

## GUIDELINES FOR MARRIAGE CEREMONIES BY REDEEMER PASTORS

If you wish to have a Redeemer pastor officiate your wedding, please review these guidelines and answer the questionnaire.

1. **Contacting a Redeemer Pastor:** You should contact a pastor as early as possible to ensure that he is available for your wedding date and to allow adequate time to complete the pre-marital counseling process. Please allow **at least six months** between the time of initial contact and the actual wedding.

Generally, our pastors will not be able to confirm with certainty that he will perform the wedding until he has an initial meeting with the couple. In the qualifying session, you should expect the minister to ask you about:

***Your Christian faith:*** When did you become Christian? What does it mean to be a Christian? What is the place that Christian faith has in your life? Are you both actively involved as members in a local church? (Redeemer members will be given priority, based on the availability of our pastors).

***The nature of your relationship:*** What is the history of your relationship? How do your friends and family feel about it? What do you perceive to be the greatest strengths and greatest weaknesses of the relationship? Are you living together? Have you maintained sexual purity? Have there been relationships in the past that are unreconciled (i.e. if you've been married before)?

2. **Pre-marital Seminar:** The couple must attend the Redeemer pre-marital seminar: "Preparing for Marriage." The seminar is a six-hour course which discusses the meaning and purpose of marriage, the qualities necessary to have a healthy marriage, the true nature of love and how to effectively express it, communication and conflict resolution, role relationships and sexuality in marriage. It involves lectures and one-on-one interactions. Register at [www.redeemer.com/sogf](http://www.redeemer.com/sogf).
3. **Pre-marital Counseling:** Depending on the couple's level of readiness, a minister will provide three-to-six counseling sessions with the couple to supplement the seminar. Some ministers employ diagnostic tools or surveys to supplement their counseling, which may entail additional cost.
4. **Wedding Venues:** Redeemer does not own a church facility in which to conduct marriage ceremonies. The responsibility for finding this space depends on you. Be mindful that certain churches have restrictions concerning officiating ministers, so make sure to verify their policies.
5. **Wedding Licenses:** Redeemer ministers are not responsible for the processing of wedding licenses. You are responsible for ensuring the proper processing of necessary marriage documents.
6. **Out-of-Town Weddings:** Some ministers will perform out-of-town ceremonies and others will not. You must contact the minister to see if he is available for such a wedding. Whether the ceremony is in town or not, you should plan to pay for any necessary travel expenses and accommodations, and provide clear directions and the precise address to the wedding facility (*please understand that an out-of-town wedding is a significant commitment on the part of the minister!*).
7. **Honorarium:** The suggested honorarium for the minister performing your ceremony is \$500-1000, depending on the number of counseling sessions that he provides. This is paid directly to the minister. If additional counseling is required, the minister may suggest additional counseling, or he may refer you to the Redeemer Counseling Center. If there is a financial hardship involved, please discuss this with your minister.
8. **Wedding Rehearsal and Reception:** The minister will generally conduct the wedding rehearsal at the agreed upon rehearsal time. Regretfully, ministers are not always able to attend rehearsal dinners or receptions. It is our sincere hope that such inability is not taken as an offense.
9. **The Wedding:** Usually a meeting will be required to discuss the actual details of the wedding service. On the day of the wedding, plan to have the entire party at the church at least one hour before the wedding. If you wish to have live photography or have your wedding filmed, please discuss appropriate parameters with the minister before the ceremony. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

## **REDEEMER WEDDING OFFICIANTS**

The following is a list of Redeemer pastors who are available to officiate weddings and provide premarital counseling. Also included is Jeff White, a former Redeemer pastor who leads the Premarital Seminars and is now pastor of New Song Community Church, our sister-church in Harlem.

(extensions are for our main number, 212-808-4460)

Rev. David Bisgrove, x111 – david@redeemer.com

Rev. Matthew Paul Buccheri, x186 – MatthewPaul@Redeemer.com

Rev. Abraham Cho, x142 – abe@redeemer.com

Rev. William Jin, x198 – william@redeemer.com

Rev. John Lin, x149 – johnlin@redeemer.com

Rev. Mark Robinson, x159 – mark.robinson@redeemer.com

Rev. Scott Sauls, x112 – ssauls@redeemer.com

Rev. Jeff White – newsongjw@aol.com (212) 749-6122

## QUALIFYING QUESTIONNAIRE

Each person should fill out the following questionnaire and return it to the minister *prior* to your first meeting with minister you are asking to perform your ceremony.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile) \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Education \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
How long have you known each other? \_\_\_\_\_  
Where will you live? \_\_\_\_\_  
Wedding time and date desired. \_\_\_\_\_  
Why have you chosen to be married by the church rather than a justice of the peace? \_\_\_\_\_  
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### CHRISTIAN FAITH

What does it mean to be a Christian?

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Do you believe that you are a Christian? Why?

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What is your church background and current involvement?

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Describe how you have been growing in Christ.

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**MOTIVES FOR MARRIAGE**

Do your parents approve of the marriage? If not, what do you think of their reasons? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do either of you feel pressure to get married? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is there some other reason for getting married that we need to speak about (pregnancy, pressure from others, citizenship issues, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

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Make a list of the qualities you see in the other person which make you want to marry him/her:

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What fears do you have about marriage or about your impending marriage?

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**STANDARDS**

We believe we are responsible before God to marry only those people who a) have God’s blessing (favor) for the marriage and who b) are prepared for the demands and responsibilities of this relationship. Marriage is work! You don’t expect to get other jobs without qualifications-so there are qualifications for marriage.

*1. You must have a similar commitment to Christ (II Corinthians 6:14).*

- Unless we are in covenant relationship with God, we lack the strength and love to really meet the demands of marriage. Without God, our natural selfishness prevents a relationship from really blossoming. Sin destroyed the oneness between Adam and Eve (Genesis 3).
- This means that a Christian minister cannot marry a Christian to a non-Christian. From a Christian perspective, the heart of marriage is deep oneness. If your spouse cannot understand the central motive of your heart and the driving force of your life, how can she/he have deep unity with you? The only way to have a tolerable marriage with a non-Christian is to push Jesus off to the periphery of your soul. *Either* Christ will be central, and your marriage relationship will be superficial, or Christ will be on the periphery and your marriage relationship can go deeper.

From a common sense perspective, it would be hard to find a rabbi or Muslim cleric or Christian minister or any marriage counselor at all who thinks two people should marry who differ on the most core/important commitments of their lives. There can’t be intimacy if two people differ in those central life commitments. Is there agreement between the two of you in this central area? Is there a similar commitment to Christ?

- You need to be active together as members of a church.

2. *You must be mature enough and willing to build a marriage based on the principles of God's word.*

- The way to handle a machine so that it continues to work properly is to follow the directions of the manufacturer. If you ignore the instructions, there will be breakdown. Freedom comes from following the rules of the creator.
- This means, first of all, you must be willing to talk through and solve problems God's way. For example, have you been engaging in sexual relations? Here's a test! Are you willing to accept God's word that this practice is wrong? Are you presently sexually involved with your fiancé?
- One of the most important qualities of a healthy marriage is the ability to handle conflicts and communicate appropriately. Unless you can base your relationship on communication now, how will you do so later? Make a list of the problems or disagreements that you are having now and make a list of ones that you have solved satisfactorily.

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3. *If this is not your first marriage, and if you are divorced,*

- Was your divorce Biblical (on the grounds of adultery or the willful desertion by your unbelieving partner)? Have you sought reconciliation with your former spouse?

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- Are you currently under discipline from another church body regarding this divorce or any other matter? Are you free to remarry at this time?

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