



GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH
MARRIAGE AND WEDDING
CEREMONIES POLICY

POLICY MIN-5
Adopted: 6/20/11
Revised: 8/28/14
Revised: 6/15/15
Revised: 6/2/16
Reviewed: 1/21/22

Grace Community Church is strongly committed to helping people build family life on a solid Christian foundation. A part of this commitment is to inaugurate and support Christian marriage by upholding biblical standards for marriages, families and healthy relationships. A Christian marriage begins when a man and a woman who are both believers in Jesus Christ, living under the guidance of God's Word, commit themselves to each other for life as husband and wife (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31). Accordingly, the following are viewed by Grace Community Church as inappropriate and contrary to Scripture:

1. Any marriage or civil union that is not between one man and one woman.
2. Any sexual intimacy or sexual act between individuals who are not married to each other.
3. Any other activity, teaching, or behavior that is contrary to the biblical view of marriage and appropriate behavior as outlined in this provision.

Wedding ceremonies last an hour, marriages should last a lifetime. We are more concerned about healthy marriages than beautiful weddings. We feel an obligation not merely to provide a building and a ceremony, but to provide specific help in building healthy Christian families.

God holds us responsible to maintain His standards and to provide loving pastoral care. Therefore we do not rent the church facility or perform a wedding for anyone who merely wants a "religious wedding." Our general policy is established not to be judgmental or to cause difficulty, but rather to help people treat marriage as a high and holy calling from God.

Specifically our policy is as follows and applies to all weddings conducted under Grace's authority at or away from the church campus by a GCC pastor, Elder or other licensed person at GCC.

1. It is our goal that both bride and groom demonstrate personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and be actively involved in an evangelical local church in order to establish and maintain a truly Christian marriage.
2. Establishing a Christian marriage requires careful preparation. Generally Grace needs to be contacted at least four months prior to the proposed wedding date. We also suggest the wedding date be finalized after the initial meeting with a pastor.
3. We require couples to involve themselves in premarital counseling with a person who is well prepared to guide this process. This counseling typically takes 6-8 sessions to complete. To help ensure the best counsel possible, we request permission to speak with any counselors or support groups leaders either party has been involved within the past year. All information will be treated as confidential. *The Grace Community Church Confidentiality Policy* is attached for that purpose.



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In order to standardize our counseling practices, all GCC pastors, Elders or other licensed persons at GCC utilize the Prepare/Enrich Relationship Assessment as the basis for our counseling. All costs of the inventory must be borne by the couple seeking to be counseled. This matter of payment can be taken care of directly with Prepare/Enrich when registering to take the inventory.

4. If either the bride or the groom has gone through divorce, the pastor will verify that the matter has been dealt with biblically (See Position Paper For Divorce/Remarriage). Questions will be asked regarding the grounds of divorce, attempts that have been made regarding reconciliation, current status of the previous spouse, etc. The pastor may ask for permission to contact the previous spouse. When restoration has brought the person back to wholeness, there is the possibility of another marriage, although that marriage will always be overshadowed by the presence of the former spouse and the broken marriage bond. It can be successful when done under the care of the church, with honesty about sin, and the power of the Spirit for Christ-like life. Grace never ignores sin, but works God's healing in moving broken, sinful people to God's pattern for all of life. When, in the judgment of the ministry staff, Elder Team or their designates (in conjunction with at least one other member of the team) and a sufficient amount of time and healing has taken place, then a subsequent marriage may be considered.
5. Because of our commitment to biblical standards of marriage, we will not perform marriages between a follower of Jesus and one who is not. Neither will we perform marriages if the couple is sexually active. Where the couple has not maintained biblical standards of purity, we will shepherd them to begin doing so. Where repentance has taken place and is evidenced by celibate life style, God's forgiveness is sufficient.
6. Any pastor reserves the right to suggest making minor adjustments to the above policy due to specific circumstances. They may also choose to postpone or decline to perform a wedding.

MARRIAGE MENTORING

We all can benefit from outside perspective when walking through some of life's challenges. With marriage mentoring, we pair you and your spouse with couples who have been there before. Using the nationally known Prepare/Enrich Relationship Assessment, these mentor couples are trained to help you get to the next level - increasing your chances of having a happy and fulfilling marriage for many more years to come.

All Prepare/Enrich documentation will be destroyed no later than one year after marriage counseling or marriage mentoring concludes.