

# Hillside Chapel Wedding Policy

## SETTING WEDDING DATE AND TIME

At Hillside Chapel, we are not only interested in providing you with the services necessary for your wedding we are deeply committed to the vision of building healthy Christian marriages. Due to this priority, our primary commitment is to couples who share Biblical values which will impact their marriages in a God-glorifying way. While we are available to meet with couples who do not actively attend Hillside Chapel, it is expected that any couple wishing to be married at Hillside will share the values and commitments expressed in this document's "Biblical Understanding of Marriage". Hillside pastors are open to meeting with couples who are in the process of exploring these commitments and values or are in the process of seriously inquiring about the Christian faith.

Since careful planning is vital for your wedding, it is desirable that the date and time of your wedding be set at least six months in advance. This will give you a better opportunity to reserve the date and hour you desire and will provide more time for the necessary conferences with the pastor.

Complete a facility request form and return the form to the business administrator. He will attempt to coordinate the desired date and time with the church's master calendar.

Meet with the staff pastor that you want to perform the wedding to coordinate with his calendar and to make arrangements for premarital counseling sessions. Your wedding date will not be finalized until approval has been granted by a member of the pastoral staff. Under normal circumstances, this will be Hillside's lead pastor.

Normally weddings will not be scheduled on Sundays, Good Friday, Easter, or during the month of December. On Saturdays all wedding services must be concluded by 4:00 pm. When the reception is held in the church fellowship hall on a Saturday all receptions shall conclude by 7:00 pm.

## NON ACTIVE INDIVIDUALS WEDDINGS

One of the questions asked of our pastoral staff is, "Will you do weddings of individuals who are not associated with the Hillside Chapel congregation?" In answering this question, it's important to remember our goal: Our goal is to do more than provide you with a building for your service or to simply perform your wedding. Our goal is to guide you through an experience that helps you assess your readiness for marriage and to provide you with tools for building a healthy marriage that is consistent with Biblical principles. Since the process of preparing to have a healthy marriage involves actively being a part of a local congregation of Christians, we require that the couple is actively engaged in the life of the congregation, even if membership is not formally held. We want to provide you with the opportunity to experience marital growth, before and after your marriage. Thus, some level of consistent commitment to Hillside Chapel is necessary before moving ahead in your planning. Thus, it is expected that a couple will have attended Hillside on a consistent basis for a period of four months, prior to beginning marital counseling. Since premarital counseling normally takes an additional

three to four months to complete, a couple will have attended seven to eight months prior to their wedding. Exceptions will be made in cases in which the couple is not living within the immediate community. However, it is expected that in such circumstances the couple will be consistently active in the life of another local congregation where they are growing in their faith with God.

### **PRE-MARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP**

As expressed in our statement regarding Biblical principles for a healthy Christian marriage, we believe that sex is a beautiful gift created by God. Yet, it is God's desire that couples wait until marriage before engaging in a sexual relationship. Thus, couples seeking to be married at Hillside Chapel will be asked to refrain from sexual expression until marriage.

### **PREMARITAL SESSIONS**

All couples will agree to participate in as many hours of pre-marital counseling as may be determined necessary by the pastor. Normal accumulated hours of pre-marital counseling is 5 – 10 hours per couple. Couples will also agree to take a personality inventory test, which will then be used during the counseling sessions. Additional matters to be discussed will be finances, human sexuality, conflict communication and faith. All issues and subjects covered during the counseling sessions will be kept in strict confidence. If a counseling session must be cancelled, a 24 hour notice is requested. A minimum of three months will be needed to complete the counseling sessions.

### **YOUR PASTOR**

If available, you are encouraged to use a Hillside Chapel pastor. Pastors are open to performing marriage ceremonies with other pastors. If a couple wishes to use a pastor not serving on the staff of Hillside Chapel they must first consult with the lead pastor.

**IMPORTANT:** Any pastor who is from another state must contact the Secretary of State for Ohio, Probate Court, and secure the appropriate credentials to perform a wedding in Ohio.

### **MUSIC**

While the bride and groom are encouraged to use church musicians, other musicians may participate in the wedding ceremony. As soon as approval has been granted to the couple to proceed with wedding plans, the bride and groom are to arrange an immediate appointment with the musicians for the purpose of reviewing and selecting music for the wedding. All music for the wedding should be selected and submitted to the organist at least one month in advance of the ceremony.

Since music is an intricate part of any worship experience and adds to the dignity of the celebration, all music used must be appropriate to Christian worship and shall be selected by the couple in consultation with the musician and pastor. Working within the philosophy considerable freedom of choice is granted to the bride and groom.

