

# Getting Married at First Baptist Church, Olds, AB

## What the Bible says about marriage

Marriage is God's idea and His Book, the Bible, has a great deal to say about it.<sup>1</sup> Take some time out of your preparations and ponder the Bible's teaching about marriage:

Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-24	Marriage is part of God's creation purpose for a man and a woman
Proverbs 5:15-23	Marriage is God's context for sexual expression
Song of Solomon 4:1-10	Marriage is to be passionate and romantic
Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2-3	Marriage is intended by God to be a lifetime commitment
Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7:15	Only in limited circumstances is marriage dissolved by anything other than death
1 Corinthians 7:39	Marriage by a believer in Christ is to be with another believer in Christ
John 2:1-12	Marriage is blessed and made holy by Christ
Ephesians 5:21-33	Marriage is based on the principled practice of love, not feelings
1 Corinthians 7:3-5	Marriage involves the surrender of each partner to the other
Ephesians 5:23, 32	Marriage is a living symbol of the union of Christ and His church
Hebrews 13:4	Marriage is to be held in honor by all because it is treasured and guarded by God

## Our desire for your marriage: God's blessing

We know everyone's situation is unique. There may be special circumstances around your wedding we need to know and you can discuss them with the marrying pastor when you have your appointment with him. But we feel it is only fair for you to know how we view marriage before you come to talk to us.

It is our desire that your marriage be the happiest relationship possible, and that it be all that God intended it to be. God created man and woman and from the beginning He intended that they be joined in marriage so they could live in community and reflect the communion of the Trinity to the world. Since God designed the marriage relationship, it makes sense that He knows best how to build a happy marriage. We want to partner with you to help you in one of the

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared with resources from the Canadian Marriage & Family Network

Adopted by the Board of Deacons, June 11, 2015

most important decisions you will make in your life. We are pleased that you are considering our church to share this special moment with you. We are committed to help make healthy marriages rather than to simply perform wedding ceremonies.

As we read God's Word, the Bible, we are able to discern basic principles which must be understood and applied if we hope to experience the joy and fulfillment that God intends for marriage. Ignoring these principles will result in frustration and possible failure in the marriage relationship.

Because we are committed to building healthy marriages under the blessing of God, we want to share the following policies and guidelines. Our purpose is not to condemn or reject anyone but to build your marriage on the strongest foundation possible: God's foundation revealed in the Bible. You will need to meet with the marrying pastor for some dialogue about your circumstances and about how God can strengthen your marriage after you have read and understood these policies and guidelines.

## **Our church policies and guidelines about marriage**

In view of the great value placed upon marriage by God in His Word, the Bible, the congregation of First Baptist Church, Olds, AB holds to the following policies regarding marriage:

### **1) Congregational Policy on marriage**

"The congregation of First Baptist Church, Olds, AB, resolves that as a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice we reserve the term "marriage" for the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others."

### **2) Congregational Policy on Staff Participation in the Solemnization and Celebration of Marriage**

"The congregation of First Baptist Church, Olds, AB, resolves that members of our staff or clergy will be allowed to arrange for, officiate at or take part in the solemnization or celebration of a marriage only when it conforms to our congregational policy on marriage."

### **3) Congregational Policy Regarding Facility Usage for the Solemnization or Celebration of Marriage**

"The congregation of First Baptist Church, Olds, AB, reserves the right to rent or allow use of the premises of First Baptist Church only for the solemnization or celebration of marriages which are consistent with our Statement of Faith, with our church practice regarding marriage and with our congregational policy that marriage is `the covenant relationship between one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.'"

Adopted by the Board of Deacons, June 11, 2015

So that there might be clarity in our understanding of God's design for marriage we want you to know that we adhere to the following guidelines, drawn from the Bible's teaching on marriage.

1. The Bible teaches that marriage is to be a life-long union of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24) which has as its ultimate purpose the goal of picturing the relationship of Jesus Christ with His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:23, 32; Revelation 21:2, 9). As such, marriage is to be held in the highest regard by all people and to be treated with profound reverence because it is treasured and guarded by God (Hebrews 13:4).

2. Because the Bible teaches that the ultimate purpose of marriage is to picture the spiritual harmony between Christ and His Church, we believe that there is to be spiritual harmony in a marriage. God's Word directs that those who believe in Jesus Christ are to marry only those who share their faith in Christ (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14). Consequently, we are not able to perform weddings where one partner professes faith in Christ while the other partner does not. We are able to perform weddings for couples where both parties are without a faith commitment to Jesus Christ, but please be aware that during the preparation sessions you will be encouraged to consider making God a part of your marriage through faith in Jesus Christ. All wedding services performed in our church will be conducted in a manner consistent with this church's Christian faith.

