

# **WEDDING CEREMONY - RULES & GUIDELINES**

## **HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH**

Congratulations to both of you on having made one of the most significant decisions of your lives! While we believe making Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior is the most important life-changing decision you can make, choosing the one with whom you will spend the rest of your life in the sacred covenant of marriage is very significant also. Now that you have chosen to commit yourselves to one another, we encourage you to make and keep Christ the center of your engagement, your marriage and your home.

At Household of Faith, we are committed to working with you to see that your wedding places God at its center and is worshipful, memorable and personal. May God continue to bless you as you look to Him for guidance regarding this important event.

### **THE ENGAGEMENT COVENANT**

Believing that marriage is a holy and sacred gift from God, it is our desire for your marriage to be a blessing to you and to God. We believe this is best accomplished by living by biblical teachings. In this regard, Pastors reserve the right to decline officiating a wedding if couples do not agree with the "engagement covenant" which includes the following:

1. A Covenant of Belief – Believing that God has intended Christians to marry only Christians, we would hope that both bride and groom individually come to an understanding and acceptance of Christ’s sacrificial death, and that commitment to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be made evident. (11 Corinthians 6:14-16; Romans 10:9-10)
  
2. A Covenant of Purity – Believing that the sexual relationship has been designed and intended for marriage, we ask that you agree to abstain from any sexual relationship until after the wedding. Furthermore, believing that living arrangements that include cohabitation prior to the wedding is a compromise of your Christian witness, we ask that you agree to separate living arrangements until the wedding.  
(1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13)
  
3. A Covenant of Faithfulness – Believing that the Church is God’s Greenhouse to grow strong marriages, we ask that you find a place of involvement in His Church, the Body of Christ, and pursue a lifestyle of faithfulness to your church family. (Hebrews 10:19-25)

## **GUIDELINES**

- Due to the time availability at Household of Faith, the bride, groom or their parents need to attend Household of Faith.
- To begin the reservation process, a *Wedding Application*, along with the appropriate fees must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator. These forms and applications are available at [www.hofchurch.com](http://www.hofchurch.com).
- Please call the church office at (225) 644-3111x10, for contact information for Wedding Coordinators.
- Reservations will not be held without an application and fees paid.
- Reservations must be made at least 3 months prior to the wedding date.
- Reservations will be confirmed as soon as (1) they have been scheduled on the church calendar. (2) The minister has been assigned to officiate the ceremony. Our Senior Pastor reserves the option of choosing an Associate Pastor to stand in for him if he's unable to officiate the ceremony. (Note: The church office will assign a Pastor to officiate the ceremony.)
- The Wedding Coordinator will notify you when your wedding date has been scheduled on the church calendar and a minister has been assigned.

- Couples will be required to participate in the Marriage Savers Curriculum called Foccus, a 12-week discussion/counseling program. This survey will enable couples to explore aspects of their relationship. It is your responsibility to contact the church office to set up a survey session. This survey can be done online and will be arranged through our Couples Small Group Leaders who do our pre-marital counseling sessions.
- After the Foccus Marriage survey has been completed, you will be contacted to schedule your pre-marital sessions.
- Though a particular time and date will be reserved for your wedding, please be aware that your confirmation is not complete until a minister has been assigned to officiate your wedding.
- All weddings will be performed by a HOF Pastor. Of course, we will welcome the participation of another minister, if you desire. The Wedding Coordinator will conduct your wedding rehearsal and will facilitate the ceremony on your wedding day. Household of Faith Pastors are not required to attend rehearsals.
- Household of Faith Pastors will need to approve script for the wedding ceremony. It is the final decision of the Pastor to allow extra scripture readings, poems and etcetera to the wedding

ceremony. The assigned Pastor will arrange to meet with you to discuss specifics concerning your ceremony.

All couples getting married at Household of Faith are required to fulfill the following preparation steps:

1. Complete the Marriage Application & submit it to Wedding Coordinator.
2. Meet with the Marriage Small Group Leader for pre-marital counseling. You will be responsible for contacting the church office to arrange appointment times.
3. Covenant marriage declaration (see Covenant Marriage Act).

## **FACILITIES FOR YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY**

- Please note there is a specific selection of ceremony times offered here at Household of Faith. Please consult with the Wedding Coordinator on these times. Due to seasonal demands on the facilities here, weddings are not scheduled on the major holiday weekends of Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years. The last three weekends in May and most of December will not be available due to demands on the facilities each year.

