



**BROOKSIDE
CHURCH**

Wedding & Pre-marital Info

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Millard Campus
11607 M Circle
Omaha, NE 68137

Elkhorn Campus
3434 N. 204th St.
Elkhorn, NE 68022

Congratulations!

Congratulations on your recent engagement! This is an exciting time in your life; we rejoice that you have decided to enter into the covenant of marriage and are eager to see what God will do through your lives together.

To be clear from the onset — Weddings to be held at Brookside Church—either location: Millard or Elkhorn campuses—will only be approved if one or both members of the engaged couple are regular attenders of Brookside Church.

The material you'll find in this packet is intended to help equip you in certain ways as you move towards your wedding day:

- (1) We'll provide you with some tools and information you'll find helpful as you prepare for the wedding day itself. This information includes details on cost, procedures regarding facility use & ceremony set-up, and much more.
- (2) We also want to prepare you for a lifetime of God-honoring marriage by highlighting and reinforcing God's view of marriage. At Brookside we believe that marriage is a good gift given to us by God. Since God is ultimately the giver of marriage, this means He has certain designs for marriage that we want to keep in mind and follow.

Because we want to follow God's design for marriage, we ask that couples who are married at Brookside and/or by a Brookside pastor sign a Pre-Marital Covenant showing their commitment to head into marriage in a way that honors God (a sample is available on page 6 of this packet). Also, to help couples understand and appreciate God's plan for marriage, our pre-marital coaching program is required of all couples that are married at Brookside and/or by a Brookside pastor.

Please look this packet over thoroughly as you consider including Brookside in your wedding plans.

- If you are requesting a Brookside venue and/or a Brookside pastor for your wedding, YOUR NEXT STEP is to contact Brad Zook (e-mail address is below) and schedule a time to meet with him or another Brookside pastor. This meeting with a pastor is required before we can put your wedding date on our calendar.
- Please also fill out [THIS ONLINE FORM](#) to give us some initial information on you.

If you do NOT need a Brookside venue OR a Brookside pastor to officiate, but if you are still interested in going through the 6-session Pre-Marital Coaching program, contact Brad Zook to begin the process of getting that started.

If you have any questions at all regarding this, or any other pre-marital or wedding information, please contact Brad Zook at Brookside Church at 402-895-1484 or bzook@brookside.net.

Again, congratulations to you both!

Brad Zook
bzook@brookside.net
Director of LifeCare
Brookside Church

Pre-Marital Mentoring

(REQUIRED of those getting married at Brookside Church and/or by a Brookside pastor;
AVAILABLE for all interested regular attenders or couples without a church family)

Brad Zook, Director of Care Ministry, provides oversight to Brookside's Marriage Ministry and its team of trained and caring volunteer marriage mentors. These mentors work with all couples that get married at Brookside or by a Brookside pastor. This ministry is also available to other Brookside regular attenders who may not be getting married at Brookside or by a Brookside pastor, but who nevertheless want to lay a strong foundation for their marriage.

Please contact us **at least 6 months prior to your wedding date**. This will allow a comfortable amount of time to get you connected with a volunteer mentor couple and work through the 6 sessions of material with them.

Next Steps:

- Arrange a time to meet with Brad Zook by e-mailing him at bzook@brookside.net.
- At this meeting you'll review the Brookside Pre-Marital Covenant with Brad. (See page 6 sample.)
- You will also be given two packets to fill out that we call "Pre-Marital Groundwork Decks" and two books titled *Preparing for Marriage*.

Groundwork Decks

- Each of you will be asked to fill out a "Pre-Marital Groundwork Deck" of information. We ask that you each fill out these decks individually and plan on allowing about 60 minutes to complete them. This information will help your mentor couple get to know you better. Please know that all responses will be kept confidential.
- When completed, you can drop these decks of information off at the church office (in a large envelope ATTN: Brad Zook) with a receptionist or staff member.

Preparing for Marriage Books

These books will lay the foundation for your 6-sessions of pre-marital mentoring. To help cover the cost of these two books, you'll be asked to pay \$20.00 total (\$10 per book...cash, check (payable to Brookside Church) or ask about paying online.

Once the Groundwork Decks are completed and returned to Brookside, we will then work from our end to get you paired with one of our pre-marital mentor couples. Knowing that sending and replying to e-mails or phone calls can take a few days, we ask that you allow 10-14 days for this process to take place, once we get your completed Groundwork Decks. Usually, by the end of 2 weeks (or before) you should be receiving an initial contact—by phone or e-mail—from a couple introducing themselves as your premarital mentors. From there, you can coordinate times and places to meet and work through the pre-marital mentoring material.

