

A CONTEMPORARY WEDDING CEREMONY

Opening Words

Dear family and friends -we are gathered here today to celebrate the marriage of _____ and _____.

Since time immemorial or long ago, people have performed ceremonies to mark a transition, a change of status.

Today we gather for the happiest of ceremonies – the change of status from single individuals to a married couple.

Traditionally, that change is indicated by passing the brides hand from her family to her husband-to-be.

Who brings this bride to be married today?

The Opening Prayer

" Dear heavenly Father, our hearts are filled with great happiness on _____ and _____'s wedding day, as they come before You pledging their hearts and lives to one another.

Grant that they may be ever true and loving, living together in such a way as to never bring shame or heartbreak into their marriage.

Temper their hearts with kindness and understanding, rid them of all pretense of jealousy.

Help them to remember to be each other's sweetheart, helpmate, friend and guide, so that together they may meet the cares and problems of life more bravely.

And with the passage of time, may the home they are creating today, truly be a place of love and harmony, where your spirit is ever present.

Bless this union we pray, and walk beside _____ and _____ throughout all their lives together. We ask these things in Jesus name; AMEN

Congregation is seated

Today is the day that _____ and _____ will formally and publicly make their promises to one another.

Although this is indeed a high point, *marriage is a journey not a destination*. Marriage is more than any one single event or promise.

It is a series of decisions that have been made, and will continue to be made over and over again, every day, that shows each of their care and concern for the one whom they each love most in the world.

Marriage is a promise that is renewed daily through a couple's actions and a responsibility taken on in the spirit of faith, and hope, and love, that brings comfort in times of sadness and heightens our greatest joy.

Declaration of Intent

_____ and _____, may the promises you make this day live always in your hearts and in your home so that all which you share now deepen and grow through the years, leading you through a lifetime of happiness.

A wedding is more than a celebration of the Love which lives in our Bride and Groom's hearts today. It reaches into the future and proclaims their intentions for that which tomorrow shall hold.

A couple who wed are joined not only by the mutual affection and love they share, but also by their hopes, dreams and by their promises of what will be...

The promises and vows they make this day shall guide them into their common future. I will ask you now if you are prepared to make these promises.

Godly Love in Marriage

_____ and _____, in just a few minutes you will publicly express your love, & pledge yourselves to each other for the rest of your life in the sacred covenant of marriage.

I don't know when you first met each other, or the circumstances involved. But I am sure that much has happened since that day. Obviously, during this time you have learned to love & appreciate each other.

There have been acts of thoughtfulness & words of encouragement. You have gained a respect for each other's qualities, strength of resolve, trustworthiness, & kindness.

I feel confident that during this time you have grown & matured in your relationship with each other. And if you remain faithful to the vows you are about to make, your life together will be a blessing both to you & to those around you.

There is a very beautiful passage of Scripture that I believe provides great advice for those who are entering a marriage covenant. Indeed, it contains sound advice for all of us to follow in our daily walk of life.

It is found in 1 Corinthians 13, in what is often called "The Love Chapter of the Bible." But as beautiful as it is, it is not about romantic love. The love of which Paul speaks is of a behavior we exercise even when we do not feel loving or lovable.

The Meaning of Marriage - I Cor. 13: 4-13

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends...so faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (I Cor. 13: 4-13)

"Marriage has the power to set the course of your life as a whole. If your marriage is strong, even if all the circumstances in your life around you are filled with trouble and weakness, it won't matter. You will be able to move out into the world in strength."

— Timothy Keller, The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God

"When God brought the first man his spouse, he brought him not just a lover but the friend his heart had been seeking. Proverbs 2:17 speaks of one's spouse as your "allup," a unique word that the lexicons define as your "special confidant" or "best friend." The Bible, however, without ignoring the importance of romance, puts great emphasis on marriage as companionship."

— Timothy Keller, The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God

Vows

Groom: _____ take _____ 's right hand and repeat after me.
_____, I choose you to be my wife.

I promise freely from this day forward
To be worthy of your trust and deserving of your confidence;
To be generous with my time, my energy and my love;
To be patient with you and with myself,
To trust you; To be devoted to you and our life together.
These things I pledge before you, our friends, and our family.

Bride: _____ take _____ 's right hand and repeat after me.
_____, I choose you to be my husband.

I promise freely from this day forward
To be worthy of your trust and deserving of your confidence;
To be generous with my time, my energy and my love;
To be patient with you and with myself,
To trust you; To be devoted to you and our life together.
These things I pledge before you, our friends, and our family.

Unity –

Exchanging of the Rings (You will have rings before ceremony begins)

Minister: **Let us pray.** Bless oh Lord, the giving and receiving of these rings.

May _____ and _____ abide in Your peace and grow in their knowledge of Your presence through their loving union. May the seamless circle of these rings continue to be the symbol of their endless love and serve to remind them of the holy covenant of marriage, to be faithful, loving, and kind to each other. Dear God, may they live in Your grace and be forever true to this union. Amen."

The weddings rings are a symbol of longevity in the Marriage covenant.

The circle of the rings symbolizes a never ending circle of love and commitment which you are making.

Always see the best in each other and each day that you are together, let it be full of the beauty of the never ending love you have for each other through the symbols of these rings.

As a token of your vows, you will give and receive the rings.

Minister To Groom: _____, you will give this ring and repeat after me:
_____, take this ring as a seal upon the marriage vows I have spoken and , as you wear it, may it be a reminder of how much I love you, not only on this precious day, but every single day of your life.”

Minister To Bride: _____, you will give this ring and repeat after me:
_____, take this ring as a seal upon the marriage vows I have spoken and , as you wear it, may it be a reminder of how much I love you, not only on this precious day, but every single day of your life.”

The Pronouncement

Having pledged your faith in, and love to each other, and having sealed your solemn vows, looking to God for guidance and direction. Let all men take care in the sight of God that these vows shall ever remain sacred.

The Kiss

Minister: _____, you may now kiss your Bride.

Presentation of the Couple

Minister: Ladies and gentlemen it is now my privilege to introduce to you, Mr. and Mrs. _____.

Parents and grandparents to be ushered out!