



# Holy Matrimony

# Marriage Service Structure



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# Welcome

*Before the Bride enters: Groom & Best Man standing sanctuary step  
Bride and wedding party (including Father of the Bride  
meet Vicar at church entrance.*

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you

All: **And also with you.**

*This sentence may be used*

Priest: God is love, and those who live in love live in God  
and God lives in them.

1 John 4.16

## Hymn (#1)

### The Marriage Preface

*The Marriage Preface is a summary of Christian marriage; what you are both  
about to undertake.  
It is therefore an important part of the marriage service.*

Priest: We have come together  
in the presence of God,  
to witness the marriage of  
*Bride* and *Groom*,  
to ask his blessing on them,  
and to share in their joy.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself  
a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee,  
and through his Spirit he is with us now.  
The Bible teaches us that marriage  
is a gift of God in creation  
and a means of his grace,  
a holy mystery in which  
man and woman become one flesh.  
It is God's purpose that,  
as husband and wife  
give themselves to each other in love  
throughout their lives,  
they shall be united in that love  
as Christ is united with his Church.  
Marriage is given,  
that husband and wife  
may comfort and help each other,  
living faithfully together  
in need and in plenty,  
in sorrow and in joy.

Marriage is given,  
that with delight and tenderness  
they may know each other in love,  
and, through the joy of their bodily union,  
may strengthen the union

of their hearts and lives.

Marriage is given  
as the foundation of family life  
in which children may be born and nurtured  
in accordance with God's will,  
to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife  
belong to one another,  
and they begin a new life together  
in the community.

Marriage is a way of life  
that all should honour;  
and it must not be undertaken  
carelessly, lightly, or selfishly,  
but reverently, responsibly,  
and after serious thought.

This is the way of life,  
created and hallowed by God,  
that *Groom* and *Bride* are now to begin. They will  
each give their consent to the other; they will join  
hands  
and exchange solemn vows,  
and in token of this  
they will [each] give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this their wedding day  
we pray with them, that,  
strengthened and guided by God,  
they may fulfil his purpose  
for the whole of their earthly life together.

## The Declarations

*The minister says to the congregation*

Priest: First, I am required to ask  
anyone present who knows a reason  
why these persons may not lawfully marry,  
to declare it now.

*The minister says to the couple*

Priest: **Bride** and **Groom**,  
The vows you are about to take  
are to be made in the presence of God,  
who is judge of all  
and knows all the secrets of our hearts;  
therefore if either of you knows a reason  
why you may not lawfully marry,  
you must declare it now.

*The minister says to the bridegroom*

Priest: **(Groom)**, will you take **(Bride)**  
to be your wife?  
Will you love her, comfort her,  
honour and protect her,  
and, forsaking all others,  
be faithful to her  
as long as you both shall live?

Groom: **I will.**

*The minister says to the bride*

Priest: **(Bride)**, will you take **(Groom)**  
to be your husband?  
Will you love him, comfort him,  
honour and protect him,  
and, forsaking all others,  
be faithful to him  
as long as you both shall live?

Bride: **I will.**

*The minister explains to the congregation that they are involved in this service too.*

*They have a duty to pray, encourage and support Bride and Groom throughout their married life.*

Priest: Will you, the families and friends  
of **Groom** and **Bride**,  
support and uphold them  
in their marriage now  
and in the years to come?

All: **We will.**

## The Collect Prayer for the Marriage Service

Priest: *(Let us pray)* God our Father,  
from the beginning  
you have blessed creation with abundant life.  
Pour out your blessings  
upon *Bride* and *Groom*,  
that they may be joined  
in mutual love and companionship,  
in holiness and commitment to each other.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your  
Son, who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

*All Sit, couple return to their chairs*

## Readings

*At least one reading from the Bible is used.*

## Sermon

## Hymn (#2)

*The congregation stands  
Couple return to the chancel step and stand facing the minister.*

## The Vows

Priest: Who brings this woman to be married to this man ?

B Father: **I do**

*The Bride's Father gives away the bride.*

Priest: *Bride* and *Groom*, I now invite you to join hands  
and make your vows,  
in the presence of God and his people.

*The bride and bridegroom face each other .*

Priest: I, *Groom* take you, *Bride*, (each line read aloud first by priest)  
to be my wife, (pause)  
to have and to hold (pause)  
from this day forward; (pause)  
for better, for worse, (pause)  
for richer, for poorer, (pause)  
in sickness and in health, (pause)  
to love and to cherish, (pause)  
till death us do part; (pause)  
according to God's holy law. (pause)  
In the presence of God (pause)  
I make this vow. (pause)

*To the bride, the priest says*

Priest: I, *Bride* take you, *Groom*, (each line read aloud first by priest)  
to be my husband, (pause)  
to have and to hold (pause)  
from this day forward; (pause)  
for better, for worse, (pause)  
for richer, for poorer, (pause)  
in sickness and in health, (pause)  
to love and to cherish (and to obey) (pause)  
till death us do part; (pause)  
according to God's holy law. (pause)  
In the presence of God (pause)  
I make this vow. (pause)