Sample Pre-Marital Covenant

(all couples married at Brookside Church and/or by a Brookside pastor must agree to these commitments)

Congratulations! You have entered into a relationship that allows you to experience community with another individual on every level possible. Marriage will provide for you a chance to have a friend who will support, challenge, love, and enjoy you.

As part of Brookside's mission to help people find and follow Jesus, we also want to prepare you for a lifetime of God-honoring marriage by highlighting and reinforcing God's view of marriage. At Brookside, we uphold the biblical definition of marriage: Marriage is a lifelong union of one woman to one man, in covenant with God. Marriage is a good gift given to us by God. Since God is ultimately the giver of marriage, this means He has certain designs for marriage that we want to keep in mind and follow.

Weddings are a time when a number of promises are made before friends, family members, and most importantly, before the Lord himself. With the fulfillment of those promises in mind, we ask that you prayerfully consider making the following commitment in preparation for your marriage, as you strive to glorify God in this new, exciting relationship.

As a marrying couple we commit to...

1. **Creating God-honoring relationships that will allow us to pursue God's will for our marriage. We will do this by...**
 - a. **Completing 2 meetings with a Brookside pastor (one to go over this covenant & Brookside's wedding practices; the 2nd is with the marrying pastor to discuss the details of your ceremony).**
 - b. **Completing the 6-sessions with our pre-marital mentors**

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

2. **Growing in our understanding of a God-honoring marriage by...**
 - a. **Consider joining a Brookside Community Group within the first year of marriage.**
 - b. **Consider attending the budget course offered by Brookside Church (Financial Peace University).**

If you turn your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:2-6)

3. **Maintaining purity within our sexual relationship before our wedding by...**

- a. **Committing ourselves to sexual abstinence**

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own body in sanctification and honor. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)

- b. **Refraining from living together (please see pages 7-9 for a more complete explanation).**

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. (Ephesians 5:3)

4. **We confess that we are in agreement on spiritual issues and will strive to grow together in Christ-likeness.**

MARRYING COUPLE:

PASTOR: _____

DATE: _____



Living Together Before Marriage

First things first: We're glad you're interested enough in Brookside Church that you've dug deeply enough to find (and read) this paper on couples who are living together before marriage. Two factors that often attract people to Brookside are (1) our care for all people who walk through our doors, and (2) our reliance on God's Word as the source of truth. Our prayer is that the tone of this paper communicates both of those things: our care for you as a couple and our trust in and dependence on God's Word. We're available to further discuss this paper in person if you've got any follow-up questions or would like clarification on anything brought up here.

At Brookside, we are aware of the American cultural reality that many couples choose to live together before marriage. This has become so prominent that many of these cohabiting couples are unaware of God's design for marriage as a covenant - a special relationship in which a man and woman become one flesh (Genesis 2:21-24) and provide a glimpse (however partial or imperfect) of Jesus' relationship with His bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33). It is only within this covenant of marriage that couples are to be united as one flesh (Genesis 2:21-24). As a church, we want to help couples see that this design by God for marriage is best and is worth embracing. It is because of this teaching on what marriage is biblically that our common practice is to graciously, yet firmly, ask cohabiting couples to move apart until their wedding day.

A primary reason for our arrival at this position is that cohabitation offers "one flesh-ness" in ways that are outside of God's design. Pre-marital sex is one obvious example of this substitute "one flesh-ness" among couples living together (see 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 and Hebrews 13:4, for example). But cohabitation also poses as "one flesh-ness" in other ways that are also significant: paying the bills together, saying good night before drifting off to sleep, sharing the responsibilities of running a household, and more. In all of these ways, cohabitation offers an alternative to God's intended design of *marriage* being the context in which the one-flesh union is established and cultivated.

Potential dangers are presented in this substitute "one flesh-ness" offered by living together. There is the real possibility that, once married, couples will have a difficult time discovering what biblical, married "one flesh-ness" looks like in terms of serving one another and sharing each others' lives in the covenant of marriage. Or, having already satisfied desires for fulfillment outside of the marriage bond, the possibility exists that a spouse may do so again, either emotionally or physically. Additionally, cohabitation can undermine the commitment that should undergird marriage, and can steal the joy of discovering parts of your spouse that were a mystery while you were dating and engaged.