- Our church facility is available for weddings on Friday evenings or Saturday with the last start time being at 3:00 PM.
- A room for the bride will be provided two hours before your wedding and must be cleared of all belongings directly after the wedding ceremony.
- Please help us by reminding your wedding party that smoking and alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church property.
- Bride will be responsible for providing additional ceremony supplies if needed such as Unity candles and communion supplies.
- Rice, confetti, birdseed, flower petals (silk petals are permitted) or any other material that might be thrown or dropped at the wedding may not be used.
- Due to the nature of our illustrated sermon series, sets or props may be located on the stage at any time during the year. HOF cannot guarantee a clear stage. HOF ministry services take precedence over all other functions. Sets or props may not be altered or moved.

## **YOUR HOF WEDDING COORDINATOR**

- You will have approximately three meetings with your HOF Wedding Coordinator.
  - The first meeting will be to gather basic contact information, to view the sanctuary, to go over the Household of Faith Wedding

Policy and Guidelines, and to review the Wedding Application.

- The second meeting is for completing the Wedding Ceremony Information form and to submit the appropriate fees. This form is necessary in order to properly conduct the Wedding Rehearsal and fees are necessary in going forward with wedding plans.
- The third meeting is also your Wedding Rehearsal. The Marriage License is to be given to the Wedding Coordinator at this time.
- Your Wedding Coordinator will contact you to confirm the time and date of your meetings, rehearsal and wedding.
- Your Wedding Coordinator will conduct your wedding rehearsal on behalf of the minister marrying you, and will facilitate the ceremony on your wedding day.
- Your Wedding Coordinator will pass your updated contact information to the Church office.

## **THE REHEARSAL**

- Your wedding rehearsal will be scheduled prior to your wedding date and conducted by the Wedding Coordinator.
- Your rehearsal must begin and end on time.

- Please give your Marriage License to your HOF Wedding Coordinator on the night of the rehearsal.
- It is very important that all members of your wedding party attend the rehearsal and that they arrive on time. If you have ushers in addition to groomsmen, please ask them to be present at the rehearsal. Parents of the Bride and Groom are also encouraged to attend.
- Since time is limited, Vocalists and Instrumentalists must contact the Wedding Coordinator to arrange a rehearsal time before the wedding rehearsal.

## **WEDDING MUSIC & PRESENTATIONS**

- Your Wedding Coordinator will help you plan the order of service for your wedding ceremony.
- Due to the sophisticated nature of the sound and lighting system in the Auditorium, only a HOF technician can operate them.
- As you are selecting the music for your wedding, please remember that this is a service of worship. Only music, which is suitable for a worship service, may be used. Only sacred, contemporary Christian, hymns and classical instrumental music are permitted.



- All music including song lyrics used in the wedding must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator and approved at least one month prior to your wedding.
- Projector use is available for an additional fee. This is used for video and computer presentations. Only a HOF technician can operate equipment.

## **FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS**

- Your florist will have access to the sanctuary the day of your scheduled wedding date. All flowers, pictures, and decorations must be removed immediately following the wedding ceremony. The church does not store any wedding decorations.
- The sanctuary is best accessed for unloading flowers and decorations from the North side of the building (main entrance).
- Candles must be spring-loaded or Paradise brand. Votive or drip-less candles may be used in hurricane lamps. Aisle candles are permitted in hurricane lamps only.
- In order to protect the carpet and furniture, plastic material must be placed under all floral arrangements and candles. Please be careful to

use nothing that will mark the woodwork or furniture. Nails, staples, adhesives, etc. are not permitted. Pew markers must be secured with padded or plastic hooks. Please do not put tape on the carpet.

- The church facility and furniture may not be altered or moved. This includes all stage sets.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO-TAPING**

- As you make plans with your photographer, remember that your wedding is a worship service and nothing should distract you or your guests from worshipping the Lord.
- All photos taken after the wedding ceremony must be completed within 30 minutes following the conclusion of the ceremony.
- It is your responsibility to inform your vendors of the rules in this policy that apply to them.
- Those persons involved in videotaping and photographing your wedding should be dressed appropriately for the wedding and must contact the Wedding Coordinator prior to your Wedding Day for further instruction and details.

