

Covenant Marriage Wedding Ceremony (Option Two)

MINISTER TO CONGREGATION:

Dear friends, we are assembled here this (morning/evening) in the presence of God to share together in the public celebration of the covenant of marriage between _____ and _____.

God is always pleased when we dedicate our lives to Him. He is also pleased when we dedicate our marriage to Him. Today, we share together in this sacred time of worship as _____ and _____ dedicate their lives and home to God, our Heavenly Father, through His Son, our Living Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

As Christians we affirm that when the people of God come together to worship Him, the living Christ blesses them with His presence. In Matthew 18:20, He made a promise to us that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is there with them. In light of this promise let us give thanks to Him for we know that He is present with us in this worship experience today.

(Opening Prayer)

MINISTER TO COUPLE AND CONGREGATION:

There are two basic forms of covenant relationships in the Bible: the first relationship is between unequals, the ultimate being between God and man, the second is the relationship of persons with one another. The difference between these covenantal forms is that the covenant between God and persons is that it is always initiated by God and is not a balanced one; we are not equal with God. The covenant between persons, on the whole, is between equals. Though earthly things such as power, possession, or position may elevate one over the other, in God's eyes we stand as equals.

Despite the difference, biblical covenants between persons are to be modeled on God's ways with people. As we covenant with one another, we give witness to God's covenant with us. We are showing how we love and are loved by God. The covenantal love of which we speak is no less than Agape love.

Jeremiah proclaimed that one day God would make a new covenant with His people, Centuries later that prophecy was fulfilled in the upper room when Jesus said, "This is my blood of the covenant" (Matt. 26:28). God initiated this new covenant when He sent His Son into the world. John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Therefore, we love him because He first loved us and gave himself up for us. This covenant, like the old, is not an agreement between equal parties. God is not our equal.

This new covenant is freely offered and established with us as we receive this gift of love. In order for us to experience the fullness of God's love we must come to Him in faith believing, as Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us ". . . for by grace you have been saved through

faith, and that not of yourself is a gift from lest any man should boast.” We must accept the gift. Then we are told in Romans 10:9-11, “. . . that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘*Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed*’.” Until we have accepted the gift of God’s covenantal love through faith in Jesus Christ, we will not be able to experience the fullness of His blessings in a covenant marriage.

MINISTER TO GROOM: (Groom’s first Name) , have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? Have you freely entered into a covenant relationship with God the Father through the blood of His only begotten son, Jesus Christ? And have you placed your trust in God as your Enabler through the Holy Spirit to live your life in obedience to Him? If so, answer, “I have.”

Husband: I have.

MINISTER TO BRIDE: (Bride’s first Name) , have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? Have you freely entered into a covenant relationship with God the Father through the blood of His only begotten son, Jesus Christ? And have you placed your trust in God as your Enabler through the Holy Spirit to live your life in obedience to Him? If so, answer, “I have.”

Wife: I have.

(OPTIONAL COMMUNION SERVICE CAN BE INCLUDED HERE CELEBRATING THE NEW COVENANT IN CHRIST’S BLOOD.)

Scripture also affirms that as God created man, He determined that it was not good for him to be alone, so He created Eve and brought her to Adam, that they should live together in a relationship as we know it to be – husband and wife. Marriage is a part of God’s Divine Plan for us and you should be thankful that God has brought you to one another.

From that day to this, marriage has been God’s supreme arena of human relationships through which He has chosen to express the fullness of His loving presence with us. God, who blessed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, offers His blessing on you today. God intends for your marriage to be a covenant relationship that reflects the relationship of Christ and the Church. Your Covenant Marriage will become a testimony to others of God’s unconditional love for them. Therefore, it was ordained that you should leave your father and mother and cleave unto one another, and the two of you should become one flesh, united in faith, hope, and love until death separates you.

