



## **Leading couples to a God-honoring marriage**

*“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and  
be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”*

*- Genesis 2:24*

Dear friends,

Congratulations on your recent engagement!

Who you marry is the second most important decision you will make on this earth. It is preceded only by your decision to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. We assume that you have prayed about this decision and know that God's hand is upon it.

It is our desire to help make this time in your life enjoyable and memorable. God created man and woman in the beginning and intended that they be joined in marriage so that each might give the other what each lacked alone. Since God designed the marriage relationship, it only follows that He would know best about what it takes to have a happy marriage. To build a Christian marriage, the center must be around God and His precept for marriage. This means one man and one woman for the rest of their lives. It also means raising children in a Christian home based on biblical principles, with God's Word being their one and only authority.

As we read the guidelines in His Word, we are able to understand some basic principles that must be applied if we hope to experience joy and fulfillment in marriage.

I hope you will find this handbook helpful as you prepare for your wedding. We have a great team ready to help you from marriage mentors to our wedding coordinator.

In Christ,  
Jim Bolen



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## **Biblical Principles and Guidelines**

### **Established by the Executive Office and Elders**

**\*Couples – As defined in the Compassion Christian Church Policy Manual: A marital union consists of ONLY the relationship between one man and one woman.**

Because we are committed to leading couples\* to a God-honoring marriage, we want to share the following guidelines. Our purpose is not to condemn or reject anyone, but to comply with God's principles for marriage.

Couples being married at Compassion Christian or by one of our pastors must have surrendered their life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and must be committed to establishing a Christian home.

Couples must remain celibate and not live together prior to the wedding ceremony. The pastor will not perform the ceremony if the couple is living at the same address.

*1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Ephesians 5:3-7*

Persons may be considered for remarriage at CCC should they meet one of these biblical criteria:

Former spouse is deceased. *Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:39*

Divorce occurred prior to conversion. *2 Corinthians 5:17*

Divorce occurred because of sexual unfaithfulness by spouse. *Matthew 19:3-9*

Desertion by an unbelieving spouse. *1 Corinthians 7:15*

If a divorced person answers negatively in all cases, acknowledging that other extenuating circumstances often relate to divorce, a meeting with the pastor asked to do the wedding is required prior to agreeing to officiate wedding.

No remarriage after divorce or death of a spouse will be performed until at least one year has passed from the time the divorce is finalized or the death of the spouse.

No pastor on the CCC staff will marry a couple if another pastor of the church has refused to perform the ceremony due to biblical reasons.

We do not marry couples if either person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs (other than those prescribed by a doctor) before or during a rehearsal and or wedding. Note: Any member of the wedding party who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs (other than those prescribed by a doctor) will not be permitted to participate in the wedding. If a pastor other than one on the church staff is used, it must be approved by the senior or executive pastor.

## Pre-Marital Preparation

Any couple\* desiring to be married at Compassion Christian Church or by a Compassion Christian Church pastor must complete the pre-marital preparation course offered by the Marriage Ministry prior to the marriage.

**Pre-marital preparation includes:** Prepare inventory/follow up sessions with mentor couple twice a month for four months.

These are suggested scriptures to read and study together as you prepare for your marriage:

**Genesis 1:26- 2:25**  
**Ephesians 5:22-33**  
**Galatians 3:26-29**  
**Proverbs 31:10-11**  
**1 Peter 3:7**  
**Hebrews 13:4**

### **My question for you:**

What do you envision as the atmosphere or prevailing tone of your wedding?

### **My challenge for you:**

Ask God to prepare you for the kind of wedding described above.



## From “The Song of Solomon” By Tommy Nelson

### **A Great Wedding is a Divine Appointment**

If you are engaged to be married, I hope you feel that you are at the point of marriage because God has brought you there. A wedding is more than a legal transaction – it is a holy and divine moment in which God is fully present as the foremost witness to the wedding VOWS.

### **A Great Wedding is a Time for Celebration and Joy**

Your wedding should be a time of joy, sweetness and happiness. The atmosphere should be filled with laughter, praise and song. Nothing truly matters except the love and happiness of the couple being united in marriage, no matter what might happen in the way of glitches in the pomp and circumstance.

