

Following Jesus Together

EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCH



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Marriage is more than a piece of paper or a ceremony. It is a sacred event designed by God Himself. At EBC we are happy to assist you in your marriage but the following guidelines will apply. If these are confusing or need clarification, please drop us a line and we would be glad to discuss them with you.

I. Couples will commit themselves to at least 10/1 hour marriage preparation sessions. The couple will make these sessions a priority and complete the assignments before hand. Under no circumstances will the ceremony take place before completion of the sessions.

Reasons:

- Marriage is a lifelong commitment. This is a small investment in that commitment.
- Studies show that couples who commit themselves to counseling sessions have a 50% better chance in maintaining a lasting marriage.
- A marriage license should be more difficult to get than a drivers license.

Options:

1. The pastor at EBC can provide the marriage counseling. These sessions have a cost involved. The cost is determined on a case by case level based on relationship to the church and financial ability.
2. Marriage counseling can be done outside the church (seminar, professional counselor). Proof of completion must be given before the ceremony takes place.

II. If the couple is living together or sexually active. They will commit to separate until the marriage ceremony (a minimum of 6 months). If the couple does not agree, the marriage will not be performed.

Reasons:

- The Bible teaches that un-married couples must remain morally pure.
- Studies show that couples who live together have a 37% greater chance of getting divorced as compared to the greater population Which has a divorce rate of 53%.

Therefore these couples only have a 1 in 10 chance that they will have a lifelong marriage.

- Prior to marriage couples who are sexually active, have a greater instance of divorce, sexual intimacy problems and adultery than the general population.

III. Couples will be asked to sign a purity covenant

Reasons:

- For all the reasons in #2 above and if a couple cannot keep a simple commitment to purity, then the chances of keeping a marriage commitment, long term, are nil.

IV. Previously divorced couples might be required to add up to 2 additional sessions to the required 10 depending on the circumstances.

Reasons:

- We do not frown upon these situations but often divorced individuals need to look at different issues related to marriage that would not apply to those who have never been married before.

V. Mixed faith marriages (i.e. Christian & Buddhist etc.) or same sex marriages will not be performed

Reasons:

- The Bible teaches that un-equally yoked marriages/business relationships are not part of God's will because the key factor in a successful marriage is the spiritual aspect.
- God designed marriage to be between a man and a woman. That which the State says is valid the church does not. Since we see marriage as primarily a spiritual undertaking, we must follow the Scriptures.

VI. The pastor at any time may decide not to perform the marriage based on a number of issues that come up. In these cases (though rare), the church will return any funds given to the church in payment.

Some may say these requirements are harsh or seem judgmental. Nothing could be further from the truth. We simply want to perform marriages that will last a lifetime, as God intended and will do everything possible to insure that as much effort is placed in preparing for many years of marriage as is placed in preparing for the marriage ceremony.

Our heart is to equip you for a life of marriage together not just a great marriage ceremony!

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call the pastor at 781-784-9008