

Wedding and Marriage



Preparing for a Gospel-transformed Marriage

Our society has made it easier to GET MARRIED than to get a driver's license...and the effects of this apathy and complacency are very apparent in the dramatic rise in divorces, separations and unhappy lives. Many couples enter marriage with high expectations, planning more for a perfect wedding day than for their lives together.

We do not offer "perfect marriage certificates," nor are we so foolish as to think that because you hold your wedding here, it will be blessed of God. We are not in the business of marrying people, but in the business of encouraging people to focus their lives on Jesus Christ. We believe that as you obey God's Word and apply His principles to your lives, you will experience His blessing. Our ministers are not glorified "*justices of the peace*," but are men called of God to uphold His Word (the Bible).

We believe that marriage is a once in a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman. We believe that this relationship should grow better with age. We offer a loving, supportive Christian environment where you can grow and mature with many others who share your concerns.

Although marriage outside the church is recognized in society, the marriage ceremony conducted within the church is a special way for believers to give public confession of their Christian faith. A marriage ceremony conducted in our church, therefore, is not merely a ceremony to honor two people in love, but is a worship service with public testimony to God's matchless love and providence at work in your lives and in your relationship.

Our Covenant and Counsel

We are serious in our desire to do more than perform a wedding. As you prepare for the special day and the vows you will be taking to love each other until death, we want to help you focus on your relationship as it is and provide you with tools to build it.

We have established the following guidelines that are the result of our convictions. We will agree to marry you on the basis that you as a couple, agree to meet each of the following criteria.

1. The couple must be members or regular attendees at First Baptist Church of Hampton Falls.
2. Application must be made at least four months prior to the wedding service. This is in order to allow sufficient time for all premarital counseling and scheduling.
3. The couple must agree to meet with the minister initially in order to determine the advisability of the marriage. After the initial meeting, the minister will schedule at least two other meetings with the couple. At these sessions, the ceremony will be planned and Biblical principles of marriage will be discussed.

4. A textbook, **Preparing for Marriage**, by Dennis Rainey, will be given to each couple - a gift of the church. We recommend that you answer the questions individually on your own and then discuss them as a couple.

5. Special Assignments:

- a. Assignments to interview parents with questions listed on pages 80-88 of *Preparing for Marriage*.

- b. Assignments to interview one mentor couple with questions listed on pages 157-160 of *Preparing for Marriage*.

- c. Assignment to counsel with a counselor for two sessions. You may make a choice between two Christian counselors. Carlotta Shanahan ((603) 964-3191 or Richard Conant (207) 475-4156 Session 1 will cover topics including expectations, relational skills, family background, red flags, etc. Session 2 covers conflict resolution and the sexual relationship. The total cost for both sessions will be \$100. The church will agree to pay half with the couple paying the other half. (If there is financial hardship, the couple should feel free to let the pastor know so that assistance may be given.) The couple must make their own arrangements for counseling.

- d. Assignment to meet with a financial counselor for one hour and a half session. It will be up to you to contact Ray Jeffs, a Christian CPA at (603) 758-1040. The session is free and will discuss money management, budgeting, and spending habits following Biblical principles

6. Following the initial meeting with the pastor in which the advisability of the marriage will be considered, the pastor will plan to cover three Bible passages on marriage: Genesis 1-3 (Foundations of Marriage), Ephesians 4: 17-5: 7 (Conflict Resolution in Marriage; and Ephesians 5: 15-6-4 (Responsibilities and Roles in Marriage). Specific plans for the wedding ceremony will be discussed as well.

7. Between now and the date of the wedding, the couple must attend church regularly.
8. If the couple is living together, and they want to have a traditional church wedding, they must agree to separate between now and the date of the wedding.
9. Since the wedding ceremony is to be viewed as a time of seriousness before God, we expect the couple to take great care in their choice of music and conduct to assure that it is suitable and worship-inducing.
10. All weddings must be under the direction of a First Baptist Church of Hampton Falls pastor.
11. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on church property. This includes champagne and *nonalcoholic* champagne following the wedding, both inside and outside on church grounds.

