

ECBC GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING AND MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The marriage union is a coming together of a man and a woman in a rewarding intimacy that is sanctioned by God. He instituted wedlock with our first parents in Eden, declaring that it is not good for man to live alone (Gen. 2: 18). Jesus Himself beautified marriage by His presence at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, gracing the occasion with the performance of His first miracle at the wedding celebration (John 2:1-11). In the light of God's word, your marriage needs to be Christ-centered and God honoring. Your marriage is intended to join you for life in a relationship that is so rich, so unique and rewarding that it will change your whole being from then on. Therefore, the pastors and staff at ECBC will make every effort to help you prepare properly for a richer, deeper life together. In order for this to happen, we ask that you read and consider the following guidelines.

WEDDING & FACILITY GUIDELINES

It is our wish to accommodate the different facets of ECBC MINISTRY in an efficient manner, therefore, **a clear understanding of the following guidelines are extremely important:**

1. You must be a member or regularly attending ECBC in order to have your wedding here.
2. Application for marriage (form w-101 enclosed) with your pastor must be done at least 6 months in advance before booking the wedding facilities with the church administrator.
3. All approved applicants must attend the marriage preparation class to be held each year on March and April, during Sunday School hour. If you choose to attend pre-marital class elsewhere, your officiating pastor needs a letter or certificate of accomplishment.
4. It is our conviction that it is unwise for a believer to be unequally yoked in marriage with a non-believer (II Cor. 6:14). Therefore we suggest that you wait till your friend come to trust in the Lord as his/her Savior before you plan for marriage. In the mean time, you are both welcome to talk to the pastor and/or attend marriage preparation class without obligation.
5. Fill out the Facilities Use Agreement Form in full with all necessary details.
6. Wedding rehearsal will generally be slotted on Wednesday or Thursday evening (unless there are other scheduled events) on the week of the wedding.
7. Due to Sunday worship services, we request that any Sunday wedding ceremony be scheduled not earlier than 3:00 p.m.
8. It is strongly suggested that the couple attend the “newly wed” class on September & October during Sunday School hour.
9. Should the wedding require the use of the church facilities for reception, users shall ensure that the rooms are left in a clean and orderly condition, to the satisfaction of the administrator.
10. No smoking, alcoholic beverages or dancing will be permitted in the church building.

SOUND SYSTEM AND LIGHTING

The church will provide a sound and a lighting technician only for your wedding in the sanctuary. The sound technician will attend the rehearsal (The lighting technician may need to attend too, depending on the requirement). A list of your music and an order of the ceremony must be available for them at the rehearsal.

A cassette recording of the ceremony can be made available to you for a cost of \$5.00. This will only be recorded at your request.

MUSIC

The musical selections you choose should reflect God's love and holiness in the wedding. Every aspect of your ceremony should promote a spirit of worship and honor to God. Many weddings have string quarters or soloists, if that is the case, be sure to include the number of microphones, music stands or chairs needed for these people when planning your set-up needs. Make sure you present these needs to the technicians and / or the administrator 2 weeks before the wedding.

PHOTOGRAPHY

During the wedding service, the professional photographer may take flash pictures only with discretion. Other photographers are allowed to take picture from where they are sitting only during the actual wedding service. During such time, no photographer is allowed to walk on stage or in front of the wedding party. Your wedding ceremony is a worship service and they should be most considerate of the guests and the solemnness of the occasion.

Videotaping is permitted but should be done stationary.

Please check with the officiating pastor on his wishes regarding picture taking during the ceremony.

DECORATION

1. Decoration intended for use in the sanctuary shall receive clearance from the administrator.
2. Do not use any nails, staples or thumb tacks on pews or walls (no tape on walls). Secure pew bows with ribbon, rubber bands or masking tape only.
3. Dripless candles must be used for candelabras and/or the unity candle.
4. No rice, or confetti will be permitted on the church premises (Bubbles are permitted).
5. The chapel/sanctuary needs to be cleaned of all decorations following the ceremony so that the facility staff can prepare the place for next service.

6. Please secure administrator's permission to move furniture. It is your responsibility to move and return all furniture at appointed time.
7. You will be responsible for any damage or breakage that may occur as a result of your wedding activities.

REHEARSAL

All participants of the bridal party must be punctual. Parents of both the bride and the groom should attend the rehearsal. The head usher must be there because he will need to know the final wedding program details to assure a smooth ceremony.

Please allow one and a half hours for the rehearsal.