There is no other arena of human relationships that affords us the opportunity to experience the love of God more fully than a covenant marriage. A covenant marriage allows us to be both givers and receivers of God’s love. We have both the honor and the privilege of offering to our spouse the free gift of God’s love. This is a love that knows no fear. It is selfless. It is a love that is freely given and must be freely received. It is a

love that does more than simply reflect the love of God. The covenant love of which I/we speak is one that can come only from God himself and is manifested through us to one another.

A covenant marriage allows us to join God in His activity in the life of our spouse. It also allows us to experience His love through the most intimate love relationship known to mankind. God alone can initiate a covenant marriage and only He can enable us to accomplish that which He has initiated. Apart from God, we cannot experience a covenant marriage.

MINISTER TO GROOM: (Groom's first Name) , do you rejoice in the gift of God's love for you through (Bride's first Name) ? Do you give thanks to God for allowing you to join Him in loving her? Will you always seek to encourage her and challenge her to become all that God intends for her to be? Will you always seek what is best for her even to the point of self-sacrifice? With God as your Enabler, will you seek to be a blessing to her and to allow God to bless others through you as a couple? And, will you walk beside her in faith, believing that God will enable you both to fulfill His call on your marriage bringing completion and wholeness to your lives as individuals and as a couple for His glory? If so, answer, "I will."

Husband: I will

MINISTER TO BRIDE: (Bride's first Name) do you rejoice in the gift of God's for you through (Groom's first Name) ? Do you give thanks to God for allowing you to join Him in loving him? Will you always seek to encourage him and challenge him to become all that God intends for him to be? Will you always seek what is best for him even to the point of self-sacrifice? As God as your Enabler, will you seek to be a blessing to him and to allow God to bless others through you as a couple? And, will you walk beside him in faith, believing that God will enable you both to fulfill His call on your marriage bringing completion and wholeness to your lives as individuals and as a couple for His glory? If so, answer, "I will."

Wife: I will

Husband: On this the ____ day of the month, in this year of our Lord _____ do you freely and unconditionally enter this covenant of marriage with this, your wedded wife, to live with her in accordance with God's will for your marriage and allowing your marriage to reflect your covenant relationship with Him. Will you love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health. And do you willfully forsake all others to remain faithful to her so long as you both shall live, to the glory of God, our Heavenly Father. If so, answer, "I do."

Husband: I do.

Wife: On this the ____ day of the month, in this year of our Lord _____ do you freely and unconditionally enter this covenant of marriage with this, your wedded husband, to live with him in accordance with God's will for your marriage and allowing your marriage to reflect your covenant relationship with Him. Will you love him, comfort him,

honor and keep him in sickness and in health. And do you willfully forsake all others to remain faithful to him so long as you both shall live, to the glory of God, our Heavenly Father. If so, answer, "I do."

Wife: I do

(LET US PRAY)

As you exchange your marriage vows to one another you are committing yourselves to the covenant of marriage. As you recite your vows you are also affirming your love for God and the commitment of your marriage to God who loves you and gave His only begotten Son so that you might have eternal life.

MINISTER: You will now please unite your right hands and repeat after me.

MINISTER TO GROOM:

Believing that marriage is a covenant/ intended by God/ to be a lifelong fruitful relationship/ between a man and a woman,/ I (STATE YOUR NAME)/ vow to God,/ to you (STATE YOUR BRIDE'S NAME),/ to our family and our community/ to remain steadfast/ in my selfless and unconditional love for you./ I will always seek reconciliation/ in times of trial./ I will remain sexually pure/ in my relationship to you/ in mind and body./ And, I will seek ways/ for us to purposefully grow/ personally and spiritually/ in our covenant marriage relationship.

MINISTER TO BRIDE:

Believing that marriage is a covenant/ intended by God/ to be a lifelong fruitful relationship/ between a man and a woman,/ I (STATE YOUR NAME)/ vow to God,/ to you (STATE YOUR GROOM'S NAME),/ to our family and our community/ to remain steadfast/ in my selfless and unconditional love for you./ I will always seek reconciliation/ in times of trial./ I will remain sexually pure/ in my relationship to you/ in mind and body./ And, I will seek ways/ for us to purposefully grow/ personally and spiritually/ in our covenant marriage relationship.