3. Because the Bible teaches that marriage is a lifelong commitment, we view divorce as a departure from God's plan for marriage (Matthew 19:3-9). Divorce was permitted by God in cases of adultery or immorality (Matthew 5:32) and in cases of desertion of the marriage by one party (1 Corinthians 7:15). Divorce was forbidden in the case of a partner divorcing their spouse in order to marry another (Mark 10:11-12). The Bible permits remarriage of a divorced person in the following situations:

- When adultery or immorality by his or her spouse has occurred (Matthew 19:3-9).
- When his or her former spouse has died (Romans 7:3).
- When his or her spouse has deserted the marriage and has refused to be reconciled (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Divorce and remarriage is a complex issue and we recognize that there are no easy answers. Therefore, it is best if you consult with the marrying pastor regarding your situation and circumstances. Entering marriage following a divorce calls for diligent preparation in order to assure the health and strength of the new relationship.

4. Because the Bible teaches that marriage is to be between a man and a woman for life (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-24), our pastors will only solemnize, bless or celebrate weddings that conform to this teaching of the Bible, and our church

Adopted by the Board of Deacons, June 11, 2015

facilities will only be used to solemnize, bless or celebrate weddings that conform to this teaching of the Bible.

It is our policy that all weddings held on the premises of First Baptist Church are to be solemnized by a member of the Church's pastoral staff or by members in good standing of the Church who are licensed clergy. "Solemnized" refers to the part of the service in which the vows are exchanged. The pastor or clergy who solemnizes the wedding then signs the marriage license, indicating that the couple have been married according to the laws of the Province of Alberta. If you would like to involve other people in other aspects of your wedding service please discuss this with the pastor or clergy who is solemnizing your wedding.

No pastor or clergy of First Baptist Church will perform a wedding service if another pastor or clergy of this church has refused to perform the ceremony based on any of the above policies or guidelines.

## **The steps toward your wedding day**

If your wedding conforms to our understanding of God's desire for marriage as outlined in the policies and guidelines listed above then the preparation for your wedding begins with a request to perform your ceremony to one of our pastors or to one of the licensed clergy who are members of our church. All of our pastors are licensed to perform weddings and you will find their contact information on our website. Once a date has been agreed upon and provisionally recorded on the church facility calendar, two processes will begin.

First of all, the pastor or clergy will outline the pre-marriage sessions that he will hold with you. Because we value preparation for marriage we believe that several months should be set aside for pre-marriage preparation. We require several meetings with the marrying pastor or clergy who will lead you through a course of pre-marriage preparation resources such as, but not limited to, *The Prepare/Enrich Premarital Inventory* ([www.enrichcanada.ca](http://www.enrichcanada.ca)), the *Marriage 101: Back to Basics* course ([www.marriage101online.com](http://www.marriage101online.com)), and the study of several Biblical passages relating to marriage.

Secondly, the church secretary will provide you with a set of forms entitled "Facility Use Guidelines." [You can also download a copy of these forms from the church website.] In order to complete your reservation of the church for your wedding day these forms must be filled out and given to the church secretary who will pass them to our church board who, will in turn, will give the final approval for your use of the church building. Your reservation is complete once the board has given you their approval in writing.

## **Schedule of fees and costs for your wedding**

Adopted by the Board of Deacons, June 11, 2015

Each of the pastors or clergy sets their own fees for performing weddings, so you will need to ask them for their fee. The fees typically run from \$150 to \$250. The fee includes the cost of the pre-marriage sessions, the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. This fee is to be paid directly to the officiant and should be paid to him by the date of your wedding rehearsal.

The "Facility Use Guideline" form contains a "Cost Schedule" for the fees payable to the church custodian who will clean the building before and after your wedding and for the audio technician who will run the sound for your wedding. These fees are to be paid directly to the custodian and audio technician and are to be in the church office before the date of your wedding. Most weddings do not employ a video technician, but if you do, please follow the same payment process. Should you wish to hold your wedding reception in the church hall an additional custodial fee is required. The "Cost Schedule" also invites you to consider making a donation to help cover the costs of "Facility Usage." This is a donation, not a set fee, and the amount is left to your discretion.

If you wish to employ a musician from the church for your wedding the pastors can provide you with names and contact information. Since the musicians set their own fees, you will need to ask them for their costs. Payment should be made directly to them by the date of your wedding rehearsal.

## **A final word**

Although costs and fees are genuine components of your wedding planning we don't want to end by talking about money when our central desire is to see your marriage blessed by God. Jesus said...

**"Haven't you read, that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." Matthew 19:4-6**

Our prayer for your wedding is that the profound union in body, soul and spirit that God designed for marriage will be yours. We want to partner with you to help make this happen. May your marriage be one in which you experience the reality of being "joined together" by God for life.