

Getting married in Church - it's special!



A church is so much more than simply a venue for your wedding. Unique and special things become part of your marriage, on the day itself and beyond:

A church wedding will add a spiritual dimension to your marriage. The ceremony includes God and looks to him for help and guidance. God's blessing is the main attraction for many couples, whatever their beliefs.

You can make amazing vows, or promises, in a church. You can only make vows this big in a church. These vows, made in public, will help you to stay together and grow together. God and your church are there for you to help you keep your vows.

The Vicar has a very particular role to play in your wedding. They can blend ancient tradition and modern experience to reflect your story. Because of the relationship with the Vicar, your wedding can be made personal, memorable, meaningful and beautiful.

Church buildings offer centuries of history. Imagine all the couples who have married in your local church, some of whom may well be your family. We know these sorts of connections can make your day even more special.

So what are the vows you take and what do they mean?

How does the church think of Marriage?

This is described in the preface to the service and these are some of the significant sentences:

“It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.”

Marriage then is a gift of God where two people are united in love and companionship for each other for the rest of their lives.

The Vows

The vows you make are summarised as:

(Both partners make the same vows)

*I, N, take you, N, to be my wife/husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward;
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
till death us do part; according to God’s holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.*

When the ring(s) are exchanged this is said:

*N, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

These vows are intended to express the fullness and total commitment that a married couple share between themselves. They cover future circumstances in terms of health and wealth. They also make a commitment to nurture, care and encourage each other – note the line ‘love and cherish’. This is where Christian marriage goes beyond that of a convenient partnership that has mutual benefits, like a business partnership, it is a commitment to love and care for your spouse in all circumstances. This could be that roles in marriage do become skewed in a range of ways (eg in caring for each other).

Getting married in church is a commitment in front of God to mark the seriousness of such a commitment but also an opportunity to acknowledge it’s not always easy and to ask for God’s help and blessing in the marriage. (Which God freely Gives)

For the giving of rings that promise encompasses the sharing that is that the heart of marriage. It includes physical exclusivity but complete sharing of wealth. The extension of that is that talents and skills are also shared.

These are the traditional vows that have been more or less the same since 1549. So you are sharing in a long tradition! The working out of the implications – of changing from unmarried to married couples – can be a lifelong process. This is why we encourage couples to take part in a course like ‘Marriage by Design’ or the ‘Marriage Sessions’ (Both by Care for the Family). These courses look at aspects of aligning expectations and priorities. They also look at the use of resources (money) as a couple and plans for the future. There are also skills to be gained in understanding communications techniques and how to manage any conflict.