## **DECORATIONS**

It is the responsibility of the bride's family to plan with the florist to arrange the appropriate decorations. Flowers may be placed either on the worship center platform or on the floor. Ribbons or simple flower arrangements may be used to mark reserved pews. It is imperative, however, that there be no use of screws, nails, wire or any fastening on furnishings or in the building proper. A white runner, if desired, is to be provided by the florist.

The church can provide candelabrum or the bride may wish to rent a candelabra. The couple should make proper arrangements with the custodian to make certain that the candelabrum are set in the proper place. When Hillside provided candelabrum are used, Hillside provided drip less candles must be used with the candelabrum. When a florist provided candelabrum is used, all candles must be canister type drip less candles. The bride is responsible for providing the unity candle and two individual candles. Should aisle candles be used, all candles must either be in a canister with drip less candles or have some sort of enclosure to provide safety and limit potential carpet/furniture damage.

It is expected that the florist will have the flowers, runners and decorations in place no later than two hours prior to the time of the wedding. The bride and groom are responsible to communicate this policy to the florist.

The church does have a kneeling bench that is available.

The couple may request that guitars, drums and small amplifiers be removed from the stage area for the day of the wedding. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to notify the custodian of the need to remove and replace the instruments. Under no circumstances should any member of the wedding party move church instruments.

## **PICTURES**

Flash pictures can be taken during the wedding ceremony if the bride and groom approve. Flash pictures can be taken of the wedding party entering and exiting the worship center.

Unlimited pictures, subject to the wishes of the bride and groom, will be allowed either before or after the service in any area of the church.

Video taping the wedding ceremony is permitted. However, to make certain that the video does not disrupt or infringe on the ceremony all video cameras being used in the front of the worship center must be placed on a tripod prior to the beginning of the service. One person will be permitted in the choir area to do the taping. All other individuals wanting to operate a video camera during the ceremony will be requested to remain in other locations.

## **YOUR WEDDING PARTY**

Your wedding party is expected to view their participation in the service as a joy and a privilege. They are expected to respect the sacredness of this service. No alcoholic beverages are to be served or consumed on the church premises at any time. The

rehearsal or wedding will not proceed if any member of the party is found under the influence of alcoholic beverages.

Smoking is not permitted any where in the buildings.

### **DRESSING ROOMS**

Facilities can be provided so that the bride and her party and the groom and his party may dress at the church. Arrangements for their use must be made with the church custodian in advance. If the bride desires a full-length mirror, she should communicate this with the custodian when making arrangements.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to arrange for the care of their personal property of the wedding before, during and after the ceremony. While every reasonable effort is made to insure the safety of your articles, the church cannot be held responsible in this regard.

The couple is responsible for contacting the custodian concerning the time in which they would like to have the church open on the day of their wedding.

The couple is also responsible for cleaning out the dressing rooms after the wedding.

### **NURSERY**

The nursery can be available for children through four years old. Nursery workers must be selected from a list of approved individuals. The list can be secured by contacting the director of children's ministries.

### **FEES**

Every effort will be made to keep the cost of your wedding at a minimum. While the church does not attempt to make money through these established fees, we do have a responsibility to pay the bills, maintain the facilities and to reimburse our church staff. It is for these reasons that the following fee schedule has been established.

A nonrefundable deposit to cover all estimated fees must be paid one month prior to the wedding. The remaining balance will be due one week before the wedding. Any additional fees will be billed to the couple and will be paid within 30 days of the wedding.

#### Rental fees:

Worship Center: non-active individuals .....	\$300.00
Worship Center: active individuals.....	\$0.00
Commons/kitchen: non-active individuals .....	\$300.00
Commons/kitchen: active individuals.....	\$0.00

Wedding Coordinator .....\$100.00

Reception Coordinator .....\$100.00

Custodian:

-Wedding .....\$125.00

-Reception .....\$125.00

-Additional Help .....\$20/hr.

Pastor

Recommended honorarium.....\$150.00

Psychological Assessment Tool (When Done Online): ..... \$100.00

Pianist:.....\$100.00

(Fee includes rehearsal, wedding, one rehearsal with soloist, and any personal practice needed)

Sound Technician .....\$100.00

Candles:.....\$20.00

(Unity candle must be provided by the wedding party)

Program printing:

Programs are to be provided by the couple and brought to the church office at least three weeks in advance: .....\$10.00/100 bulletins

Child care:.....\$10.00 per worker/hour

Additional Addendums:

All large instruments, including piano, drums and organ will remain on stage.

Exceptions may be granted by the Minister of Worship Arts. If consent is granted estimated time will be charged at a \$20/hr rate.

All couples re required to have a mandatory conversation with the Minister of Worship Arts at least *two months* prior to the wedding date to discuss issues related to staging, sound, technology, music, etc.

