

Wedding Handbook

A Guide To Marriage At Grace Bible Church



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Letter From Marriage Ministry Team

Congratulations and thank you for inquiring about our facilities for your upcoming wedding. Your wedding is one of the most joyful occasions in your life, and we are honored to be a part of this special event. While marriage is a lifelong process of merging two lives together, the wedding ceremony is the event that inaugurates this process.

A Christian wedding acknowledges marriage as a covenant relationship, or lifelong commitment to live together as husband and wife. Thus, a Christian wedding is an act of worship before God in which family and friends gather to praise God for His grace and love expressed through marriage. The love of God, as experienced in our personal covenant relationship with Christ, becomes the foundation for giving and receiving human love in the covenant of marriage. Couples who desire to be married at GBC or by one of our pastors at GBC will have an initial consultation with a GBC Pastor and/or Elder.

We are committed to building strong marriages built upon His Word. With this understanding of a Christian marriage and wedding ceremony, we have prepared this booklet and these guidelines to help your wedding be an occasion to celebrate God's love, to acknowledge Him as the source of love, and to help your wedding ceremony go as smoothly as possible.

See Appendix C for a check list of various items that will need to be addressed as you plan your wedding.

Marriage Ministry Team
Grace Bible Church
(863) 382-1085

Wedding Policies

- 1 The couple is required to attend one full course of Pre-Marriage classes (MERGE) during their engagement and complete Pre-Marital Counseling. Additional information is located under “Pre-marital Preparations.”
- 2 You must give 3-6 months advance notification before a wedding date can be assigned.
- 3 The Elders of GBC strongly encourage couples to abstain from physical intimacy prior to marriage. They also believe it is not in the couple’s best interest to live together before marriage. A pastor and/or elders are willing to meet with you to discuss any concerns regarding your upcoming marriage. *1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.*
- 4 It is the conviction of Grace Bible Church that marriage is a covenant commitment between a man and a woman made before God and man. While civil law may recognize a marriage between partners of the same sex, it is the position of Grace Bible Church that this union is not a marriage in the eyes of God, nor of Grace Bible Church.

Marriage License

Every marriage license is issued by a county court judge or clerk of the circuit court under his or her hand and seal. Marriage licenses are issued by counties and you can apply for your license at any county clerk's.

You can get married in any county in Florida, regardless of where you obtained your marriage license.

Marriage license is valid for 60 days after issuance. You must perform the ceremony of marriage before this 60 days has expired. Blood Tests are not required.

Both parties are to appear in the Clerk's Office and sign the application.

The legal age for marriage without parental consent is eighteen (18) years of age. The legal age for marriage, with parent's consent, is sixteen (16)

To obtain a marriage license you need:

- Identification: a picture ID such as a driver's license, state ID card, or valid passport; both parties will also have to provide their Social Security numbers, but do not need to provide their Social Security Cards.
- The fee for a marriage license is \$93.50 and there is a three (3) day waiting period for Florida residents; there is no waiting period for non-residents.
- Florida residents who have completed a premarital preparation course and can provide completion certificates will only be required to pay \$61.00 and the three (3) day waiting period will be waived.
- Once you completed the said requirements, the Church will provide you with a certificate of completion.

Please discuss with your officiating pastor their process for obtaining and signing the license.

Pre Marital Preparations

The most important part of the couple relationship is planning for your marriage.

GBC weddings (or those officiated by a GBC Pastor) require you to take part in our MERGE Pre-marital class. This 8 week class takes place on Tuesday evenings. You can register on our website gbc.life. Each class will require purchasing the Class Curriculum Workbooks when you register for the class. Your total fee for this class is \$25/per person. (\$50 per couple) Should you have any questions or concerns regarding your mentoring please contact the Randy & Paula Novak. (219-365-3364)

In addition to completing the 8 sessions of Merge, all couples are required to complete premarital mentoring with either the pastor who will officiate the ceremony or a staff-approved mentor couple. Couples are required to take the PREPARE inventory, which provides specific feedback (both strengths and growth areas). Results of the PREPARE inventory will be discussed and reviewed with the mentor couple and/or officiating pastor. The cost of the inventory is \$35/couple. If a mentor couple is meeting with you instead of the officiating pastor, you may be asked to meet with the officiating pastor 1-2 times, in order to discuss your service/ceremony as well as to give the pastor the opportunity to know you as a couple.

