



MARRIAGE CEREMONY PREPARATION

MARRIAGE CEREMONY PREPARATION

WHAT THE WEDDING OFFICER NEEDS (PREFERABLY ONE WEEK BEFORE):

1) **A copy of the IDs of the groom, the bride, and two witnesses.** *They do not need to be certified. Please ensure that your witnesses have South African IDs.*

2) **A copy of your ante-nuptial contract if you marry out of community of property.** *The lawyer will give you this.*

3) **If a foreigner, I need a copy of passport.** *Also include immigration or temporary residence permit number if applicable.*

4) **If divorced, a copy of the final decree of divorce.** *If for any sound reason a person is unable to produce a decree of divorce or if a person was divorced in a foreign country and cannot obtain a decree of divorce an affidavit by the person concerned is required to the effect that he/she is legally divorced, and stating the name of the court which granted the divorce and the date on which it was granted.*

5) **If widowed, a copy of the deceased spouse's death certificate.** *If a death certificate is not available the person concerned is required to submit an affidavit confirming the death of the deceased spouse and stating the name of the deceased and the date of death.*

6) **The address where you will reside once married.**

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO HELP MAP OUT THE DAY:

1. Date, venue and time of wedding?
2. What are the details for the wedding rehearsal?
3. Have you done your legal contract (it needs to be done prior to wedding)?
4. What is the general mood/feel you are going for?
5. How long would you like the ceremony to be?
6. Worship, yes or no? How many songs and which songs are you thinking?
7. Do you have any special memorable touches you would like to do (communion, candles, etc.)?
8. Bible reading/s - do you have some in mind and who will do them?
9. Do you want people to pray for you? How many and who?
10. Do you have any pointers for the message?
11. Would you like to include personal vows?
12. How are we doing the legal register signing?
13. Who will be your witnesses?
14. Have you planned your entry and exit music?
15. In what order would you like people to leave?
16. Are there any instructions people need before the exit the church (what is happening next, where do they go)?

CEREMONY ELEMENTS / ORDER OF SERVICE:

Before the ceremony:

- Pastor meets with groom and groomsmen to pray if appropriate.
- Pastor/ pastor's wife goes to meet the bride outside to pray with the bridal entourage if appropriate.

General Welcome

(Include asking guests to turn off phones. If you are on call then please adjust your phone to vibrate silently. Toilets are situated... Thank you so much.)

Entrance of the bride and bridal party

"Please rise for the bridal party."

Welcome bridal couple

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Parents of bride say, *'We do.'*

Legalities

Before we start this ceremony, let me just deal with one legality.

1) _____ and _____, *do you know of any legal reason why you may not marry today?*

2) *Does anyone here know of any legal reason why _____ and _____ may not marry?*

OR

Do you "full name" declare that as far as you know there is no lawful impediment to your proposed marriage with "full name" here present and that you call on all here present to witness that you take "full name" as your lawfully wedded husband/ wife? If you do, say "I do".

Is there anyone here present who knows of any lawful reason why "couples names" should not get married? Please speak now, or forever hold you peace.

Welcome all.

Welcome God's presence.

Options: 1) Pastor prays. 2) Pastor's wife prays. 3) Someone else prays.

Singing of song or songs.

Optional: Read a portion of the Bible. If so, decide who will reads what.

Some suggestions from the Message translation...

1 Cor 13:1-7 "If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. 2If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. 3-7If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.
Love cares more for others than for self.
Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.
Love doesn't strut,
Love doesn't have a swelled head,
Doesn't force itself on others,
Isn't always "me first,"
Doesn't fly off the handle,
Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,
Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Love takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,
Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Love never looks back,
But keeps going to the end.
Never dies."

Col 3:12-18 "So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it. Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way."

The Message

Share an inspiring, helpful message to the couple particularly, but address it to everyone present too. I suggest keeping this to 15 minutes maximum.

Exchange vows

Two questions to answer:

1) Groom, do you take bride to be your wife, do you promise to love her, comfort her, honour her and care for her all the days of your life? (I do)

2) Bride, do you take groom to be your husband, do you promise to love him, comfort him, honour him, and care for him, all the days of your life? (I do)

Three different ways of doing rest of vows:

- 1) You can do the traditional vow.
- 2) You can write your own.
- 3) You could choose to do both.

Whichever you choose, I can lead you line by line, or you can read them from your own copy.

Suggested traditional vows:

"With deep love and joy, I now forsake all others and join myself to you, to be husband / wife to you, to have and to hold you, to love and to cherish you, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death us do part. This is my solemn vow."

Exchange rings (The standard symbolic confirmations of the vows.)

I like to comment on the significance of the rings at this point.

As you put rings on each other's fingers, you can say:

- 1) Nothing or
- 2) A short '*With this ring, I bind myself to you in the covenant of marriage*' (I can guide you phrase by phrase) or

3) A longer comment:

"I unite with you in marriage, and with all that I am and all that I have; I honour you as my wife / husband. As a token and pledge of my love, friendship and commitment to you, I place this ring upon your finger."

OR

"_____, with this ring I commit all my love to you. I ask you to wear it as a constant reminder of my love for you and of the vows which we have made this day before these witnesses."

Optional symbolic confirmation: Lighting Unity Candle

I suggest this is done during a group singing moment or a performance song item or instrumental piece. Additionally, if the ceremony is taking place indoors, you could get everyone to light their own individual candles (from a flame passed on from the just-lit unity candle) as a way of seeing the part we all play in supporting your marriage and the blessing and light it will bring to many more.

Signing of register

This usually takes place during a song / instrumental / performance / photo slide show. Two witnesses need to come up too. Usually, one from the bride's family and one from the groom's.

Prayer moment

With my hand placed over the couple's embracing hands, I pray a prayer that affirms the covenant they have made to each other, and ask that God will now come and bind them together. I pray a blessing over their marriage too. Optionally, my wife or some of their close friends or family can join me in this too.

Final announcement

"Before creation, before angels, before people, before government, and before God, I declare you husband and wife. What God has joined together, let no man separate.

Ladies and gentleman, I present to you _____ and _____, man and wife.

You may kiss your bride."

Recessional

Bridal party leaves the church/ venue.

Any final announcements/reminders given to the audience after the bridal party have exited.