### **A Great Wedding Should Have a Supportive Atmosphere**

Your wedding ceremony should bear a sense of security, safety, protection and solidarity. One place this safety and security should be the most evident is in those people you choose to be attendants in your wedding ceremony. It is very important to choose godly people who will support you in the vows you make. Don't ask someone to stand up for you who is not completely committed to you, to your marriage and, in general, to the sanctity and value of marriage.

### **A Great Wedding is Marked by Strength**

Women are drawn to strength. This doesn't necessarily mean physical strength, but strength of character, inner strength. A woman wants a man who displays his love for her through his willingness to support her both emotionally and financially. In these days of two-income families, we sometimes forget that it is the man's primary responsibility to provide for his family. A woman wants to feel secure. A man who knows that he is strong inside in faith and character stands tall and proud. He is ready to assume the responsibility of marriage with the assurance that he can provide for his wife.

### **A Great Wedding has Parental Approval**

In Song of Solomon 3:11, Solomon's mother crowned him with the wedding crown as a sign that she approved of the woman he was marrying. This is similar to our modern practice of a father giving away the bride. It signifies not only that her parents approve of the man she has chosen to marry but that they trust him enough to give their daughter to him. The only thing that makes it truly possible for parents to give up their children to marriage is the belief that the marriage is God's plan.

### **A Great Wedding Should be a Day of Splendor**

Your wedding day should be a day you look back on as a day of joy and blessing. It should be the highlight of your life – the day when two lives were joined as one spiritually, emotionally, financially and socially.

\*Reference Song of Solomon study

## The Wedding Covenant

**A covenant is based on trust between parties;** a contract is based on distrust.

**A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility;** a contract based on limited liability.

**A covenant cannot be broken if new circumstances occur;** a contract can be voided by mutual consent.

**Your wedding is important to God and His church because it has a biblical tradition.**

**What is the significance of a white aisle runner?**

It is a symbol of walking on holy ground. A covenant is not made merely between two people and their witnesses. It is made in the presence of God.

He is actively involved in the agreement because it is God that joins them together.

**Why are the parents of the couple given special seating?**

The parents of the bride and groom are part of the marriage covenant. The commitments they make during the ceremony are just as binding as the vows of the couple.

**Why does the groom enter the auditorium first?**

By entering the auditorium first, the groom signifies that he is the covenant initiator. This is important because whoever initiates the covenant assumes greater responsibility for seeing it fulfilled. God initiated the covenant of salvation with us. God is still at work to fulfill His covenant, and Christ will soon appear with the sound of trumpets to consummate the wedding with His bride, the church.

**Why does the father walk with the bride down the aisle?**

This symbolizes the father's agreement with the bride's choice of husband.

"I am endorsing this man as God's best choice for you, and I am now bringing you to him." At the same time, the father states that he is presenting the groom his daughter who he has earnestly endeavored to train as a pure bride.

**Why does the minister ask, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?"**

This response symbolizes not only the full blessing of the parents, but also the transfer of responsibility to the groom by the father. A daughter is under the authority and responsibility of her father until she is married.

**Continued on next page**

### **Why do the bride and groom take each other's right hand during the wedding vows?**

The open right hand offered by each party symbolizes their strength, resources and purpose. By clasping each other's right hand, they are pledging these to each other. Just as we depend on the "saving strength of God's right hand," so each partner can depend upon all the resources that the other brings into the covenant relationship.

### **Why does the groom make the vows first?**

He must be the leader and assume the greater responsibility to fulfill the marriage covenant. As covenant initiator, he must commit himself to the purpose of marriage that God established in the beginning.

### **What is the significance of the wedding ring?**

It symbolizes transfer of authority, strength and protection. In scripture, the ring is a symbol of authority with the resources that accompany it. In a covenant relationship, the ring symbolizes identification.



### **What is the purpose of introducing the new couple?**

The introduction of the new couple establishes their change of names. In the marriage when the wife takes on the name of the husband, the man becomes known as the husband of the wife. When God made the covenant with Abram, He changed his name to Abraham.

### **Why is the couple pronounced man and wife?**

The pronouncement of husband and wife establishes a definite point in time for the beginning of the marriage. These words are to remove any future doubts in the minds of the couple or the witnesses about the validity of the marriage.