Role of the Pastor

Worship and Marriage services at GBC are led by one of its Ordained Pastoral Staff or an Elder. They are glad to share the worship service with an Ordained Pastor from another church or denomination; however, final Consistory approval is required for any pastor to participate in, or to perform the ceremony. Denominational credentials of ordination may be required by the Elders prior to approval. If you are using a Pastor outside of GBC, please use the form in Appendix B.

The Pastoral Staff will require an initial meeting with the couple in order to confirm their wedding request. The Pastor will make the final decision as to whether he will marry the couple. Each Pastor will meet approximately 1-3 times in addition to this initial meeting to discuss the couples relationship, future marriage and wedding content. Please schedule these meetings through the Pastoral Secretary.

Available Staff Pastors include:

Dustin Woods	dustin.woods@gbc.life
JJ Bender	john.bender@gbc.life
Kendal Sheen	Kendal.sheen@gbc.life
Chris Taylor	chris.taylor@gbc.life
Cameron Sandel	cameron.sandel@gbc.life

Setting the Date

- 1 Only one wedding is allowed per week at GBC
- 2 Weddings will have the church for approximately four to five hours on the wedding day.
- 3 The Worship Center at GBC may be used for weddings on Friday night, Saturday morning/afternoon, or Sunday afternoon. . Friday weddings may begin as early as 3:30 pm and must be vacated by 10 pm. Saturday weddings must be completed and cleaned up by 3:00 pm. Sunday weddings may begin after 3:00 pm.
- 4 If using the Children's Center for a reception on Saturday, it must be cleaned up by 3:00 pm.
- 5 There are no weddings scheduled on Holiday Weekends. (New Years Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Years Eve.
- 6 There will be no weddings when there are large events scheduled at GBC
- 7 Please fill out the wedding request form in Appendix D to schedule your wedding.

Decorations

The couple or their designated person(s) are responsible for removing all decorations that will be going to the reception hall immediately following the ceremony. The rental person(s) should also be informed that they are responsible for all damages incurred through the misuse of the facility. In the event that the couple desires to leave some flowers in the church, approval of the Church office is required.

The decorations for worship services on the Worship stage will remain and not be changed according to wedding colors or personal preference in staging.

Rehearsal

Rehearsals are scheduled for the Friday before the wedding for one hour time slots and will be directed by the officiating pastor and the Pastoral Secretary. The rehearsal times lot will be arranged through the Pastoral Secretary. The entire wedding party should attend, including, ushers and immediate family members. Rehearsals will begin on time and will last no longer than one hour.

Participants should arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time. Any changes must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator by the end of the rehearsal. There will be no changes on the day of the ceremony.

Set Up & Take Down of Decorations & Rehearsal

Optional Components of the Wedding Service

Music Selection

Since the wedding is a worship service, the music selected should reflect the reverence of the occasion. Therefore, music sung or played at your wedding service should place the emphasis on the glorification of God. Music that reflects the Christian tradition, whether classical or contemporary, is appropriate. All music selected, both instrumental and vocal, must be pre-approved by the Wedding Coordinator one month prior to the wedding. (see Appendix F) If the instrumentalist does not have a copy of the music selected, it is the responsibility of the couple to provide it. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to contact musicians and vocalists in order to communicate about the music for your wedding day. Traditionally music is played 15-20 minutes for the Prelude. There are many options that can be used (i.e. ensembles, solos, duets, instrumental music, congregational singing, or a combination of these).

Instrumentalists

It is the wedding couple's responsibility to select their instrumentalist for the wedding service. All musicians should coordinate their own practice times and plan on attending the rehearsal if possible.

Vocalists

Vocalists needing accompaniment are asked to contact the accompanist directly to coordinate their practice time. All special music selections are required to be pre-approved by the Pastoral Secretary.

**Optional
Components
of the
Wedding
Service**

(Continued)

Facility Guidelines

Sound, light and musical equipment are not to be removed, moved, or used without the permission from the Production Director or a GBC assigned sound person. Couples must use a GBC sound technician for the ceremony. If PowerPoint and/or video is needed, the church will provide this service at an additional fee. (See appendix A)

No items may be moved or removed from the Worship stage unless given approval by the Production Director.

