

Wedding and Reception Policy

1. Introduction

Marriage is a joyous occasion when a man and a woman decide to unite together in a permanent covenant relationship. The bride and groom make vows to God and to each other as they enter into holy matrimony. This is done in the context of worship during a wedding ceremony. God is the author of marriage, and it is His guidelines that we use to perform all weddings. God richly blesses the marriages and churches which follow biblical requirements.

2. Biblical Requirements and Expectations

1. Each person must give evidence of being a Christian. It is not God's will for a Christian to marry a non-Christian. *"Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness...what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?"* (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)

During the first meeting of premarital counseling both people will be asked to give a personal testimony of when and how they placed their faith in Christ for salvation.

One area which gives evidence of a person's Christian character is church attendance. A person who has little or no interest in the local expression of the body of Christ should first restore his/her commitment to the church before expecting church members to sanction their marriage (see Hebrews 10:23-25 and 2 John 9-10).

No wedding or reception will be permitted when one or both are unbelievers or one or both are not in good standing with the church.

2. Each person must be committed to the permanence of marriage. It is God's will for a marriage to last for life: *"Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What there fore God has joined together, let no man separate"* (Matthew 19:6)

The bride and groom enter into a covenant with each other during the wedding ceremony by pledging vows to one another. *"...she is your companion and your wife by covenant"* (Malachi 3:14).

3. Each person must understand and practice the biblical view of sex. God created sex to be practiced within the marriage covenant. God ordained sex between a husband and wife in order to procreate children, to strengthen the "one flesh" relationship, and to provide intimate pleasure for the husband and wife which is only to be shared with each other.

All sexual activity outside of the marriage covenant is sin. The Bible clearly teaches that sexual immorality is unacceptable behavior for followers of Christ and that God judges this disobedience.

Unfaithfulness is the primary reason for divorce; therefore, sexual purity is a vital part of marital stability. If a dating couple is sexually active prior to their

marriage covenant they are more likely to be sexually active with someone outside of their marriage covenant after they are married.

To unite a couple in holy matrimony, who currently engage in sexual immorality, is a mockery of God's call for purity and holiness. Therefore, no wedding or reception will be performed under these circumstances unless repentance and subsequent abstinence are demonstrated (see Exodus 20:14; Acts 26:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18 and 7:1-9; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

In addition, no wedding or reception will be permitted when the couple is sharing the same residence. The couple must be willing to live separately until the day of their wedding.

4. Each person must understand the biblical teaching concerning divorce and remarriage. God hates divorce, and as His followers we should view divorce in a like manner (see Malachi 2:16; 1 Corinthians 7:39-40). Scripture permits divorce for two reasons so that a faithful spouse can be protected:
 - A. A faithful spouse may divorce an unfaithful spouse who has participated in sexually immoral behavior such as adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, and incest (see Matthew 5:32; 19:9; 1 Corinthians 5:1).
 - B. If an unbelieving spouse abandons a faithful spouse who is a believer, then divorce is permitted (see 1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

While divorce is permitted in these two circumstances, it is not commanded. Hosea, chapters 1-3, shows that God would prefer for repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation to occur.

The Bible clearly teach that if remarriage occurs after a divorce (without biblical grounds for divorce), adultery is the outcome. The Bible also warns those who consider marrying a divorcee that if the divorce was not biblically permitted then the person who marries a divorcee is an adulterer in God's eyes (see Mark 10:12).

The only other consideration in which a divorced person may remarry is if a marriage and divorce occurred before conversion to Christianity (see 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Other passages to consider: 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 15, 39; Romans 7:2-3; Matthew 5:32; Luke 16:18.

God loves all people and offers forgiveness to the repentant sinner. All of us are sinners in need of God's restoration through Jesus. We stand by these marriage requirements not to judge people, but to demonstrate what we teach from the scriptures each time we worship together. God has high standards for the marriage and family relationships because of their great worth. In our society we have devalued these relationships, and it is up to the Christian community to stand firmly on the principles found in God's Word because of our love for God, our love for each other and our love for our children.