Make sure you call the church administrator (438-3222 ext. 205) 2 weeks before the wedding to reconfirm the rehearsal date and time.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

REASONS FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELLING

If 30-40% of our cars fell apart in the first two years of running, there would be a public outcry to correct the problem. Yet marriages are disintegrating, even among the Christian community, without so much a protest from the public.

Many couples assume that their marriage is unique and invulnerable to the traps that destroy so many other relationships. Many, perhaps, fail to realize that what comes out of a marriage depends primarily on what is brought into their relationship.

We have a minimum of ten years of education before we work. What makes us so confident that we can enter into marriage without any preparation? The reason why wedding is so beautiful is the amount of time and effort that we spent in getting it ready, yet wedding is the easiest part of the marriage. Similarly, the beauty of our marriage depends proportionately to the attention we have given to it before and after the wedding.

TOPICS FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELLING (6-8 Sessions)

1. Biblical Foundations
 - a) A Christian Home (Deut. 6:4-9)
 - b) Roles of Husband and Wife (Eph 5: 21-33)
2. Planning the Wedding
 - a) Legal requirements
 - b) Details of the wedding service.
 - c) A God-honoring reception
3. Communication Skills and Conflict Resolution
4. Money and Financial Management
5. Family Living & Issues
6. Sexuality/Spirituality

SPECIAL COUNSELING:

Beyond the seminar itself, the pastor performing your ceremony will get together with you once or twice to discuss ceremony details and any other questions about marriage. He will work with you to plan a beautiful wedding, uniquely yours!

Depending on your circumstances, the pastor will require you to have extra counseling. For those who have experienced divorce, the position of the church is committed to the restoration of family and marriage; therefore, ECBC will either decline such wedding or ask you to postpone your wedding, until proper counseling in all relevant aspects be fulfilled first. (cf. Appendix 1 for ECBC position in this matter.)

Should personal or interpersonal problems of a serious nature fail to be resolved in counseling, the pastor may elect to recommend postponement or cancellation of wedding plan.

APPLICATION FOR WEDDING

Please provide the following information and answer the questions as thoroughly as you can in order for us to work with you with your plan of wedding, and to determine the right approach to the pre-marital counselling you need. Please note that the consent for officiating your wedding will be determined by meeting the requirements of our Christian faith and the guidelines of ECBC.

Name: _____ / _____
FIANCE / FIANCEE

Address: _____

Tel.: _____ E-Mail: _____

Date of Wedding: _____

Place of Wedding: _____

Age: _____ Status: Single _____ Divorce _____ Widow _____

Faith: _____ Church Attending: _____

Pre-Marital Counselling: ECBC _____ (Date) Other _____ (Specific)

1. WHY DO YOU WANT TO GET MARRIED?

2. IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN, HOW AND WHEN DID YOU COME TO KNOW JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOR?

3. ARE YOU PRESENTLY LIVING TOGETHER? IF SO, UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES?

4. DO YOUR PARENTS GIVE YOU THE BLESSING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE? IF NOT, WHY?

Counsellor: _____

Date: ____ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5

Comments: _____

Appendix 1
Evangelical Chinese Bible Church

Divorce and Remarriage

1. Marriage is instituted by the Holy God and must be held in honor among all people. According to Malachi 2:16, God hates divorce. Christians must have the same attitude towards divorce and see it as a violation of Gods original purpose of marriage.
2. The Bible permits divorce on grounds such as (a) marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 19:9) and (b) desertion by an unbelieving partner (I Corinthians 7:12-15). The Bible does not commend divorce but permits it as a concession to human sinfulness.
3. Where a divorce occurred on biblical grounds, the Bible does give permission for the innocent party to remarry. The guilty party must remain unmarried until true repentant is evident. However, both must first seek, whenever possible, to restore their marriage by the grace of God.
4. When a divorce occurred on non-biblical grounds, the validity of the divorce is not recognized by God (Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12) and thus the divorcee who remarries first commits adultery (Matthew 19:9). One who marries a person divorced on non-biblical grounds also commits adultery (Luke 16:18). Reconciliation and restoration (I Corinthians 7:10-11) must therefore be encouraged unless one or both have remarried (Deuteronomy 24:1-4).
5. In the case when a person becomes a Christian after his or her divorce, remarriage is permitted provided the partner is a believer (II Corinthians 6:14). When we become a Christian, we are a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17) and God will hold us accountable from the point of salvation. However, the first responsibility of a new believer includes seeking peace and restoration with the ex-spouse.
6. Any divorcee must go through extra counseling to ensure healing and deliverance before he or she commits to another marriage. One will be encouraged not only to ask for forgiveness but also to forgive. We believe that the grace of God is operative at the point of true confession and repentance (I John 1:9).