

**WEDDING POLICY**  
Central Pastors  
Central Baptist Church

**THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE**

Marriage was not conceived in the minds of men but by the sovereign plan of God. God instituted and is the author of marriage. The priority that God places upon marriage is demonstrated by the introduction of marriage in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible. Since God is the author of marriage, He is also the authority of marriage. God has communicated His will to us through His Word; therefore, the Word of God stands as the authoritative text concerning marriage. All predispositions concerning marriage outside the biblical text must be dispelled. The key to understanding and experiencing marriage to the degree that it was intended is dependent upon submission to the authority of the Word of God.

Genesis 2:18 states, "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'" God created woman to provide companionship for the man. Relationship is the heart of God, and He desires for a husband and wife to enjoy such a relationship that companionship is provided. The woman is referred to as a helpmate; therefore, she will assist and complete her husband in accomplishing God's plan for their life.

This idea of companionship includes the concepts of friendship and partnership. A man's wife should be his best friend. A woman's husband should be her best friend. Partnership reflects common goals, ambitions, and teamwork. Genesis 2:24 says, "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." The commitment to a spouse should be the highest human commitment in the life of a person. Oneness and unity characterize the intimacy in this relationship.

Marriage is also God's plan for procreation. Through the intimacy of marriage, God blesses a couple with children. This is God's means of populating the planet and giving a heritage to a couple. A couple's philosophy on children should be incorporated in the goals of the marriage.

Marriage was created by God to give mankind a picture of the relationship between Jesus Christ and His bride, the Church. This sacred picture demonstrates God's high standards upon the marriage relationship. (Ephesians 5:21-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21)

### **THE REQUIREMENT OF MARRIAGE**

Since God is the authority of marriage and marriage in its fullest is under God, marriage should be between two born again believers of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:14 that believers should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers; therefore, weddings will be performed for believers in Jesus Christ only.

Given the spiritual background and foundation of marriage, worship of God as a couple and family is essential to the success of the marriage. Therefore, the couple is encouraged to choose a church home where they can worship together. The local church will play a vital role in the nurturing of you as a Christian and in your marriage. These intentions should be carried out prior to the wedding to demonstrate the recognition of the importance of the local church and family worship in your marriage.

### **DIVORCE**

The Bible is clear on the fact that God hates divorce. As a couple enters marriage, divorce should not be considered as an option to the Christian couple. God's will is never accomplished in a divorce. Broken lives and broken promises to God and to a spouse are results of divorce, not to mention the devastating impact on a child that is often downplayed.

God apparently makes allowance for divorce in Matthew 5:32 in the case of adultery. Paul mentions also the allowing of an unbelieving spouse to leave in

2 Corinthians 7:15. Although many note these exceptions, reconciliation is God's desire if at all possible. "With God all things are possible."

### **REMARRIAGE**

Remarriage for those who lose a spouse to death is clearly permitted by Scripture (2 Corinthians 7:39). Remarriage for those who have experienced divorce, unfortunately, is not as clear. Many find Bible-believing pastors differ on this issue. Some pastors believe that if the exception clause as previously noted is recognized, then allowance for remarriage is implied.

Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. God forgives and cleanses when a repentant heart turns to Him. Some of the most dynamic Christians have suffered the tragedy of divorce. Some of the most faithful church members are divorced people who have remarried. Unfortunately, the Bible is not explicit concerning remarriage except in the case of the widow. Our personal position is one of uncertainty and caution at this time. Therefore, our current policy is to evaluate each situation individually. This is not an easy task. This sometimes reveals anger and hurt from the past. If you have suffered from a divorce in the past, it is very important that you seek God's will about remarriage. God's voice can be heard through His Holy word, the Bible. Please consider reading these verses of scripture pertaining to divorce: Malachi 2:16, 1 Corinthians 7:11-13, Luke 16:18, and Matthew 5:31-32.

### **PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING**

Four to six sessions of counseling are generally required prior to the wedding. Session one will include a review of this policy. Personal testimonies and the church building use policy will be discussed. The counseling sessions should be completed no later than one month prior to the wedding date. This will allow for any adjustments of plans that might be necessary. Before, during, and after the pre-marital counseling sessions, attendees must demonstrate a consistent Bible study and worship attendance in a Bible-believing church.

## USE OF CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH FACILITIES

Refer to the Central Baptist Church Wedding and Reception Policies.

### STATE LAWS

The State of Arkansas requires that the male individual be of the age of 21 and the female must be 18 upon the signing of the marriage contract. A marriage certificate can be obtained from the county courthouse. We strongly encourage you to consider obtaining a "Covenant Marriage" certificate. This was enacted in 2001. There is no waiting period. Central Baptist Church will be in compliance with all state laws.

### PASTORAL APPROVAL

The Central pastor must approve all aspects of the rehearsal, rehearsal dinner (if at the church facility), wedding ceremony, and reception at the church facility. This includes vows and music. Christian music should be considered over secular music since the ceremony will be in the church and involving Christ.

I have read and understand the Central Pastors Wedding Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bride

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Groom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(Please return this form to the Central pastor conducting your wedding)

If you agree with the *Central Pastors Wedding Policy*, continue to *Central Baptist Church Wedding Policies*.