3. General Church Wedding and Wedding Reception Regulations

1. The property and facilities owned and controlled by Green Valley Baptist Church shall only be used for weddings/receptions that adhere to the biblical definition of marriage (see constitution, article IV). Only ordained and duly licensed clergy approved by this church shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on church property.
2. The pastoral staff shall not officiate in any capacity at any wedding ceremony that violates the beliefs and teachings of this church body or would cause the staff member to violate their conscience and convictions.
3. The senior pastor may, at his discretion, decline to provide church facilities for a marriage ceremony when in his judgment there are significant concerns that one or both applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.
4. No wedding, wedding rehearsal, or reception will be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of alcoholic beverages or any other controlled substance. Alcoholic beverages and controlled substances are not permitted on the church property at anytime.
5. Rooms for the various members of the wedding party to dress will be provided. This provision will be made through the church office.
6. The dress of the wedding party should be in good taste and should conform to suitable clothing for a religious ceremony.
7. Please request all members of the wedding party to refrain from smoking on church property.

The pastoral staff and the members of the Green Valley Baptist Church wish that you will experience a wedding/reception that you can remember with real joy and happiness. We hope these guidelines will help you plan toward that goal.

4. Information for the Bride and Groom

We are delighted that you have chosen our church for your wedding/reception. Marriage is sacred and the church will help your marriage to be beautiful and sacred.

1. Setting the date: When you have made a decision about your marriage/reception, please contact the church office to arrange for a date. The date of the wedding/reception and consultation with the senior pastor can be set at this time.
2. Working with the senior pastor: Please arrange a time with the senior pastor for consultation at least 3 months prior to the wedding/reception date. The pastor will need time to discuss your wedding/reception and to complete pre-marital counseling.
3. Using a photographer: Because of the sacred nature of a wedding ceremony, all photography will be at the discretion of the senior pastor. Please inform the officiating minister if he is to be included in the photographs.
4. Wedding Coordinator: All weddings shall have a wedding coordinator provided by the church who is designated to undertake the responsibility of directing the wedding party to proper places and times. This individual will work with the pastor and should attend the rehearsal. A full schedule of the wedding will be given to the pastor.

5. Deposit and Fees:

A. Everyone will pay a \$200 damage deposit which will be refunded after any necessary damage costs are paid.

B. Mandatory fees for active members/attendees of the church:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| ○ Sanctuary use fee | \$0 |
| ○ Sound engineer and equipment fee | \$100 |
| ○ Wedding coordinator | \$100 |
| ○ Standard custodial fee | \$100 |
| ○ <u>Gym use fee</u> | <u>\$0</u> |
| TOTAL FEES: | \$300 |

C. Mandatory fees for all other wedding/reception requests:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ○ Sanctuary use fee | \$150 |
| ○ Sound engineer and equipment fee | \$100 |
| ○ Wedding coordinator | \$100 |
| ○ Standard custodial fee | \$100 |
| ○ <u>Gym use fee</u> | <u>\$150 (if applicable)</u> |
| TOTAL FEES: | \$450 (or \$600 if gym use is requested) |

D. Optional fees for all wedding/reception requests:

| | |
|--|--|
| ○ Suggested fee for officiating pastor | \$100 |
| ○ Musicians fee | \$50 (if church musicians are requested) |

All fees must be paid to the church office when the date of the wedding/reception is reserved.

6. Green Valley Baptist Church will not lend its facilities for weddings or receptions to non-members who are not regular attendees at the church. Arrangements can be made for non-members who regularly attend the church at the discretion of the senior pastor. (Determination as to the status of one's active or inactive participation in Green Valley Baptist Church is left to the discretion of the senior pastor).
7. It is the responsibility of the guest party to clean up and remove all decorations that they bring as part of the wedding/reception.

Green Valley Wedding/Reception Reservation Form

This form is to be completed, signed, and returned to the church office. No date can be confirmed until the initial meeting with the pastor has concluded and the deposit and fees have been paid. In the event that the wedding/reception is cancelled all fees will be returned.

Bride's full Name _____ Age _____
Church Membership _____
Bride's Present Address _____
Phone Res. _____ Bus. _____

Groom's full Name _____ Age _____
Church Membership _____
Groom's Present Address _____
Phone Res. _____ Bus. _____

Future Address _____
Phone Res. _____ Bus. _____

Wedding Date: _____ Time _____ Place _____
Rehearsal Date: _____ Time _____ Place _____
Reception Time: _____ Place _____

We have read the Green Valley Wedding and Reception Policy. We understand the biblical requirements and expectations for marriage. We commit ourselves to these requirements and expectations, demonstrated by our signatures.

Signatures: Groom _____
Bride _____

Membership status (to be determined by Green Valley Baptist Church):
_____ Active _____ Inactive _____ Special

Senior Pastor Approval Signature: _____

Date Deposit and Fees Were Paid: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

Date Event Was Added to the Church Calendar: _____