## RECEPTION

The custodian will be responsible for setting up tables as the wedding party desires. It is also the wedding party's responsibility to make certain that the tables are cleared and the kitchen returned to clean order. If tables or chairs are brought into the church from an outside location, the wedding party assumes responsibility for teardown and return of those items. A hospitality director will be provided to offer assistance to the caterer and/or kitchen workers.

### **SEATING CAPACITY**

Worship Center without the overflow is 375. Worship Center with overflow is 550. The Commons will seat 200.

### **BUILDING ACCESS**

The bridal party must make arrangements with the custodian ahead of time for access to the church for decorating, rehearsal, the florist and the ceremony.

### **ORDER OF WORSHIP**

The order of worship is to be planned in conjunction with the officiating pastor.

## **HELPFUL ETIQUETTE HINTS**

### **WEDDING BREAKFAST**

A wedding breakfast or brunch is often planned for out-of-town guests. It is not important that the bride and groom attend, as you may have some last minute preparations.

### **REHEARSAL DINNER**

Written invitations requesting an RSVP should be sent for the rehearsal dinner at least two weeks in advance. This will avoid embarrassment to the attendants, musicians, clergy, etc. and their spouses and will also provide you with an accurate number of guests attending.

The groom's parents normally give the dinner, although it is not obligatory. In such case, a member of the bride's family or a close friend may give the dinner.

The bridal party, immediate families of the bride and groom, and if possible and desired, out-of-town friends who arrive the day before the wedding make up the list. Clergy, musicians, soloists, etc. are optional.

### **CHANGING NAMES**

Once married, the bride can make arrangements to have her name changed. The following is a suggested list of documents and items to consider: driver's license, car registration, passports, post office, magazine subscriptions, identification cards, social security, insurance policies, wills, voter registration, bank accounts, credit cards.

### **WHO PAYS FOR WHAT**

The bride or her family normally pays for: invitations, announcements, and enclosures, wedding dress, bouquets for attendants and bridesmaids, flowers for the ceremony and reception site, photographs, church rental fee, custodian, organist or pianist, soloist fees, rental of any floral equipment, groom's ring or rings, wedding gift for the groom, hotel lodging for out-of-town bridesmaids, complete reception.

The groom or his family pays for: bride's engagement and wedding rings, marriage license, clergy's fees, bride's flowers (including going away corsage), attendants' boutonnieres, bride's wedding gift, gifts for the best man and ushers, hotel lodging for out-of-town ushers, complete wedding trip, bride's bouquet, flowers for the mothers and grandparents, and rehearsal dinner.

### **INVITATIONS**

Invitations should be mailed at least four weeks in advance of the wedding. Maps are appropriate for out-of-town guests.

Invitations should be sent to your fiancé's immediate family, the members of the wedding party and their parents, and all others participating in the wedding in whatever capacity, even if they have already been invited informally.

## **THE GUEST BOOK**

The guest book should be set at a prominent place, normally at the entrance to the wedding service or reception. An attendant should stand near the guest book in order to make certain that guests have an opportunity to sign.

## **FLOWERS**

The bride and attendants normally carry a bouquet at all weddings. This may range from anything from an armload of flowers to a small nosegay, but it should be scaled to the bride's height and compliment her dress.

Mothers and grandmothers of the bride and groom are customarily presented with flowers to wear at the wedding. The giving of roses following the service often provides a personal touch.

The groom and every man in the wedding party (best man, ushers, and fathers) traditionally wear a boutonniere on the left lapel. White carnations are the normal selection for everyone except the groom and the best man who may wear a white rose or other flower(s), which are symbolic of love. It is also acceptable to give the pastor a boutonniere matching the flowers of the ushers.

## **GIFT REGISTRY**

Registering your gift preferences at local wedding gift registries provides your guests with appropriate ideas of your needs and will greatly enhance the possibility of proper selection in areas of color and style. Most major department stores carry a gift registry.

## **THANK YOU NOTES**

Either the bride or groom should send a personal, handwritten letter of appreciation for each gift received, even gifts from a close friend whom you thanked in person and see every day at work. The only exception to this rule is gifts from your spouse and parents, although they, too, may treasure a special letter from you.

Start writing your notes as soon as you receive your wedding gifts, including gifts, which arrive prior to the wedding.

## **ATTENDANTS' GIFTS**

It is customary to give each attendant a small gift as a token of appreciation and as a memento of your wedding. These gifts do not have to be expensive, but should be relatively permanent gifts of a personal nature. Most often these gifts are given during the wedding rehearsal meal.

## **RECEIVING LINE**

Traditionally the bride's mother, as hostess, is the first to greet guests, followed in order by the groom's mother, bride, groom, maid or matron of honor, and bridesmaids. If

fathers wish to join in the receiving line, each is to stand to the left of his wife. In the interest of keeping the receiving line brief, bridesmaids and groomsmen may mix with guests instead of standing in line.

