

Commitments Toward Marriage

Our church views the wedding itself as a ministry and not merely a ceremony, and therefore we perform weddings primarily for those who are regular attenders of our church. We also take seriously our commitment to help prepare the couple for a Christ centered marriage. This is reflected in our Wedding Policy, and we ask each couple to make the following commitments.

1. A commitment to attend at least five sessions of premarital counseling with the Pastor. Therefore requests for a wedding in our church should be made **months in advance** to be able to complete the counseling. (A 6 month advance request time is suggested). Absences from the scheduled counseling sessions may result in postponement or cancellation of the wedding ceremony.
2. A reaffirmation of your commitment before God to maintain sexual purity, restraining from sexual involvement or intercourse until following your wedding, and agreeing not to live together prior to the wedding.
3. The wedding will be characterized by the truths and principles of Christianity, and will uphold Biblical principles and standards as follows:
 - A. Both persons must be confessed Christians, or both must be nonbelievers who are willing to have a God-honoring ceremony. (2 Corinthians 6:14)
 - B. In view of the high priority and permanence of marriage in Scripture, remarriage is a serious consideration. Any request will be reviewed by the church Elder Board for their approval.

Church Policy For Facilities Use

1. Any ceremony in our sanctuary will be conducted by one of our credentialed pastoral staff, who may be assisted by other credentialed clergy as approved by the Board of Elders.
2. Upon receiving the "Wedding Request Form" the Board of Elders will consider approval of the application based on a number of criteria, such as scheduling, pastoral availability for counseling, etc. *The date is not officially placed on the church calendar until it has Elder Board approval.*
3. Following approval of the Elder Board a \$100 deposit must be received to officially place the wedding date on the church calendar, the balance of fees must be paid at least *30 days* prior to the ceremony. Failure to do so may result in postponement or cancellation of the wedding ceremony.
4. No Saturday weddings may be scheduled after 6:00 p.m. (to allow for cleaning and setup of the facility for Sunday morning worship).
5. In sensitivity to the wishes of the EFC congregation, no alcoholic beverages may be served on the premises. No smoking is allowed on the premises. Wedding dances shall not be held on the premises. No throwing of rice or bird seed is allowed on the premises.
6. The wedding couple is responsible for arranging any needed musicians with the guidance of the Pastor.
7. All food items (coffee, cream, sugar, etc.), paper items (plates, napkins, etc.), candelabrum, and flowers shall be furnished by the wedding party.
8. The wedding party is responsible for arranging the washing and restocking of dishes and kitchen utensils, and the removal of decorations and leftover food.
9. At a wedding where the presence of Christ is the central focus, His presence shall also remain the central focus at the reception. The values of Christianity shall determine the atmosphere of the entire event.

Revised 10/05

Wedding Policy



Marriage In Our Culture

Our society believes deeply in marriage. Ninety-six percent of all Americans will marry at some time in their lives. Yet more than half of those married couples will terminate their relationship in divorce. Many of the other couples remaining together will be disillusioned. Even among those who are divorced, marriage itself remains a significant goal. Seventy-nine percent of divorced individuals remarry, though it is ironic that remarriages statistically fail at a higher rate than first marriages.

Marriage In The Christian Community

As Christians, we believe that marriage is both a spiritual covenant with God and the church as well as a civil contract before society. Marriage is a covenant in the sense that both individuals vow themselves by God's grace to each other for as long as they both shall live. Marriage is a civil contract in the sense that both individuals declare their intentions to abide by the laws of the state for their marital union.

As a Christian couple lives out the commitment of their marriage vows, the positive consequences for themselves and others are almost unparalleled. For one another, for Christ, for their children, for the Christian community, for those yet to respond to the gospel of Christ, they demonstrate the beauty of God's truth, including faith, commitment, hope and love. Thus, this church places a very high value upon marriage and the preparation for this sacred union.

Preparation For Marriage

Because we desire to contribute to the healthy beginning of any marital union, our church and pastoral staff requires that couples commit themselves to a process of marital counseling in the months preceding their wedding.

The purpose of these counseling sessions are:

1. To assist the couple in assessing their readiness for marriage
2. To clarify the beliefs, values, strengths and behaviors that each individual brings to their relationship
3. To clarify the spiritual resources which Christianity provides as a foundation for marriage, and to gain a better understanding of God's desires for every marital union
4. To resolve any present conflicts or weaknesses, and to develop the insights and skills needed to meet potential tensions or conflicts in the future
5. To incorporate others in the process who may support and enrich the couple's marriage

The premarital counseling process may begin with various assessment tools, which will provide the pastor insight into the issues which may need to be explored. The couple must commit themselves to at least five counseling sessions, and may include relationship-building assignments during the course of the counseling. Each of these assignments must be completed according to the instructions and schedule given by the pastor.

The planning of the wedding ceremony and/or reception will require additional appointments with the pastor and/or the church wedding coordinator.

Financial Responsibilities

Church Attenders

(Bride, Groom, or parents are regular attenders of the Grand Island Evangelical Free Church)

Wedding/Counseling*	\$150
Wedding Coordinator	
reception off-site	\$100
reception at the church	\$150
Basic Sound Technician Fee	\$75
Kitchen Coordinator	
reception at the church	\$50
Weekend Janitorial Fee	\$150
Holiday Weekend Janitorial Fee	\$200

Non-Attenders

Wedding/Counseling*	\$200
Wedding Coordinator	
reception off-site	\$150
reception at the church	\$200
Basic Sound Technician Fee	\$100
Weekend Janitorial Fee	\$150
Holiday Weekend Janitorial Fee	\$200
Use of the Worship Center	\$300
Use of the Multi-Purpose Room	\$100
Use of Kitchen	\$90
Kitchen Coordinator	
reception at the church	\$50
Decorations, musicians honorariums, etc. are the responsibility of the wedding couple.	

*This fee includes any counseling assessment tools used by the pastor (e.g. the PREPARE questionnaire, etc.), as well as copies of books, DVD's, etc. Also included are the Pastor's fee for counseling, the rehearsal, and the wedding.

As you contemplate this expense, please consider the investment you will be making in your lifelong relationship of marriage. Much more money is usually invested in the wedding ceremony, which lasts only a matter of minutes.