Photography

Photographs provide wonderful, lasting memories of your wedding day. To assist in capturing these precious moments and at the same time to maintain the dignity of the worship service, the following guidelines have been established.

1. During the worship service, flash photography is permitted, except during the Scripture reading and during all times of prayer.
2. Family photos may be scheduled before the wedding service or immediately afterwards. The church will be reserved for a total of four to five hours for preparations, the service, and photos.
3. It is the responsibility of the couple to communicate these guidelines to the photographers and their wedding guests.
4. Photographers & videographers are discouraged from attending the rehearsal due to time constraints.

Candles

Candles or open flames must be dripless and in enclosed type container(s) such as a hurricane lamp.

Other

No confetti, rice, birdseed, etc., may be thrown within the church building. Only birdseed is to be thrown outside of the church building.

APPENDIX A

**Financial
Responsibilities**

WEDDING FEES AT GBC	PRICE
Worship Center (seats 600)	\$400
Children/Fellowship Hall (optional) (seats 100-150)	\$100
Class Rooms (Optional)	\$75
Set up/Tear Down (Custodial Services)	\$100
Sound Tech (microphones, Sound booth, etc.)	\$75
Lighting Tech	\$75
Suggested Honorarium for Pastor	\$100
Suggested Honorarium for Musicians	\$75

The couple is responsible for paying the honorarium directly to the Pastor, soloist and special musicians.

Important Items

- Fill out the Wedding Request form (Appendix D) and return to the church office to clear the date on the church calendar and the Pastor's calendar.
- A \$200 down payment is required for weddings. Your Date will be secured once the \$200 deposit is received. Please note that the \$200 is not your total fee.
- Checks should be made payable to: Grace Bible Church. The balance is due one month prior to wedding. A full refund (including security deposit) will be given if it is at least 7 days before the date. Under 7 days only the security deposit will be refunded.

OUTSIDE OFFICIANT FORM

Please Print

Name: _____

Title: _____

Church or Ministry: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone of church/ministry: _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-Mail: _____

Web Address: _____

Your services have been requested by

_____ to officiate their wedding at GBC.
(please list the names of both bride and groom)

In order to help us respond to this request, please answer the following questions:

I believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. YES No

I believe eternal salvation is available only through Jesus Christ. YES No

I accept the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. YES No

To the best of my knowledge, the person(s) who has requested my pastoral services for the above ministry is a professed and practicing follower of Jesus Christ. YES No

During the wedding ceremony, I am committed to giving a clear presentation of the Gospel. YES No

I am licensed or ordained under the authority of the following church/ministry:

Signature: _____

Please fax or mail this completed form at least one month before the event to:

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH,

Attn: Pastoral Secretary

4541 Thunderbird Rd. Sebring, FL 33872

FAX: 863-382-1454

APPENDIX B

**Outside
Officiant
Form**

APPENDIX C

Wedding Checklist

Select possible dates for your Wedding and Rehearsal

- Check availability of church dates and times and request your Pastor with the office?
- Receive and sign paperwork provided in this Handbook.
- Please contact your Pastor's Administrative Assistant to schedule for your initial appointment. You are encouraged to do these as soon as possible since your pastor will make the final decision to perform your ceremony. Your wedding date will be added to the official church calendar once your deposit and paperwork is completed and your pastor gives the final ok.

- Call the Pastoral Secretary to set up a meeting to go over the Wedding Handbook if you have any additional questions.

Schedule the Following:

- Musicians/soloists
- Photographers, Videographers, Florist, and Transportation

4-6 Months Before Wedding

- Make sure you attend the MERGE class (you can sign up on gbc.life or at the info booth).

90-60 Days Before the Wedding

- Obtain Marriage License (60 days before) and turn in to the Pastoral Secretary.
- Schedule your final meeting with your Pastor's Administrative Assistant (40-60 days before wedding date).
- Finalize details with your Wedding Coordinator to settle on wedding ceremony details such as music, vows, positions of attendants, etc.

30 Days Before the Wedding

- Your ceremony details **MUST** be complete and finalized. Marriage License must be submitted to the Pastoral Secretary in the church office no later than 3 weeks prior to the wedding.
- All facility rental fees must be paid in full prior to the wedding.
- Print Programs (GBC is not responsible for printing programs).

