

Cowee Baptist Church • Wedding Policies

A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The staff at Cowee Baptist Church believes the wedding ceremony is one of the most sacred Ceremonies of the church. A wedding ceremony is a time of worship. Nothing in your life is more sacred than your relationship to God and each other.

There are only two institutions that God has ordained, the church and the home. Therefore, marriage is a sacred institution, ordained by God Almighty. Marriage is always a three-way relationship involving Almighty God, man and woman. It should never be entered into lightly. In His Word, God said:

It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him. Genesis 2:18

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh. Genesis 2:24

The Apostle Paul said: *Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her. Ephesians 5:25*

SCRIPTURAL CONVICTIONS

Our pastors will officiate the marriage ceremony of those people who are Christians and can give adequate testimony of their experience with Christ. Outside of Christ, marriage is a human struggle. Only "In Christ" can a marriage ever be what it was intended to be. If one or both persons desiring to be married are not a Christian, a pastor would be thrilled to present "God's Plan of Salvation," so that there can be "completeness" in Christ.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

The pastors will not officiate the marriage ceremony of a believer with an unbeliever. The two will not be able to have one purpose, one mind ("the mind of Christ") and one lifestyle. It is a direct violation of Scripture to marry a Christian with a non-Christian. Again, if the "believer" would desire to bring the "unbeliever" to a pastor so that the gospel may be shared, the pastor would count it a privilege to do so.

Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

The question of divorce is perhaps the most difficult and complex question regarding a new marriage. Our pastors are under no obligation to officiate the marriage ceremony of anyone, but we are open to counsel those who choose to marry. Each situation will be treated individually, compassionately, and redemptively.

The following principles apply to remarriage after divorce:

- No remarriages after divorce will be performed if there is a possibility of reconciliation with either person.
- No remarriages after divorce will be performed until at least one year from the date the divorce is final.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

Premarital counseling is mandatory for all couples having a wedding ceremony. Our pastors are part of a community of pastors that have come together around marriage and family and have committed to this standard.

The agreed upon standard that follows is taken from the Macon County Marriage and Family Agreement signed in 2014:

Requiring engaged couples to attend at least eight hours of premarital education over a minimum of 4 months (6 month minimum is recommended).

- a. Instruction will include Scriptural fundamentals on marriage, insights to grow their marriage, and tools to enhance their marriage relationship.
- b. Couples will complete a relational inventory to help evaluate their relationship.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever: Amen.” 11 Peter 3:18

FACILITY USAGE

Cowee Baptist Church is pleased to offer its facilities for your upcoming wedding. Please see the facility usage policy for details on that process. The entire staff of Cowee Baptist wish to extend any assistance to you as you prepare for this special day.