

Marriage [1]

why marriage?

Gen 2:18-24

Marriage is instituted by God for:

- Friendship and companionship (v 18)
- Working together (v 18,20)
- Continuance of the human race and bringing up children (Gen 1:27-28, Ps 127:3-5)

We must leave our parents (v24) - it is a breaking away - failure to do so can result in problems.

We must cleave to our spouse - it is joining together (Matt 19:5-6).

It is making a new family, a new home with its own unique character.

A Christian marriage is a new force for God in the world.

responsibility & commitment

Caring

When you are married, there is someone else in your life - all the time! You take on responsibility for another human being - you have a new dependent.

You need to look after each other and consider how to meet each other's needs.

You also have responsibility for the spiritual condition of your partner.

You are one flesh - if you hurt your partner, you hurt yourself (Eph 5:28-29).

**...love, comfort,
honour and protect....**

**..to love and to
cherish..**

Understanding

Friendship and humour are important.

You will need to get used to new habits and ways of living.

..for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health...

Be prepared to change how you live yourself. It is not your life mission to change your partner - you have married them how they are!

Your partner is unlikely to reach your expectations - don't expect too much!

There is considerably less freedom when you are married (1 Cor 7:32-35) - and especially when you have children!

You need to learn to be less self-centred (1 Cor 13:4-7)

Sharing

Physically

The physical side of your marriage is important (1 Cor 7:3-5).

It is a holy relationship (1 Thess 4:4-5).

..with my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you...

Materially

Nothing is mine any more - it is all ours!

..and all that I have I share with you...

Spiritually

When you are married, you need to maintain your personal walk with God and at the same time develop a spiritual relationship together.

..within the love of God...

- Pray for each other's needs.
- Two can help and encourage each other - maintain a three-fold cord (Eccl 4:9-12)
- There is power in joint prayer (Matt 18:18-20)
- There is power in joint ministry (Acts 18:26)
- Be patient and do not expect too much of each other.

Authority and Submission

..and obey...

Ephesians 5:21-33

As Christ is the head of his Church, so the husband is the head of his wife. As the Church submits to Christ, so a wife should submit to her husband.

A husband and wife are a team working together in their family and for the kingdom of God. The husband is the leader of that team. Godly leadership is characterised by sacrifice, care and protection (Eph 5:25-29) and humility and service (Matt 20:25-28)

A husband must love and honour his wife

- He must not treat her as inferior
- He must allow her to be herself
- He must include her in decision making

God did not make woman from the head of the man so she could dominate him or from his feet to be trodden on by him - but from his side to be equal to him, from under his arm to be protected by him and from near his heart to be loved by him

A wife should submit to her husband

As Christians we have no problem submitting to Christ - there is no fear, no insecurity - it should be the same for a wife with her husband.

A man and wife must respect each other

- Support each other
- Speak well of each other
- Do not undermine each other
- Do not criticise each other
- Build up, don't pull down

1 Peter 3:1-7

Faithfulness

Beware of Satan's lie:

"I married the wrong person"

You must believe in the power of God to overcome difficulties as they arise.

You may still be attracted to other people - keep your feelings under control.

- Adultery is sin (Ex 20:14)
- Keep yourself for your husband or wife (Prov 5:16,17 Heb 13:4)
- Marriage is a covenant relationship - God hates divorce (Mal 2:14-16)

..forsaking all others, be faithful...as long as you both shall live...

Till Death

Marriage for the Christian is for life. It is not an experiment - God has joined you (Matt 19:6).

- Divorce is not the will of God (Matt 19:8)
- Death of one of the partners releases us from the covenant (Rom 7:2-3).
- There is no marriage in the next life (Matt 22:23-33).

**..to have and to hold
from this day forward...**

**..as long as you both
shall live...**

..till death us do part...

wedding vows

The central part of a marriage ceremony is the making of promises to each other. These vows should be based on the scriptural principles of marriage. The extracts above are from the Church of England Series 3 Marriage Service and the complete wording is included below.

Some couples prefer to express these vows in their own words. Hopefully this leaflet will help you to do that.

First Part

N, will you take N to be your wife(husband)? Will you love her(him), comfort her(him) and protect her(him), and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her(him) as long as you both shall live? I will.

Second Part

I, N, take you, N, to be my wife(husband), to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish (and obey), till death us do part, according to God's holy law; and this is my solemn vow.

Third Part

I give you(receive) this ring as a sign of our marriage. With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you, within the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.