The Rehearsal

1. The rehearsal will normally be scheduled a day before the wedding ceremony and will be under the direction of the pastor.
2. Before the rehearsal, the couple will have provided the pastor with a list of the entire wedding party and reviewed with him the ceremony itself.

Photographs

Ushers should inform friends with cameras and professional photographers that no flash pictures are to be taken in the sanctuary after the ceremony begins. This does not include the processional and recessional. The party is welcome to pose for pictures following the service. This helps to maintain a sense of reverence and respects the seriousness of the vows being shared.

Fees

1. The sanctuary use suggested donation is \$250.00, for non-members, due at the rehearsal.
2. The minister's suggested stipend is \$350, due at the rehearsal.
3. The organist should be attained by the couple. (Any other professionals, such as the florist, photographer, etc. should be attained by the couple as well.)
4. The custodian's fee is \$75.00, due at the rehearsal.
5. The sound technician's fee is \$50.00 (depending on demands), due at the rehearsal.

General Information

1. The marriage license shall be the responsibility of the couple and should be in the possession of the minister no later than the time of the rehearsal.
2. The church building should be respected as the House of God.
3. If you desire to be married in our church under the guidelines above, please call the church to set up a time for an initial meeting. Also, please fill out the enclosed questionnaires and mail to the church prior to your first interview.

Additional Resources to Help With Marriage

A PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Dennis Rainey, [PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE](#)

AN OVERVIEW OF MARRIAGE

Tim Keller, [THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE](#).

UNDERSTANDING OF RELATIONSHIPS IN MARRIAGE

Dave Harvey, [WHEN SINNERS SAY "I DO."](#)

SEX IN MARRIAGE

John Piper, SEX AND THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST
Ed Wheat, INTENDED FOR PLEASURE

First Baptist Church of Hampton Falls

3 Lincoln Avenue
Hampton Falls, New Hampshire
(603) 926-3724

WEDDING APPLICATION

In order to assist the pastoral counsel in being relevant and specific to your situation, we ask that prior to your first meeting with him, you provide the following information:

Date _____

1. Name (**male**) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Date of Birth _____

Have you been married previously? _____ If so, when was your divorce final? _____

Are there children from your previous marriage? _____ Ages _____ Do you have physical custody? _____

2. Name (**female**) _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Date of Birth _____

Have you been married previously? _____ If so, when was your divorce final? _____

Are there children from your previous marriage? _____ Ages _____ Do you have physical custody? _____

Are you willing to discuss your previous marriage with a counselor/pastor from HFFBC? Yes _____ No _____

3. How long have you been dating? _____ Engaged? _____ Are you currently living together? _____

4. What church would you consider to be your home church? _____ How long has you been attending there? _____
5. Proposed date of wedding _____
6. Officiating pastor requested: Pastor Winnes _____ Pastor White _____ (Please check one.)
8. Are there any significant issues we should be aware of?
9. Are you willing to meet the expectations listed in "Our Covenant and Counsel?" Yes _____ No _____

Pre-Marital Questionnaire

The following questions serve two purposes: First, some are to help you and your future spouse start thinking through some of the issues you might have taken for granted before you begin marriage counseling. Second, in preparation for our meeting together, you may want to think about some of the things we will be talking about.

1. Why do you want to get married?
2. How do you know this person you have chosen to marry is a good choice for you?
3. What would you say love is? How would you define love?
4. Since no person is perfect, if you could, what would you change about this person?
5. When you have had conflict with each other, what has it been about? What have you done to resolve those conflicts?
6. Is your family in favor of your marriage to each other?
7. How did you meet? When did you know this person was someone you wanted to marry?
8. In what way has this person affected your spiritual life?
10. What are your greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses personally?
11. What are your intended partner's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
12. What do you think is meant by the command, "Wives, submit to your husbands." Eph. 5: 22
13. Why do you think the Bible commands wives to submit to their husbands but does not command husbands to submit to their wives?
14. What do you think is meant by the command, "Husbands, love your wives?" Eph. 5: 25
15. Why do you think the Bible commands husbands to love their wives, but does not command wives to love their husbands?

16. What does it mean when the Bible says, "For the husband is the head of the wife?"
Eph. 5: 23