



Wedding Guidelines

The church's guidance on preparing for marriage, counselling, dress, music and ceremony arrangements.

Instructions for Wedding Ceremonies

Open Door Baptist Church

Introduction

We congratulate you on your forthcoming marriage. Scripture honours marriage and provides guidance for married life [[Hebrews 13](#); [I Corinthians 7](#)]. Marriage is a lifelong commitment: the vows are made to one another before the Lord and the gathered witnesses. As the Creator of marriage, God has revealed His guidance for married life in His Word. We believe that committed Christians should enter marriage prayerfully, with the counsel of their God-given authority. For this reason, the pastors of Open Door Baptist Church will marry only those who give testimony of saving faith and are living in submission to the Lord. We welcome you as you prepare for this new stage of life and will seek to guide and support you through the process. May God bless your union.

Counselling Procedures

Every wedding conducted by the pastors of Open Door Baptist Church requires premarital counselling over several sessions. Contact the church to discuss the counselling materials, schedule and arrangements before making wedding plans.

General Information

Careful planning and preparation help a wedding run smoothly. The following guidelines explain the church's expectations and help you make arrangements in advance.

Please contact the church to reach the wedding co-ordinator, who will help you plan the ceremony and follow the church's wedding guidelines and timetable. Discuss the arrangements and any associated costs before confirming them.

Discuss the practical arrangements for your wedding with the church in advance, including any setup needs. Confirm what can be provided before making bookings or purchases.

Contact the church to discuss possible wedding dates and the availability of the facilities. Please suggest more than one date and wait for confirmation before making bookings.

All weddings held at Open Door Baptist Church must follow these wedding guidelines. Please read the entire guide carefully and complete the acknowledgement form at the end to confirm that you agree to follow the guidelines.

General Guidelines

- Open Door Baptist Church conducts weddings only when both the bride and groom are from an Independent Baptist church.

- Smoking is not permitted in any church facility at any time.
- No divorced person will be married at Open Door Baptist Church.
- Weddings may not be held on Sunday.
- Anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be permitted to participate in the ceremony.
- Please do not wear shorts or short skirts during setup, the rehearsal or any other part of the wedding.
- We believe that long hair is inappropriate for men. Men in the wedding party are expected to have neatly cut hair. Facial hair is permitted but should be neatly trimmed.
- Obscene or suggestive writing on cars will not be permitted.
- The wedding should be a joyful occasion, but horseplay and practical jokes are inappropriate during the rehearsal and ceremony.
- Weddings that include dancing or the serving of alcohol will not be held at Open Door Baptist Church. This includes weddings where the reception is held elsewhere.
- Throwing the bride's garter is not permitted.
- The couple is responsible for informing the wedding party of these guidelines.

Dress Guidelines

All wedding dresses and bridesmaids' dresses must meet the church's standards:

- The front neckline must be no lower than four finger-widths below the wearer's collarbone, measured with her own fingers held together. The back of the dress must not fall below the wearer's normal bra line.
- Off-the-shoulder dresses are not permitted.
- Sleeveless dresses must have fabric several inches wide over each shoulder, reaching the shoulder's outer edge. They must fit closely under the arms and must not be cut away at the shoulders, sides or underarms. Spaghetti straps are not permitted.
- Any slit or pleat at the back or sides must be sewn closed so that it does not open above the bottom of the knee.

Bride's Wedding Gown:

The wedding co-ordinator must visually check the bride's dress before her bridal portrait is taken. The bride must wear the dress during the check, and any required alterations must be completed before the portrait is taken. If no bridal portrait is planned, the dress must still be checked well before the wedding to allow time for alterations. The co-ordinator will check the dress again if significant alterations are made.

Bridesmaids' Dresses:

The wedding co-ordinator must visually check one of the bridesmaids' dresses well before the wedding. The bridesmaid must wear the dress during the check. Allow time for any required alterations. The co-ordinator will check the dress again if significant alterations are made.

Out-of-Town Brides and Bridesmaids:

Contact the wedding co-ordinator well in advance to agree how and when dresses will be reviewed for brides or bridesmaids travelling from outside the area. Allow enough time for any alterations rather than leaving the review until after the rehearsal.

Conclusion:

These guidelines are intended to uphold biblical modesty, avoid causing offence and maintain the church's standards. Consult the wedding co-ordinator before purchasing a dress, especially if it cannot be returned, and discuss any questions in advance.

Music Guidelines

A wedding is a worship service, and its music should meet the same standards as any other church service. Keep this in mind when choosing music for the ceremony.

All wedding music must meet the standards of Open Door Baptist Church. Submit your proposed music to the church for review and approval at least four weeks before the ceremony.

For the church's music standards, including traditional Christian hymns and its position on contemporary Christian music (CCM) and Christian rock, see [Section 7.6, Music, of the Doctrinal Statement](#).

Discuss any fees or honoraria with the musicians before confirming their participation. Some may offer their services as a gift; confirm the arrangements in advance.

Practical Considerations**Finances:**

Agree on a realistic budget for your wedding, reception and any honeymoon plans. Confirm costs before making bookings or purchases, and choose arrangements you can afford. Careful, modest planning can help you avoid unnecessary financial pressure as you begin married life.

Family Planning:

Discuss family planning together before marriage, with an emphasis on clear communication and a balanced approach. We believe that methods such as the **IUD** or "**abortion pill**", and drugs used to terminate a pregnancy, are unbiblical. Discuss medical questions with your doctor and questions about the church's convictions with your counsellor. If you choose to use birth control, make sure you understand its use and implications.

Living Arrangements:

Agree on where you will live after the wedding and discuss how the arrangements will affect your married life. Living with relatives after the wedding is not recommended. Where possible, have your home ready before you return from your honeymoon.

Work/School Arrangements:

Discuss how work and study commitments will affect your married life, including your time, finances and future plans. For those currently pursuing an undergraduate degree, we strongly recommend completing it before marriage. Talk about your expectations for family life, including the wife's role in the home if you have children.

Marriage Documentation:

Contact the church early to confirm which documents are needed and how to provide them to the pastor before the ceremony.

Honeymoon:

If you are planning a honeymoon, choose a private, restful time together rather than a trip centred on visiting relatives. A typical honeymoon will last about a week and can be inexpensive if the couple shops around. Plan within your budget and avoid unnecessary travel, particularly on the first night. We recommend avoiding large crowds and busy destinations. Make reservations in advance and share essential contact details with someone you trust in case of an emergency. Keep your first night's accommodation private and your belongings secure. Your honeymoon can create some of the greatest memories of your marriage.

Planning Your Ceremony

- Plan the order of your ceremony with the church, including the vows, readings, music and participation of the wedding party. Confirm the agreed arrangements before preparing or printing any ceremony programmes.
- Submit any proposed vows, readings or other additions to the church in writing several weeks before the wedding for review and approval.

Conclusion

We hope these guidelines help you prepare thoughtfully for marriage. Please contact the church with any questions and discuss your plans before making arrangements. After reading the full guide, complete and return the acknowledgement form at the end. May the Lord bless you as you prepare for married life.



Wedding Guidelines Acknowledgement Form

Please read the complete wedding guidelines before signing this form. Return the completed form to the church.

We confirm that we have read and understand the wedding guidelines of Open Door Baptist Church and agree to follow them. We will discuss any questions and confirm our wedding arrangements with the church.

Bride's full name

Groom's full name

Proposed wedding date

Contact telephone

Bride's signature

Date

Groom's signature

Date

The proposed wedding date and arrangements must be confirmed with the church.