

Edgewood Marriage Booklet



Marriage is a wonderful gift of God! And since He created this relationship, it is of vital importance that His Word be the guiding factor on how it is entered and practiced. In our culture, what starts out as a joyous event is often ended as a wounded and broken relationship. A Christian wedding and marriage is not accomplished without choosing to follow the principles and practices given to us by our Creator. To follow them is to experience God's blessing, to violate them is to experience untold pain, the disapproval of God, and the consequences of disobedience.

Saying that a wedding ceremony or a marriage is Christian, without seeking to follow God's precepts, creates hypocrisy and lacks authenticity. Following God's blueprint for marriage will create a consistent testimony to the world that Christ is preeminent and gives greater probability the marriage will last and be satisfying.

Here are a few of the most basic Biblical convictions regarding marriage. They are meant to create guidelines to help encourage, protect, and strengthen a couple's relationship and foster Christian integrity.

- Marriage is a God ordained and a unique relationship between one man and one woman for life (Genesis 1:27-28, 21-24).
- Marriage is a solemn covenant to God and to each other, and is meant to last a lifetime (Mark 10:6-14).
- Having the same faith is critical and required for a successful marriage. A Christian and a non-Christian should not seek to be married because of competing value systems and the problems that will occur (2 Corinthians 6:14; Amos 3:3). An Edgewood pastor will not knowingly perform a wedding ceremony between a believer and an unbeliever.
- Sexual purity is important to God and affects the spiritual life. Having a sexual relationship is the privilege of marriage (Hebrews 13:4). A couple living together prior to marriage should change their living arrangements before seeking a Christian wedding and make a commitment to sexual purity (Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

- Taking the time to prepare for a wedding is important but preparing for a successful marriage is even more important (Proverbs 24:3-4; Matthew 7:24-25).
- Obedience to God's Word regarding marriage will give the greatest ability to have a satisfying, healthy, and blessed relationship (Ephesians 5:15-33).
- Remarriage after divorce is permitted in the Bible for a Christian in certain circumstances (Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Romans 7:3).

If a couple has some questions about the above values and would like to talk with someone about them, the Edgewood pastoral staff is more than happy to assist in understanding them and embracing these foundational Christian values. Sometimes the circumstances surrounding a wedding can be complicated and sometimes a person who is new to the faith can have questions due to their new position in Christ. These discussions will be compassionate, positive, and respectful with the intent to encourage life-change that places God's principles above human preferences.

If there is disagreement with any of the above Biblical principles, an Edgewood pastor will decline to perform the wedding ceremony and the wedding will not be held at Edgewood. If any pastor of Edgewood declines to officiate a marriage ceremony, other than for a scheduling conflict, all pastors will be unavailable until the issues are resolved.

Issues Regarding Divorce and Remarriage

No one generally gets married thinking and hoping there will be a divorce. Yet because of the sinfulness of people, the death of a marriage is a sad reality. Since divorce is both a process and an event, the following guidelines are given in the hope that healing, grace, and Biblical convictions are the hallmarks of a subsequent marriage. Passages that should be studied are: Mathew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:1-12; Mark 10: 2-14; Luke 16:18 and 1 Corinthians 7:1-16.

- Divorce should not be used to simply seek a different mate since the intent of that decision would be adulterous.
- Remarriage should not be available if the restoration of the original

marriage remains a viable option.

- Remarriage should not take place if there is no evidence of repentance, forgiveness, and brokenness regarding the circumstances which contributed to the divorce.
- If remarriage is to be justified, the Bible should be consulted regarding divorce and remarriage so that Biblical grounds are evident and the will of God is honored.
- At least one year of legal divorce should pass before consideration for remarriage. Often, even more time is needed in order to understand what went wrong, heal from emotional wounds, grow spiritually, and adequately prepare for a new relationship.

Scheduling Requirements

- Weddings are available to Edgewood members, their immediate family or regular attenders (who have been attending for at least six months).
- A wedding cannot be scheduled more than a year in advance and must be scheduled at least 6 months prior to the event.
- An Edgewood pastor must participate in or oversee the ceremony. Any guest pastor must be approved in advance and must agree with the Biblical positions Edgewood believes regarding marriage.
- The bride and groom must complete premarital counseling that is approved by Edgewood.
- Weddings may not be scheduled on major holidays or in conflict with on-going church activities. No weddings can be scheduled in the month of December.
- Weddings on weekdays or evenings will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Weddings may be scheduled on Friday evenings and Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Sunday weddings can be scheduled between 2 and 3 p.m. with all activities being completed by 4 p.m. in

September through May. June through August weddings may be scheduled later in the day on Sundays.