### **OPENING GIFTS**

While it is acceptable to open gifts at the reception, once started the bride and groom should continue until all gifts are opened. This does include the opening of cards. Otherwise a small party following the honeymoon in a home will serve the purpose.

### **CHILDREN AT THE WEDDING**

If you are concerned about children disrupting your wedding but wish to include them at the reception, you may wish to provide nursery services. Available nursery services should be noted at the foot of the invitation.

If you are afraid that your guests may bring their children even though the invitation did not include their names, the best solution is to explain that you are terribly sorry but you cannot include children on your special day. Ask them to assist you by spreading the word. It is improper to print, "Please do not bring children" or similar words on the invitation.

### **ARRIVAL AT THE CHURCH**

If the bride and her attendants dress at the church, they should arrive one hour in advance of the service. If they dress at another location, they should arrive thirty minutes ahead of the ceremony. Ushers should arrive forty-five minutes prior to the service while the best man and groom arrive thirty minutes in advance.

## BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MARRIAGE

In his book Discovering the Intimate Marriage, Dr. R. C. Sproul writes

*“Love and marriage --- the songwriter says they go together like a horse and carriage. The aspiring goal of the romantic is love in marriage. So much hope, so much excitement, so much planning, so much feeling goes into marriage. Marriage, for many, becomes the dream of a lifetime.”*

He’s right. For many, marriage is the dream of a lifetime. Yet in many cases, the dream becomes shattered. Bitterness, anger, disappointment, and sometimes divorce are often the results of a marriage turned bad. Marriage can become either a beautiful dream or a monstrous nightmare.

The hope of the pastor and leadership of Hillside Chapel is that your marriage will be an exciting and satisfying adventure. Thus, we provide you with this statement that explains our understanding of the Biblical view of marriage. It’s not intended to be a moralistic discussion on marriage. It’s not intended to be a “sermon”. Rather, it’s offered to you with the hope that in understanding God’s intent for your marriage, your marriage will be filled with joy and delight.

What does God have to say about marriage? A lot! Far too much, in fact, to include in this short statement. So, let’s jump right to some of the basic essentials.

1. God has created marriage for the good of his creation. In creating man, He quickly discovered that it was not good to leave man by himself. Thus, woman was created and the first marriage began. (Genesis 2:23)
2. In entering the commitment of marriage, God calls us to make our spouse a number one priority. So dramatic is this call that he instructs us to leave our parents and to now focus on our spouse as the most important human being in our lives. (Genesis 2:24)
3. God has created the gift of sex and invites us to enjoy this gift only within the boundaries of marriage. The emotional and physical pleasures, which accompany sex, are a celebration of a couple’s newly discovered unity. (Genesis 2:24, I Corinthians 7:9, Hebrews 13:4)
4. A good marriage will occur when a husband and wife relate to each other in the same way that God relates to us. With love, tenderness, compassion, understanding, patience and trust.
5. The joy of marriage is maximized when each member of the marriage has a relationship with God through a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Anytime one member of the marriage has this relationship with God while another does not, there is the strong potential of having a marriage that is

- filled with unnecessary hostility. This is why God instructs Christians to limit their life-long relationships to Christians. (II Corinthians 6:14)
6. The highest expression of love in marriage is not to be found in our feelings, but in our acts for each other. Acts that demonstrate kindness, tenderness, patience, forgiveness, understanding and selflessness are crucial. (I Corinthians 13: 1 – 8)
  7. While there may be a few rare situations in which divorce is permissible (such as immorality and desertion) divorce is considered inappropriate for God's people. (Matthew 19:6)
  8. The ultimate factor, which determines a marriage's longevity, is not the feeling of love, but the commitment, which the couple has towards each other. Simply put, through time, the feeling of love will change. During those times, God's people are called to renew their commitment to each other and to the marriage into which they have entered.

While the above is certainly not an exhaustive statement, which covers everything the Bible says about marriage, they are some of the basic essentials. We hope they will help guide you in one of the most important decisions you will ever make. And as you consider these principles, ask yourself some tough questions.

- Am I willing to make my spouse a number one priority?
- Am I willing to commit my sexuality to God and to delay total sexual gratification until marriage?
- With God's help, will I endeavor to relate to my spouse in the same way, which Jesus relates to his church?
- Am I willing to limit my life-long commitment to only those individuals who share my commitment to Christ?
- Am I so committed to this marriage that I will commit myself to this marriage, even when my feelings may change?
- Am I willing to dismiss divorce as an option?

Hopefully, these questions will help you face up to some of the most important issues of marriage. And hopefully, as you answer them you'll make the right choices and discover God's joy, peace and fulfillment. If these issues seem foreign to you, we hope that you'll consider them carefully and practically, so that the wisdom of God may be discovered and experienced.

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