Rehearsal

- Bring the honorarium for your musicians/soloists.
- Bring anything you do not want to be concerned about on the day of the wedding, and it will be securely locked until the ceremony. (i.e. programs, guest book, flowers, baskets, favors).

Wedding Day!!

- Relax and Enjoy!

APPENDIX C

Wedding Checklist

(continued)

____/____/____
Date of Request

APPENDIX D

Wedding Request Form

Bride's Name: _____ Bride's Phone#: _____

Email Address: _____

Groom's Name: _____ Groom's Phone#: _____

Email Address: _____

Wedding Date: _____

Beginning Time: _____ End Time: _____

Wedding Ceremony Location: _____

Wedding Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Wedding Reception Location: _____

Wedding Coordinator: _____ Phone #: _____

Pastoral Preference:

- Dustin Woods
- Frank Derrick
- JJ Bender
- Kendal Sheen

CHURCH USE ONLY:

Contacted:

Pastor Yes No ____/____/____ by: _____

Premarital Counseling Yes No ____/____/____ by: _____

Production Tech Yes No ____/____/____ by: _____

Janitorial Staff Yes No ____/____/____ by: _____

Building and Grounds Yes No ____/____/____ by: _____

APPENDIX E

**Facility
Reservation
Form**

FACILITY RESERVATION	PRICE
<input type="checkbox"/> Worship Center	\$400
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Center	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Children/Fellowship Hall	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Class Rooms	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/> Set up/Tear Down (Custodial Services)	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Sound Tech (microphones, Sound booth, etc.)	\$75
<input type="checkbox"/> Lighting Tech	\$75

Signature of Renter

Date

Signature of Approver

Date

WEDDING OF _____

DATE OF CEREMONY: _____

START TIME OF CEREMONY: _____

MUSIC:

Please - will the music be:

- Tracks (if Tracks, please see the NOTE below)
- Live Accompaniment (if Live Accompaniment, please list all instruments and/or vocals)

Both

* NOTE: GBC requires all music/media/tracks to be provided by the wedding party and given to the Pastoral Secretary at the rehearsal. Approved methods of music/media/tracks include:

- CD with tracks in correct order as well as edits (song starts at a certain time)
- Mp3 player with playlist entitled "Wedding Ceremony"

SET-UP LOCATION:

Location of Instrument(s) and/or Singer(s):

_____ Stage Right (Facing out from the stage, the RIGHT side
(Traditionally the BRIDE'S SIDE)

_____ Stage Left (Facing out from the stage, the LEFT side
(Traditionally the GROOM'S SIDE)

OFFICIANT/READERS

Please indicate how many people will be speaking during the ceremony:

_____ Pastor

_____ Scripture Reader

_____ Other (please clarify)

VIDEO:

Please indicate if there are any video requirements during the service:

Approved By: _____ Date: _____

*Due ONE MONTH prior to the ceremony

APPENDIX F

**Music A/V
Form**

APPENDIX H

GBC'S STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARriage & CO-HABITATION

Any man and woman desiring to be married on or off the GBC campus by any GBC pastor is strongly encouraged to undergo marriage counseling by a GBC pastor. Any Grace Bible Church pastor may decline to perform a marriage ceremony that he feels is not in the best interest(s) of the Church or the persons making the request or would be in conflict with tenets of scripture.

As a result of the constant increase in the number of relationships ending in divorce, we are compelled to reassert a biblical view of marriage, divorce and remarriage that we prayerfully hold to based on our understanding of God's Word. It is more important than ever to reiterate the wisdom and goodness of God's plan for marriage.

MARRIAGE

God is profoundly serious about the sacredness of marriage, and as His followers and servants it is our privilege to share this high view. Marriage is a sacred Covenant relationship between one man and one woman. We believe that He designed it for the display of His glory and the manifestation of God's relationship to his people-the church, or the bridegroom and the bride, that is Christ and His love (Ephesians 5:25).