- All Saturday wedding activities in the Sanctuary must be concluded by 3 p.m.
- No wedding dates are confirmed until there is a conference with the officiating pastor and the date is approved. Any plans for printing invitations or any reservations for wedding activities should not be made until the confirmation letter is received and your wedding date is secured on the church calendar.

Premarital Counseling Activities and Agreements

- Premarital counseling can begin after the wedding date is confirmed, and should start no later than four to six months prior to the marriage.
- There will be a minimum of four to six sessions. Biblical roles for marriage, communication, conflict resolution, finances, intimacy, and other topics will be addressed in an understandable and practical manner.
- A premarital inventory may be requested by the pastor performing the wedding. The expense will be minimal and provided by the couple.
- The couple will be asked to purchase and read at least one book intended to provide necessary relational information that will be processed in the pre-marital counseling.
 - * First marriages: *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* by Les and Leslie Parrott.
 - * Subsequent marriages: *Saving Your Second Marriage Before It Starts* by Les and Leslie Parrott.
- The couple will be required to view some videos on RightNow Media (a free video service provided through Edgewood) that will provide valuable relational principles and serve as a platform for discussions by the couple.

- * First marriages: *Before You Say I Do* by H. Norman Wright and *Essentials of Marriage: Higher Love* by Gary Thomas.
 - * Subsequent marriages: *Remarriage Success* and *The Smart Step-Family* by Ron L. Deal.
- Other materials may be needed if the pastor doing the premarital counseling deems it important for the success of your marriage. These might include information on blended family situations or other topics that need exploration in order for the relationship to have the best opportunity for success.
 - A commitment to spiritual growth and regular church attendance is necessary for the spiritual dynamic of a couple. Specifically, we'd like to see couples living out our 4G's – gathering, growing, giving, and going.

Good Conscience and Purity Covenant

The following passages indicate God's desire for a good conscience and sexual purity in the dating/engagement relationship.

Acts 24:16

"So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man."

1 Timothy 1:19

"... holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith."

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

"Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in

this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”

I pledge to show my love and respect for my future spouse in ways that allow both of us to keep a clear conscience related to sexual purity before God, the body of Christ, and each other.

Rehearsal and Wedding Details

- Acquiring the marriage license is the responsibility of the bride and groom. This license should be given to the officiating pastor at the rehearsal. The County Courthouse that serves the location of the wedding will give details about securing the license.
- The rehearsal should be scheduled the night before the wedding unless there is an extreme conflict. It should last about an hour.
- All songs and readings must be approved by the officiating pastor. Care should be given by the bride and groom to remember that this is a Christian ceremony and the words and values should reflect and produce this reality. We highly recommend that couples purchase *A Christ-Centered Wedding: Rejoicing in the Gospel on Your Big Day* by Katherine Parks and Linda Strode as this resource will help you think through various aspects of your wedding ceremony.
- Modesty should be a major consideration in a Christian wedding. Revealing necklines, short dresses, and any apparel that could be considered sensual should be avoided.
- Edgewood provides no decorations such as candelabras, flowers, or wall coverings.
- Any use of candles must be the dripless style.
- Only the Edgewood staff can be used to attach an aisle runner.
- Edgewood staff must be used for audio/video management due to the complexity of the equipment.

- The wedding party is responsible to acquire photographers and videographers. All photography, video use, and placement must be cleared through the officiating pastor.
- All children should be supervised and not allowed to run freely in the facility.

Facility Details

- The Edgewood campus is an alcohol, tobacco, drug, and gun free zone.
- Sanctuary seating capacity: 300.
- Aisle measurements from door to platform for runner: 45 ft. Platform measurements for runner: 15 ft. for steps and stage to first tier.
- There is a baby grand piano and an electronic organ for use.
- Microphones and audio monitors are supplied by Edgewood for most circumstances and will be coordinated by the sound technician.
- No nails, tacks, pins, staples or tape may be used without approval.
- No birdseed or rice may be used on the property. Bubbles may be used outside.

Guidelines for Receptions in the Gymnasium

- No dancing is allowed.
- Music must be approved by the officiating pastor. Appropriateness from a Christian value emphasis should be used.
- An Edgewood kitchen coordinator must be consulted.

- Set up for a reception cannot begin on Friday evenings until Celebrate Recovery has finished using the gym at 8:30 p.m.
- Round tables that seat eight people can be used. The maximum seating capacity is 250.
- All decorations must be removed immediately following the reception.
- An Edgewood sound technician must be hired to operate the sound system in the gym.

Current Fees

Janitor (payable to him/her the night of the rehearsal)

- \$80 – Sanctuary
- \$120 – Multi-Purpose Facility

Audio/video Technician

- \$100 – Sanctuary
- \$100 – Multi-Purpose Facility

Musicians should be consulted for their fee structure

Suggested pastoral honorarium

- \$200

Notes



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