# The Giving of Rings

*The minister receives the ring(s) from the best man.  
The priest then blesses the rings*

Priest: Heavenly Father,  
by your (+) blessing  
let these rings be to *Groom* and *Bride*  
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,  
to remind them  
of the vow and covenant  
which they have made this day  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

*The Best Man and the Bride's father return to their seats.  
The priest turns to the **GROOM** who repeats the words of the priest saying:*

Priest:	<i>Bride</i> , I give you this ring	(pause)
	as a sign of our marriage.	(pause)
	With my body I honour you,	(pause)
	all that I am I give to you,	(pause)
	and all that I have I share with you,	(pause)
	within the love of God,	(pause)
	Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	(pause)

*The priest turns to the bride and invites her to repeat each line.*

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

## The Proclamation

*The minister addresses the congregation*

Priest: In the presence of God,  
and before this congregation,  
*Groom* and *Bride*  
have given their consent  
and made their marriage vows to each other.  
They have declared their marriage  
by the joining of hands  
and by the giving and receiving of rings.  
I therefore proclaim  
that they are husband and wife.

*The minister joins their right hands together.*

*The minister wraps his stole once around their joined hands.*

*The minister then lifts their hands aloft and says:*

Priest: Those whom God has joined together let no one  
put asunder.

# The Blessing of the Marriage

*The husband and wife kneel at the sanctuary step and are blessed.*

Priest: Blessed are you, O Lord our God,  
for you have created joy and gladness,  
pleasure and delight,  
love, peace and fellowship.  
Pour out the abundance of your blessing  
upon *Bride* and *Groom*  
in their new life together.  
Let their love for each other  
be a seal upon their hearts,  
and a crown upon their heads.  
Bless them in their work and in their  
companionship; awake and asleep,  
in joy and in sorrow,  
in life and in death.

Finally, in your mercy,  
bring them to that banquet  
where your saints feast for ever  
in your heavenly home.  
We ask this through  
Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

# Registration of the Marriage

*The priest informs the congregation that the marriage will be registered now according to civic law*

## Prayers

**Priest:** Faithful God,  
holy and eternal,  
source of life and spring of love,  
we thank and praise you  
for bringing *Bride* and *Groom* to this day,  
and we pray for them.

*silence*

**Priest:** May their marriage be life-giving and life-long,  
enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace; may they bring comfort and confidence to each other in faithfulness and trust.

*silence*

**Priest:** May the hospitality of their home bring refreshment and joy to all around them; may their love overflow to neighbours in need and embrace those in distress.

*silence*

**Priest:** May they discern in your word  
order and purpose for their lives;  
and may the power of your Holy Spirit  
lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.

*silence*

**All:** May they nurture their family with devotion,  
see their children grow in body, mind and spirit  
and come at last to the end of their lives  
with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of  
heaven.

*silence*

**Priest:** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All:** **Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
forever and ever.  
Amen.**

*A hymn may be sung.*

## **Dismissal**

**Priest:** God the Father,  
God the Son,  
God the Holy Spirit,  
(+)bless, preserve and keep you;  
the Lord mercifully grant you  
the riches of his grace,  
that you may please him  
both in body and soul and,  
living together in faith and love,  
may receive the blessings of eternal life.

**All:** **Amen.**

## Selection of Readings

### *Genesis 1.26-28*

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

### *Song of Solomon 2.10-13; 8.6,7*

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one,  
and come away;

for now the winter is past,  
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;  
the time of singing has come,  
and the voice of the turtle dove  
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,  
and the vines are in blossom;  
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,  
and come away.'

Set me as a seal upon your heart,  
as a seal upon your arm;

for love is strong as death,  
passion fierce as the grave.  
Its flashes are flashes of fire,  
a raging flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love,  
neither can floods drown it.  
If one offered for love  
all the wealth of one's house,  
it would be utterly scorned.

### ***Romans 12.1,2,9-13***

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

### ***Romans 15.1-3,5-7,13***

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one

voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **1 Corinthians 13**

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*Ephesians 5.21-end*

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind - yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

*John 15.1-8*

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.'

### ***John 15.9-17***

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'

*Mark 10.6-9,13-16*

Jesus said, 'From the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

## Other suggested readings:

**Jeremiah 31.31-34**

**Romans 7.1,2,9-18**

**Romans 8.31-35,37-39**

**Ephesians 3.14-end**

**Ephesians 4.1-6**

**Philippians 4.4-9**

**Colossians 3.12-17**

**1 John 3.18-end**

**1 John 4.7-12**

**Matthew 5.1-10**

**Matthew 7.21,24-end**

**John 2.1-11**

**Psalms 67**

**Psalms 121**

**Psalms 128**

**Psalms 127**