

# Covenant Marriage Wedding Ceremony (Option Three)

WELCOME: (Please be seated)

I welcome each of you today to witness the marriage of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ take a moment to look around you and behind you at these friends and family gathered here. Every one of us is here with you to worship God, to celebrate your union, and to encourage and support you as you enter your new life together.

God has blessed you two with a powerful love for one another. You've been patient as you have waited for this day but while you waited you worked hard to prepare yourselves in every way for a happy life together. It is my personal honor to be a part of your wedding. I am very proud of you.

## *OPENING PRAYER*

Dear Heavenly Father, this is an exciting time for these two young people. All of us here desire to feel your powerful presence with us today. You have wonderfully made us to unite with one special person whom you have made to be our complement, our soul mate, our life mate. In your time, you arranged for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to find each other. Today they come desiring to be united as one. Pour out your blessing on all of us this hour and especially on the marriage of these two special people. In Jesus name, Amen.

## *THE GIVING OF THE BRIDE*

Who gives this bride in marriage?  
Bride's Father, "Her mother and I."

## *THE STATEMENT OF MARRIAGE*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, what images come to mind when you hear the word marriage? You probably picture loved ones or friends who are married – perhaps your parents. You may envision the two of you. How did God see marriage when he created it for mankind?

In the church marriage is most often seen as an institution. Marriage is understood as having been instituted by God. It was his design and plan for the human race. In creation, God declared, "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him." It was God who brought Eve to Adam after creating her, in effect pronouncing the first marriage union. In the New Testament, the husband and wife are said to be "joined together" by God. Jesus is seen as sanctioning marriage by his attendance at the marriage in Cana in Galilee. Marriage is a God-given institution created and blessed for our benefit.

As a Body of Believers, we hold to the belief that God views marriage as a covenant. In the Bible, marriage is spoken of as a covenant and therefore we accept this view as our own.

A covenant is the most solemn binding relationship into which two parties can enter. As a holy covenant made in the name of God, Christian marriage is a freely chosen, lifelong, exclusive relationship between the husband and wife under the authority of God. Marriage is not contract but a covenant. It is important to note the difference between a covenant and a contract. A covenant is based on trust and selflessness between parties; a contract is based on distrust and self-interest. A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility/ a contract is based on limited liability. A covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur. A contract can be voided by mutual consent.

How strong is the bond of the marriage covenant? The marital bond is to be one of total commitment, complete faithfulness, selflessness, and permanence. Established and blessed by God, the marriage covenant is not to be broken. It is to be honored among all people. The Bible says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, today you must leave your parents and cleave to the spouse God has given you. With your new spouse you will experience the strongest of all human bonds – the covenant of marriage.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, are you ready now to be joined in this covenant of marriage?

Say: We are

### *THE VOWS*

The vows you are about to make are the most important pledges you will ever make to one another. I pray that you will remain faithful to the promises you make today all the days of your lives.

(GROOM'S NAME), believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman, do you vow to God, to \_\_\_\_\_, your family, and your community, to remain steadfast in selfless and unconditional love for her and will you always seek reconciliation in times of trial? Will you remain sexually pure in mind and body while purposefully growing personally and spiritually in your covenant marriage relationship?

(HUSBAND, "I Will")

(BRIDE'S NAME), believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be a lifelong fruitful relationship between a man and a woman, do you vow to God, to \_\_\_\_\_, your family, and our community to remain steadfast in selfless and unconditional love for him and will you always seek reconciliation in times of trial? Will

you remain sexually pure in mind and body while purposefully growing personally and spiritually in your covenant marriage relationship?

(BRIDE, "I Will")

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ face each other and repeat these covenantal vows after me.

(GROOM'S NAME), repeat after me.

"I, (HUSBAND), enter into this covenant of marriage with you, (WIFE)./ I promise always to love you as my wife/ and to completely give myself/ and all that I have to you./ I pledge to care for you/ in sickness or in health./ I will honor and cherish you/ all the days of my life,/ whether our life circumstances/ are better or worse, richer or poorer./ I will strive to live before you/ a life of faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

(BRIDE'S NAME) it's your turn.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, enter into this covenant of marriage with you, \_\_\_\_\_./ I promise always to love you as my husband/ and to completely give myself/ and all that I have to you./ I pledge to care for you/ in sickness or in health./ I will honor and cherish you/ all the days of my life,/ whether our life circumstances/ are better or worse, richer or poorer./ I will strive to live before you/ a life of faith and trust in Jesus Christ."

### *THE RINGS*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, you have shared beautiful vows. You will now exchange rings as symbols of these vows of faith and love. A wedding ring says, "I love one person more dearly than all others. I am committed as a life partner to this person." Let your wedding ring, therefore, from this time forward, remind you of the gift of God you have in your mate and the power of Christ you have in your marriage.

(HUSBAND), place the ring on her finger and repeat after me.

"\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring/ as a symbol of my commitment to you/ and, thereby, seal this covenant of marriage."

(WIFE), place the ring on his finger and repeat after me.

"\_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring/ as a symbol of my commitment to you/ and, thereby, seal this covenant of marriage."

*Bell and flute duet begins*

### *THE CANDLES*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ will light the unity candle and return to kneel at the benches.

*PRAYER*

Heavenly Father, we have felt your presence in this place. Your new work is set to begin as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are uniting as husband and wife. May the days and years ahead find them serving you with excitement and faithfulness. May they always experience the blessing of your presence in their lives as individuals and as a couple. We pray for your provision and your protection over them and for their witness in the world of your unconditional love. In Jesus name, AMEN

*CEREMONIAL SIGNING OF THE COVENANT CERTIFICATE*

(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."

[The couple signs the Covenant Marriage Certificate.]

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.

*(\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, turn and face the congregation.)*

*TO THE CONGREGATION*

"Dear friends and family, as God has joined this couple together in His Covenant of Marriage through this Community of Faith, will you encourage and support them in their life in God's kingdom? Will you stand by them in sickness and in health, in adversity and prosperity, be true and loyal to God in support of this covenant relationship holding them accountable to their covenant, so long as they both shall live? If so answer, "We will."

On behalf of these witnesses here (Best Man) and (Maid of Honor) will now sign the covenant statement. (Or, 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.")

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."

*THE PRONOUNCEMENT*

Since \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have entered into this covenant before God and this Family, by the authority of God, the affirmation of this Community of Faith, and the laws of the state of \_\_\_\_\_, I declare that they are husband and wife.

*(HUSBAND), you may kiss your wife.*

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, Mr. and Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_.