## **REMINDERS**

**The local church is called ‘the Bride of Christ’ and we ask that you treat it with reverence and respect. Members of the wedding party and guests must abide by the following guidelines, which will be strictly enforced. Any breach of these rules will result in the immediate removal of the wedding party and guests from the church campus.**

- Use of inappropriate language is prohibited.
- Proper dress is required at the rehearsal and the wedding.
- The use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs, or items resembling such is strictly prohibited on the premises.

## FEES

- All fees must be submitted with your wedding application.
- Total Fees for a Wedding at the Household of Faith

Member - \$425.00

A member is one who faithfully attends and faithfully supports HOF with their time, talents and giving.

Because we are not specifically a wedding chapel and due to various other ministry activities, we must limit the number of weddings held at Household of Faith to only those who are members of HOF.

The above fees includes:

- Sound and Lighting
- Maintenance Personnel
- Wedding Coordinator
- Pastor's Honorarium

# **Covenant Marriage Act**

## **Contracting A Covenant Marriage**

The couple who chooses to enter onto a Covenant Marriage agrees to be bound by two serious limitations on obtaining a divorce or separation. These limitations, which do not apply to other couples married in Louisiana, are as follows:

The couple legally agrees to seek marital counseling if problems develop during the marriage;

and

The couple can only seek a divorce or legal separation for limited reasons, as explained herein.

## **DECLARATION OF INTENT**

In order to enter into a Covenant Marriage, the couple must sign a recitation that provides:

- A marriage is a agreement to live together as husband and wife forever;
- The parties have chosen each other carefully and disclosed to each other “everything which could adversely affect” the decision to marry;
- The parties have received premarital counseling;
- A commitment that if the parties experience marital difficulties they commit to take all reasonable efforts to preserve their marriage, including marital counseling; and
- The couple must also obtain premarital counseling from a priest, minister, rabbi or similar clergyman of any religious sect, or a marriage counselor.

After discussing the meaning of a Covenant Marriage with the counselor, the couple must also sign, together with an attestation by the counselor, a notarized affidavit to the effect that the counselor has discussed with them:

- The seriousness of a Covenant Marriage;
- That the commitment to the marriage is for life;
- The obligation of the couple to seek marital counseling if problems arise in their marriage; and
- The exclusive grounds for divorce or legal separation

The two documents which comprise the Declaration of Intent – the recitation and the affidavit with attestation – must be presented to the official who issues the marriage license with the couple's application for a marriage license.

## **LEGAL, SEPARATION IN A COVENANT MARRIAGE**

In order to obtain a legal separation (which is not a divorce and therefore does not end the marriage), a spouse to a Covenant Marriage must first obtain counseling and then must prove:

- adultery by the other spouse;
- commission of a felony by the other spouse and sentence of imprisonment at hard labor or death;
- abandonment by the other spouse for one year;
- physical or sexual abuse of the spouse or of a child or either spouse;
- the spouses have lived separate and apart for two years; or
- habitual intemperance (for example, alcohol or drug abuse), cruel treatment, or severe ill treatment by the other spouse.

## **DIVORCE IN A COVENANT MARRIAGE**

A marriage that is not a Covenant Marriage may be ended by divorce more easily than a Covenant Marriage. In a marriage that is not a Covenant Marriage, a spouse may get a divorce for adultery by the other spouse, conviction of a felony by the other spouse and his imprisonment at hard labor or death, or by proof that the spouses have lived separate and apart for six months before filing for divorce.

In a Covenant Marriage a spouse may get a divorce only after receiving counseling and may only get a divorce for the following reasons:

- adultery by the other spouse
- commission of a felony by the other spouse and sentence of imprisonment at hard labor or death;
- abandonment by the other spouse for one year;
- physical or sexual abuse of the spouse or of a child or either spouse;
- the spouses have lived separate and apart for two years; or
- the spouses are judicially or legally separated and have lived separate and apart since the legal separation for:
  - (a) one year and six months if there is a minor child or children of the marriage
  - (b) one year if the separation was granted for abuse of a child of either spouse;
  - (c) one year in all other cases.

This informational pamphlet outlines the consequences of entering into a Covenant Marriage under Louisiana law. LSA-R.S. 9:272, et seq.