### **Why do you serve food at the reception?**

Food is part of the covenant celebration. One of the root meanings of the word covenant is "to feed." Following the marriage, a feast was customary to further symbolize the unity of the couple. Entering into a meal is a form of covenant. It is significant that the first event of Christ's ministry was to attend a wedding feast and His first miracle took place during the occasion.

### **Why does the couple feed cake to each other?**

This act symbolizes their becoming one flesh. By feeding cake to each other, they are saying, "this represents my body. As you eat it, I am becoming a part of you, and as I eat the cake that you give me, you become a part of me."

## **Marriage Licenses (Q&A)**

**Chatham County  
Probate Court  
133 Montgomery, Suite 304  
Savannah, GA 31410  
(912) 652-7270**

**Q: How can a marriage license be obtained?**

A: Both the prospective bride and groom must appear together in the County Clerk's office. Bring picture identification.

**Q: Do the parties have to obtain a blood test?**

A: Not required, but strongly suggested.

**Q: How long is the marriage license good?**

A: A marriage license does not expire.

**Q: What is the fee for a marriage license?**

A: In Chatham County it costs \$26 with a notarized "Certificate of Completion" saying you have completed approved pre-marital requirements (if pre-marital preparation completed at CCC, the form and notary are available through church) or \$66 in without.

**Q: Is there a waiting period?**

A: There is no waiting period in the State of Georgia.

**Q: What is the age requirement in Georgia?**

A: 18 is the legal age. If either party is under 18, he or she must have parental consent.

**Q: In what county should a license be obtained?**

A: In the county that one or both parties reside. The license is then good in any county in the State of Georgia.

**Q: When do I receive my certified license?**

A: You will need to go to the County Clerk's office approximately two weeks after the ceremony or supply a self address stamped envelope.

## **Pastor's Fees**

Honorarium for the rehearsal and performing the wedding in the Savannah area is \$175. Destination Weddings (outside the Savannah area) require an honorarium of \$225 plus accommodations. This is usually given to the pastor the night of the rehearsal dinner or given to the wedding coordinator to give the pastor the day of the wedding.



## **Wedding Coordinator's Fees**

A wedding coordinator must be used if a Compassion Christian Church pastor is officiating the ceremony. Friends and family members may not be used in place of a coordinator. You will find the wedding coordinator to be a resource for you throughout your planning process.

## The Benefits of a Wedding Coordinator

Congratulations on your decision to be married! If you are reading this booklet you have already contacted the church regarding your upcoming wedding.

At Compassion Christian Church we are very intentional on making your rehearsal and wedding ceremony everything you want it to be and what God intended it to be! Compassion Christian Church requires each of our pastors to have a wedding coordinator at the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.

A wedding coordinator will supervise the rehearsal and the day of the wedding. They will be a liaison between families and Compassion Christian Church. The wedding coordinator provides direction, support and hospitality to the bride and groom, wedding party and their families. This is accomplished through the three primary aspects of the role: assisting with advance planning, conducting the wedding rehearsal and coordinating/overseeing the activities before the wedding, which concludes at the point the wedding party enters the Worship Center for the service.

A wedding coordinator will customize the events of the day so that all parties involved in your wedding (photographers, wedding party, etc.) will have a timeframe from start to finish. They can also narrow down your choices of photographers, musicians, reception locations and other details. Our goal is for your day not to be stressed but to be special and enjoyable!

Our first meeting will allow us to get to know each other and for you to bring your questions and ideas. I look forward to meeting with you and helping you “get to the church on time!”



## Helpful Hints and Suggestions

You have been dreaming of this moment all of your life! You met the person God has in mind for you and you are engaged, now what?

First, take it all in, relive the proposal, share the news with your family and friends, enjoy the moment!

You probably have some ideas and dreams for your wedding, perhaps you even have a book or Pinterest page set up with your wish list. The internet is a great tool for helping you to get organized and keeping all of your plans in one place. There are a lot of resources to consider while personalizing your wedding day. There is nothing like a bridal magazine to flip through, wedding websites are endless, Google wedding will give you tons of information and of course there is Pinterest. You probably have friends who have gone down this path before, so ask them what they would or would not do again. Below are several wedding sites where you can find a budget tracker, timeline breakdown for bookings, photographer tips, music suggestions, bridal shower registry ideas, honeymoon destinations and more:

TheKnot.com  
RealSimple.com  
WeddingWire.com  
Pinterest.com

Find the one you like most and works for you or you may have your own system. Can't find an answer to your question? Ask the wedding coordinator! The chances are she has seen it, heard it or will know where to find the answer!

