

MARRIAGE CEREMONY

To all assembled:

..... (his FIRST name)

..... (her FIRST name)

together with their families and friends, appreciate your attendance to share their joy and to witness their covenant together.

Having grown to love one another, (his first name) and (her first name) have chosen to commit their lives to each other in marriage, and so today they will be united as husband and wife.

To the couple:

Marriage is a natural union of a man and a woman but it is a divine institution, ordained of God. Humans did not establish marriage. In the very beginning, God gave us the pattern for marriage by joining Adam and Eve. Marriage derives its authority from the divine will and law of God.

When God created life on the earth, he made human beings in His own image. He gave men and women creative minds with the ability to make choices, to develop plans and to build their lives on those plans.

Men and women are created with the need to relate to God and with our Saviour, Jesus Christ. As a loving Father, God gave us the institution of marriage and the blessing of family that we might more fully comprehend the depth of His love for us.

To emphasise His purpose to Adam and Eve, the Creator did not make the woman directly from the dust of the ground but from the very flesh and bone of the man. When the woman was presented to him, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." (Genesis 2:23 NKJV)

The Creator then united this first man and woman as husband and wife saying, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24 NKJV)

Then God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply: fill the earth". (Genesis 1:28 NKJV)

Thus we understand that marriage is honourable, instituted by God at creation and hallowed by the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Marriage is therefore not to be entered into lightly, but reverently, soberly and in the fear of God.

And it is important that we consider that marriage should be honoured and respected. We should realise that civilisation may have its own customs and laws respecting marriage but marriage must be based on the foundation of God's revelation. Marriage is based on the authority and direction of God.

Jesus said, "God's plan was seen from the beginning of creation, for 'He made them male and female.' This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. [So] they are no longer two but one" (Mark 10:6-8 NLT).

Jesus directs us to understand the uniting together of husband and wife as one flesh. This union is not only physical but is an emotional and spiritual unity.

Let us now notice the Apostle Paul's instructions regarding marriage: "you will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. You wives will submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of his body, the church; he gave his life to be her Savior. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives must submit to your husbands in everything.

"And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word... In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man is actually loving himself when he loves his wife." (Ephesians 5:21-28 NLT)

Marriage illustrates the relationship between Christ and Christians. It is a holy union, a living symbol, a precious relationship that needs constant tender, self-sacrificing care. Marriage is for love and because of love. Love is the reason, the cause and the foundation of marriage.

Paul reminds us of the attitudes that can live within us. "Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing. Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had." (Philippians 2:1-5 NLT)

The sacred marriage covenant that you will both make here today calls on you to yield yourselves to each other, to hold each other in high esteem, giving honour and respect to one another. Always give preference to the welfare of the other. Love and unselfish devotion are the foundation of marriage.

In one of the Bible's most beautiful statements about the love that is possible through Jesus Christ, Paul lifts and inspires us with these words: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable [or easily angered], and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7 NLT)

A loving relationship within marriage is a type of the spiritual relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church. And it is in your submission to God's love that this marriage will be strengthened and protected.

As the loving Father, God wants to pour out upon us his richest blessings. He wants us to be supremely happy. To that end He has given you, (his first name) and (her first name), this wonderful gift of marriage.

As you both come to know one another, let your relationship be built on the greater love and commitment of God the Father and of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Keep this love ever before you, hold close to each other, fulfil the vows you make here, and Jesus Christ will enable and empower you to establish a home that will weather the changes and challenges of life.

Because marriage is a divine institution, and we are asking God to join you as husband and wife, it is fitting that each of you should faithfully promise to accept the marriage covenant.

Do you then (his full name) faithfully promise and covenant with God in the presence of these witnesses, to take (her full name) to be your lawful, wedded wife for as long as you both shall live, to love her, cherish her, honour her, respect her and provide for her? (Groom's answer)

And do you (her full name) faithfully promise and covenant with God in the presence of these witnesses, to take (his full name) to be your lawful, wedded husband for as long as you both shall live, to love him, cherish him, honour him, comfort him and be subject to him? (Bride's answer)

[Have the couple face each other and join their right hands]

Beginning with the bridegroom, would you please repeat after me:

"I, (his full name),
take you (her full name) to be my wedded wife,
to have and to hold,
from this day forward,
in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish till death do us part.
There to I pledge you my faith."

"I, (her full name),
take you (his full name) to be my wedded husband,
to have and to hold,
from this day forward,
in plenty and in want,
in joy and in sorrow,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish till death do us part.
There to I pledge you my faith."

Because you recognise the supreme God and his love for you, it is appropriate and fitting that we come before Him — and before Jesus Christ — to ask His blessing and to ask Him to unite you as husband and wife.

[Prayer of appropriate length, asking God to bless this marriage]

By the authority of Jesus Christ, I now pronounce you HUSBAND and WIFE!

You may now exchange rings, which are an outward symbol of your love and devotion to each other.

..... (his first name), you may now kiss your bride.

Mr & Mrs