

The Marriage Policy of Central Christian Church

In Scripture the marriage union is held to be the human echo of the relationship between Christ and the church, a covenant relationship characterized by joy, intimacy, and permanence. The Bible also clearly defines marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman. This high regard for marriage enables Central Christian Church to administer the following values in regards to weddings either performed by a representative of Central or weddings held on our campus. While these values will be reaffirming to some, we realize that for others they may raise questions or cause concern. In light of this, this policy will be discussed during the initial session with the pastor scheduled to perform your wedding.

1) **We value the spiritual lives of the couples we marry.** Therefore we cannot unite in marriage a Christian and a non-Christian. A Christian is a person who has come to know Jesus Christ as his/her personal Savior, honors him as the Lord and Savior of their life, and is therefore committed to living in accordance with Scriptural principles.

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.” 2 Corinthians 6:14

2) **We value the purity and the holiness of the marriage bed.** Therefore living in a separate residence and practicing sexual abstinence are expected until the formal marriage ceremony. In accordance with this value, you will be expected to sign a Purity Covenant.

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed be kept pure.” Hebrews 13:4

3) **We value the permanence of marriage.**

A. We require participation in our premarital seminar and strongly encourage participation in our ministries designed for those recently married. The purpose of the premarital seminar is to help couples develop the relational skills and personal commitment necessary to enjoy the lifelong union of a Christ-centered marriage. The purpose of our postmarital ministries is to provide encouragement, friendship and opportunities for growth after the wedding.

B. While holding to the value of the permanence of marriage, we realize that because of the frailty of human nature, that Scriptures permit divorce in the following cases for the protection of the innocent party.

1. Divorce for the cause of immorality - with the understanding that the obligation to maintain or reinstate the marriage may be imposed upon the innocent spouse.
2. Divorce for desertion - desertion being defined as behavior equivalent to the abandonment of the marriage relationship.

Scriptural references: Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2-3; I Corinthians 7:15, 39; II Corinthians 5:17.

C. If, after the potential of Scriptural reconciliation has been exhausted, divorce for the above reasons becomes a reality, the innocent party may be free to remarry in the Lord. Each case of divorce and remarriage has its own set of unique circumstances and therefore needs to be dealt with from the perspective of God's inexhaustible capacity to forgive human sin and to restore broken lives.

“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate.”
Mark 10:6-9.

Purity Covenant

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. (NIV)

1 Corinthians 6:16-20

Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were brought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (NIV)

Acts 24:16

So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. (NIV)

Promise of Purity

In obedience to God’s will for our relationship, I promise to protect your sexual purity from this day forward.

Because I respect and honor you, I commit to build up the inner person of your heart rather than violate you.

Adhering to this wedding policy, I pledge to show my love for you in ways that allow both of us to maintain a clear conscience before God, the body of Christ, and each other.

Groom’s Signature _____

Bride’s Signature _____

Witness Signature _____

Date _____