Most of all remember this is your day, make it what you want it to be! Everyone is on a different budget and everyone has different styles, yet every wedding is beautiful!

Regarding vendors and locations for receptions, review their websites and Facebook pages, have a set of questions for them when you meet with them and interview at least two so you can compare services. It really comes down to finding the one that matches your personality and style.

## Popular Reception/Ceremony Locations

Savannah is beautiful! You cannot go wrong with an outside or inside wedding depending on the time of year. Consider taking advantage of the natural beauty of Savannah. Savannah may also be considered a destination wedding for some of your out-of-town guests, too.

Savannah Station  
Bryson Hall/Savannah Theatre  
Ships of the Sea Museum  
The Mighty Eighth Airforce Museum  
Marshall House

Vic's on the River  
Brockington Hall  
The Mackey House  
The Gingerbread House  
The Pink House



## Photographers

Apt B Photography

[AptBPhoto.com](http://AptBPhoto.com)

Dream Weaver Photo Booth

[DreamWeaverPhotos.com](http://DreamWeaverPhotos.com)

Esther Griffin Photography

[EstherGriffinPhotography.com](http://EstherGriffinPhotography.com)

5D Photography

[5DPhotography.com](http://5DPhotography.com)

Jamber Photography

[JamberPhotography.com](http://JamberPhotography.com)

Jenna Davis Photography

[Jenna-Davis.com](http://Jenna-Davis.com)

Billig Photography

[srichsx@comcast.net](mailto:srichsx@comcast.net)

## **Musicians and Vocalists**

How do you know what music to play before, during or after the ceremony? Do you need musicians? Can you use an iPod? These are great questions. There is no wrong or right answer. You can hand-select your own music, or you can ask the musician or vocalist for suggestions. You can also let them select the music pieces they get the most requests for at ceremonies. Most musicians and vocalist fees will start at \$100.

### **MUSICIANS**

Keith Baxter	231-8815
Nicholas Baxter	
Arianna Baxter	
Cheryl Frazier	756-6194

### **VOCALISTS**

#### **Female**

Perri Baxter	272-5323
Alyssa Wheeler	
Julie Pecenka	627-4284
Melissa White	706-201-7441
Melissa Sharp	404-514-3015

#### **Male**

Eric Betts	547-5802
Dan Pavlin	604-3265

**Still don't see what you are looking for? Contact your wedding coordinator.**



## Getting Married at Compassion Christian Church

### Church Reservations and Procedures

The following procedures are to be followed by all Compassion Christian Church couples who will be married at any of the Compassion Christian Church campuses.

- Contact the administrative assistant to the pastor who will be officiating to check for the church availability and apply to reserve the facilities.
- Give the administrative assistant to Facilities the deposit of \$500 to reserve the church as soon as possible. The date for the wedding cannot be finalized until the deposit and application is submitted.

### Church Policies

You must be affiliated with Compassion Christian Church to be married on one of the church campuses.

There is to be no smoking, alcoholic beverages or dancing on the church property. A slow dance between the father and daughter and the bride and groom can be requested. Please call the Care Ministry department at 912-629-4720.

You must use sound/lighting/video technicians from Compassion Christian Church if the ceremony is on one of Compassion Christian Church campuses. (See price list.) **Compassion Christian Church does not provide videographers for any ceremony held at the church.**

It is the bride's responsibility to choose and contact the coordinator, technical director, musicians and vocalists. (See resource and price list.)

There are to be no flash pictures and no photographer movement during the ceremony.

## Ceremony Information Form

Please complete this form and return to Yvonne Fowler,  
executive assistant to Care Ministry at  
[yfowler@compassionhchristian.com](mailto:yfowler@compassionhchristian.com) no less than two  
weeks before your final consultation.



Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's Phone Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Phone Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding  
Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information:  
Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Time Rehearsal Begins \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Location \_\_\_\_\_

Time Ceremony Begins \_\_\_\_\_

Ceremony Location \_\_\_\_\_

Time Reception Begins \_\_\_\_\_

Reception Location \_\_\_\_\_