

The Marriage Service



The History of the Marriage Service



own the centuries, not much has changed in the Marriage Service, and much of the same structure and feel is retained in the service we have today. In the Middle Ages there was more dramatic movement in the service, with most of it happening at the church door, and the couple entering church for the Wedding Mass. At the Reformation the wedding proper moved into the body of the church, and the beginning of the second part of the service was marked by the procession to the sanctuary. But the main concerns of the marriage preface (where the reasons for marriage are set out), have changed little since medieval times - Chaucer uses similar material in the Parson's Tale in 1387. Cranmer's 1549 service included 'quietness, sobriety and peace' as the ideal of Christian married life, and later social changes included those in the 1928 service (the basis for the Series I Marriage Service) making 'the causes for which matrimony was ordained' acceptable to a more refined generation, and the (optional) omission of the word 'obey' in the bride's promises.

What the Marriage Service is about.



wedding is one of life's great moments, a time of solemn commitment as well as good wishes, feasting and joy. St John tells us how Jesus shared in such an occasion at Cana, and gave there a sign of new beginnings as he turned water into wine.

Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship, as his blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and in bad, and to share in the care and upbringing of children. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, declared and celebrated in the presence of God and before witnesses.

On this their wedding day the bride and bridegroom face each other, make their promises and receive God's blessing. You are witnesses of the marriage, and express your support by your presence and your prayers. Your support does not end today: the couple will value continued encouragement in the days and years ahead of them.

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 wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

The congregation are asked to stand as the bride enters the church (music?)

THE WELCOME

The priest welcomes the bride and groom and their guests.

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

1 John 4.16

God of wonder and of joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Without you, we cannot please you;
without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.
Send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

All remain standing to sing the opening hymn.

Minister As we prepare to hear God's word
and to celebrate the marriage of N and N,
we remember our human frailty
and our need for God's help in all that we do.

As short period of silence is kept

Minister May God in his goodness forgive *us our sins*,
grant *us strength in our weakness*,
and bring *us to eternal life*,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

P R E F A C E

The congregation sit and the Minister introduces the marriage ceremony.

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*, 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. It 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. It 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. It 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 *N* and *N* 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 priest says to the congregation

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

The priest says to the couple

Minister 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 priest says to the bridegroom

Minister ??, will you take ?? 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 priest says to the bride

Minister ??, will you take ?? 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 priest says to the congregation

Minister Will you, the families and friends of ?? and ??, support and uphold them in their marriage now and in the years to come?

All **We will.**

THE COLLECT

The priest invites the people to pray, silence is kept and the priest says the collect.

Minister Almighty God,
from the beginning
you have blessed creation with abundant life.
Pour out your blessings upon N and N,
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 for ever.

All **Amen.**

BIBLE READING

At the end of each the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

The minister will give a short address

THE WEDDING CANDLE

The Minister introduces the Wedding Candle and a prayer is offered for the couple by both families.

THE VOWS

The minister introduces the vows, and the bride and groom make their vows to each other.

The bride and bridegroom face each other.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his.

Bridegroom

I, N, take you, N,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says

Bride

I, N, take you, N,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

THE GIVING OF RINGS

The priest receives the ring(s), and says this prayer:

Minister Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to ?? and ??
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 bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand, and, holding it there, says

Bridegroom N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If rings are exchanged, they loose hands and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand, and, holding it there, says

Bride N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

THE PROCLAMATION

The minister addresses the people

Minister In the presence of God, and before this congregation, N and N 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 and says

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

THE BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE

The priest says to the couple

Minister 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.**

PRAYERS

A further reading/poem or prayer can be included here.

The minister leads the congregation in prayers, concluding with the Lord's Prayer

Minister

As our saviour taught us, so we pray:

All

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

THE REGISTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE

The husband and wife and their witnesses gather for the signing of the Registers.

During the Registration music may be played.

The Minister then prays with the couple.

A hymn may be sung.

THE DISMISSAL

Minister

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All

Amen.

The Husband and wife leave the church together. (music?)

OFFWELL
MISSION
COMMUNITY



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN
Offwell | Widowrthy | Farway

Serving God, serving others
in the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

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