[Take the rings from the attendants.]

(Groom's First Name) and (Bride's First Name), you are exchanging rings as a visible testimony of your covenant with God and each other. Let your love for each other be more precious, and more valuable, and longer lasting, and stronger than these rings. Let the rings forever serve as a reminder of the joy that you feel today as you exchange them.

(Groom's First Name), take this ring, place it on (Bride's First Name)'s hand, and repeat after me.

(Bride's First Name), with this ring, I seal my covenant with you before God to be your faithful and loving husband, in the name of our Heavenly Father, and of His Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Bride's First Name), take this ring, place it on (Groom's First Name)'s hand, and repeat after me.

(Groom's First Name), with this ring, I seal my covenant with you before God to be your faithful and loving wife, in the name of our Heavenly Father, and of His Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In as much as you have given yourselves to one another by your vows, and have demonstrated your love and trust by the giving and receiving of rings, by the Power and Authority of God and the laws of this state, I now pronounce you Husband and Wife. What God has therefore joined together let no one separate.

You may kiss the bride.

(Groom's First Name) and (Bride's First Name), at the conclusion of this service you will be signing a marriage license required by this state. This license has to be signed by the officiating servant of the court and two witnesses all for legal purposes. But far greater than this and prior to the signing of such a document, you have expressed a desire to place your signatures on this Covenant Marriage Certificate which will stand as a witness to all those who enter your home that your marriage covenant before God supercedes any and all licensing of the court.

(Groom's First Name) and (Bride's First Name), do you wish to affirm your Covenant Marriage by signing this Covenant Marriage Certificate? "We do."

Present the Covenant Marriage Certificate to be signed by the couple and witnessed by the Best Man and Maid of Honor.

Having signed this covenant, not only have you provide a tangible witness to your belief about marriage you have joined legions of couples across the nation and around the world in affirming the importance of a covenant marriage relationship

[Bride and Groom turn to face the congregation.]

Before I present to you Mr. and Mrs. (Groom's and Bride's First Name) (Groom's Last Name) I have a few questions to ask you on their behalf.

MINISTER TO THE CONGREGATION:

MINISTER: As (Groom's first Name) & (Bride's first Name), have committed themselves to God's Covenant of Marriage, will those of you who bear witness to this affirmation, encourage and support them in their life in God's kingdom? If so answer, "We will."

CONGREGATION: We will.

MINISTER: Will you stand by them in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, and be true and loyal to God in your support of their covenant relationship, so long as they both shall live? If so answer, “We will.”

CONGREGATION: We will.

MINISTER: Do you affirm that marriage, as God ordains it, is a covenant relationship through which He expresses His love relationship with them as individuals? If so answer, “We do.”

CONGREGATION: We do.

MINISTER: Will you seek to gain a better understanding of covenant marriage for yourself thus providing a stronger family for this couple that stands before you today? If so answer, “We will.”

CONGREGATION: We will.

MINISTER: On behalf of these witnesses here, (Best Man’s Name) and (Maid of Honor’s Name) will now sign the covenant statement. (Or, you may say: “(Groom’s First Name) and (Bride’s First Name) , ask you to affirm your covenant with them by signing your names on the back of their covenant certificate at the reception to follow.”)

MINISTER: In Philippians 4:8, Paul’s final words to the church at Philippi were, *“Finally, brother, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.”*

On behalf of (Groom’s & Bride’s First Names) our final words to you are, “Brothers and sisters, whatever is true about this marriage, whatever is noble about this marriage, whatever is right about this marriage, whatever is pure about this marriage, whatever is lovely about this marriage, whatever is admirable about this marriage--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy about this marriage—think about such things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in God, practice these things; and the God of peace will always be with you. AMEN.”

I now present to you Mr. and Mrs. (Groom’s and Bride’s First Name) (Groom’s Last Name).