The Bible clearly teaches that the Lord, in His creation of Adam and Eve as husband and wife, so designed that marriage should be lifelong, covenantal, monogamous and between male and female. Ultimately, marriage is a tool by which He can make us holier and more Christ like. In addition, Scripture instructs that a believer is not to be "joined together" with an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Suggested Scripture Study: Genesis 2:18-24, Malachi 2:14-16, Matthew 19:3-6, Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:39, Ephesians 5:22-33

DIVORCE

Few life experiences are more painful personally or destructive societally than divorce. God hates divorce because He loves people, including those who have been through the divorce process. Our heart is to be faithful to God's Word and loving to God's people.

It is the collective belief, of the elders of Grace Bible Church, that divorce was never intended to be part of God's design and is always costly to the divorcing parties, connected children and society. Divorce is never God's best, and anyone who loves God and knows of His goodness would never consider it without broad input from community and spiritual counsel.

We never encourage anyone to rush *into* marriage, we likewise never encourage anyone to rush *out* of marriage. Forgiveness and reconciliation are clearly near to the heart of Jesus' life and message. We are fully committed to wisely and cautiously counseling toward repentance and restoration of the relationship.

APPENDIX H

GBC'S STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE & CO-HABITATION

(Continued)

Sexual Immorality: The bible allows for divorce (Matthew 19:3-9) for sexual immorality (*porneia*), however, where a spouse has been unfaithful, we are committed to encourage the couple to uphold the sacredness of the marriage covenant and to pursue and exhaust every means necessary to **grant forgiveness and reconciliation**.

Suggested Scripture to Study: Genesis 2:18-24, Malachi 2:14-16, Hosea, Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:1-12, 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, Colossians 1:19-22

Abandonment: But if the husband or wife who isn't a believer insists on leaving, let them go. In such cases the Christian husband or wife is no longer bound to the other, for God has called you to live in peace. 1 Cor7:15 NLT

Suggested Scripture Study: 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 14-16, 1 Peter 3:1-2

Abuse: It is never our counsel to recommend to a spouse to stay physically present in a physically abusive situation. Where obvious danger exists for either a spouse or child, we support the execution of all appropriate means to bring the abuse to an immediate halt including separation, church discipline, police action, a court order and other kinds of intervention by church members, family and friends. Should the unrepentant spouse choose divorce, Scripture calls the offended spouse to allow for divorce that is clearly initiated by the unrepentant spouse

Suggested Scripture Study: Matthew 18:15-17, Romans 13:1-5, 1 Corinthians 7:12-16, Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3: 12-17, 1 Peter 3:1-2

REMARRIAGE

While there is a broad range of convictions on the issue of divorce among serious students of Scripture, there is an even greater variety of positions when it comes to remarriage. We are continually devoting ourselves to struggle in prayer on how to best honor Jesus and glorify God in our teaching and convictions on this issue. Before we ask when or if remarriage after divorce is permissible, we must first ask if reconciliation is a viable option. We believe it best honors Jesus that one should remain single or be reconciled in marriage to the ex-spouse, as long as the possibility of reconciliation exists.

Divorced persons who desire remarriage should enter into such only with the greatest caution. It is rare for a marriage to fail for any cause in which one of the partners is completely innocent. A believer who seeks to remarry should demonstrate an attitude of repentance for any part he or she may have had in the original failure. Such individuals should receive counseling from the church so as to avoid repeating destructive attitudes and behaviors.

Suggested Scripture Study: Matthew 19:3-9, Mark 10:1-12, Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, 15, 39

CO-HABITATION

Biblical Marriage Relationship

The elders at Grace Bible Church consider the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and therefore our guide in matters of sex and marriage. The Bible says that the only proper place for sexual expression is marriage (Exodus 20:14; Deut. 22:21-22; Heb. 13:4). Marriage is defined as being between a man and a woman who are committed to a lifelong relationship (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5-6). Any sexual relationship outside of marriage, whether premarital, extramarital or homosexual—is considered a sin. Therefore, Grace Bible Church would advise against an unmarried, unrelated man and woman living together. Likewise those tempted toward homosexuality would be wise not to cohabit with those of the same sex and should instead elect to live alone or with close family members. It is our position that a heterosexual cohabiting relationship, even when celibacy is intended, invites too much temptation (1 Cor. 6:18), and does not properly avoid the “appearance of evil” (1 Thes. 5:22, KJV).

APPENDIX H

GBC'S STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE & CO-HABITATION

(Continued)