wedding service. On the day of the wedding, plan to have the entire wedding party at the church at least one hour before the ceremony. IF you wish to have live photography or have your wedding filmed, please discuss appropriate parameters with the pastor before the wedding day. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you on this special occasion!
10. **Recusal:** Please note that the pastor may elect to recuse himself at any point per his discretion.

Pre-Marriage Questionnaire

Each person should fill out the following questionnaire separately. When both of you have submitted the completed form your information will be forwarded to the pastor you have requested to officiate your wedding. This information must be submitted prior to your first meeting with him.

Which pastor are you requesting to marry you?

Name of your future spouse:

Please fill out your personal information below and make sure that your future spouse also fills out this form separately.

First Name:

Last Name:

Address:

City:

State :

Zip Code:

Phone Number:

Birth Date (mm/dd/yyyy):

Email (required):

Occupation:

Level of Education Completed:

How long have you known each other?:

Where will you live?:

What is the desired date and time of your wedding?:

Where is the location of your wedding?:

Why have you chosen to be married by the church rather than a justice of the peace?:

Christian Faith

What does it mean to be a Christian?

Do you believe you are a Christian? Why?

What is your church background and current involvement?

Describe how you have been growing in Christ?

Motives for Marriage

Do your parents approve of the marriage? If not, what do you think of their reasons?

Do either of you feel pressure to get married?

Is there some other reason for getting married that we need to speak about (pregnancy, citizenship issues, etc.)?

Please list the qualities you see in the other person which make you want to marry him/her.

What fears do you have about marriage or about your impending marriage?

Standards

We believe we are responsible before God to marry only those people who have God's blessing (favor) for the marriage and who are prepared for the demands and responsibilities of this relationship.

Marriage is work! You don't expect to get other jobs without qualifications, so there are qualifications for marriage.

1. You must have a similar commitment to Christ (2 Corinthians 6:14)

Unless we are in covenant relationship with God, we lack the strength and love to really meet the demands of marriage. Without God, our natural selfishness prevents a relationship from really blossoming. Sin destroyed the oneness between Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). This means that a Christian pastor cannot marry a Christian to a non-Christian. From a Christian perspective, the heart of the marriage is deep oneness. If your spouse cannot understand the central motive of your heart, and the driving force of your life, how can s/he have deep unity with you? The only way to have a tolerable marriage with a non-Christian is to push Jesus off to the periphery of your soul. Either Christ will be central and your marriage relationship will be

superficial, or Christ will be on the periphery and your marriage relationship will be central. From a common sense perspective, it would be hard to find a rabbi or Muslim cleric or Christian pastor or a marriage counselor who thinks two people should marry who differ on the most core/important commitments of their lives. There can't be intimacy if two people differ in those central life commitments. Is there agreement between the two of you in this central area? Is there a similar commitment to Christ? You need to be active together as members of a church.

2. You must be mature enough and willing to build a marriage based on the principles of God's word.

The way to handle a machine so that it continues to work properly is to follow the directions of the manufacturer. If you ignore the instructions, there will be breakdown. Freedom comes from following the rules of the creator. This means first of all, you must be willing to talk through and solve problems God's way. For example, have you been engaging in sexual relations? Here's a test! Are you willing to accept God's word that this practice is wrong?

Are you presently sexually active with your fiancé?
Please answer yes or no

One of the most important qualities of a healthy marriage is the ability to handle conflicts and communicate appropriately. Unless you can base your relationship on communication now, how will you do so later?

Make a list of the problems or disagreements you are having now and make a list of ones you have solved satisfactorily.

If this is not your first marriage and you are divorced, please complete the following questions.

Was your divorce Biblical (on grounds of adultery/willful desertion by unbelieving partner)? Did you seek reconciliation with your former spouse?

Are you currently under discipline from another church body regarding this divorce or any other matter? Are you free to remarry at this time?