Gratefully, this isn't the final word, and - by the grace of God - you can take steps to ensure that these possibilities aren't realized. Whatever your history, we believe that God eagerly responds to couples who become aware of His design for marriage, and who make the changes necessary in their relationship to honor His intentions. By the grace of God, your future can be built on a godly foundation that reflects God's design.

And ultimately, we find it important to help couples understand that just as God's design for marriage carries implications **BEFORE** your wedding, so too God's design for marriage carries implications **AFTER** your wedding as well:

- *Before your wedding*, the biblical call to sexual purity takes the shape of abstinence until you are united in marriage; *after your wedding* this same biblical call to sexual purity still applies, but now takes the shape of exclusive faithfulness to your spouse physically and emotionally.
- *Before your wedding*, the biblical teaching that a married couple is one flesh takes the shape of not uniting as one flesh (either physically or coming together in other ways to share a home) until after your vows are said; *after your wedding* this teaching about one flesh should manifest itself in tangible ways as well (both physically and uniting in all the other ways that go along with two lives becoming one: financially, relationally, etc.).

If we can help couples lean into God's design as they prepare for marriage, we believe they're better equipped to continue honoring God's design for marriage after their wedding. On the flip side, our concern is that dating or engaged couples who are resistant to following God's design may carry that resistance into their marriage.

At Brookside, our goal is both to honor God's design for marriage and help couples start their marriage with as strong of a foundation as possible. Because of these reasons, please know that if you are living together before marriage, Brookside will graciously ask you to move apart until your wedding day, if you wish to be married by a Brookside pastor.

This decision will be inconvenient and will require sacrifice, but we strongly believe that it will set Christian couples on a new trajectory to enter into marriage with as strong and godly of a foundation as possible, as they walk forward in obedience to God's design for marriage. We believe that inconvenience - however large it seems - should never interrupt our willingness to obey God and His Word. We also believe that it is God who gives us strength to walk in line with Him, and that He will continue to provide strength and grace that surpass any levels of inconvenience.

While we can't remove all of the inconveniences you'll encounter if you decide to move apart, at Brookside we nevertheless want to make this transition as accessible as possible. Therefore, we'll help you brainstorm ideas for how to make this transition, by identifying places of temporary residence (e.g., the couch of a close friend or family member, perhaps a spare room in the home of a Brookside family, etc.), by walking with you until your wedding through pre-marital coaching, and by praying for resolve, strength, and joy as you walk ahead in obedience.

If you're interested in additional study on this topic, here are some places we'd point you:

Andreas J. Kostenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 2nd ed. Crossway, 2010.

Mike and Harriet McManus, *Living Together: Myths, Risks and Answers*. Howard Books, 2008.

Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, *Premarital Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate, and Think About Marrying*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Glenn T. Stanton, *The Ring Makes All the Difference: The Hidden Consequences of Cohabitation and the Strong Benefits of Marriage*. Moody Publishers, 2011.

Glenn Stanton, interviewed by Focus on the Family. "Cohabitation vs. Marriage: Why the Ring Matters." Available online at <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/radio.aspx?ID={B15FED40-8251-467F-AF84-67D38300F36E}> (Last accessed November 2, 2011)

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crafted by Brookside LIFEcare ministries, January 2012

Scripture verses cited in this paper (verses quoted from the English Standard Version):

Genesis 2:21-24

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Ephesians 5:22-33

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

Hebrews 13:4a

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled...

Couples Testimony

(Taken from *The Journey* ~ The Study Bible for Spiritual Thinkers)

My husband and I have been married for over three years now, and this letter is long overdue. I'm writing to thank the church for insisting that Chris and I move apart after we became Christians. Even though we had been living together for six and a half years and were engaged, the church exhorted us to establish a pattern of purity before getting married. I am so grateful ~ though I never would have predicted I would be! Allow me to explain.

The idea of living apart after such a long time together seemed impossible at first. After all, Chris and I had recently invested in a new house together! Still, the leaders of the church asked us to honor their wishes, even offering to help with the costs of finding a new place to live, if need be. We reluctantly trusted them, thinking that they probably had our best interests in mind. I moved out of the house for the five months that remained before our wedding.

During those five months we discovered a lot of things to be thankful for. First, we had the joy of knowing that we were obeying our church leaders, whom we had really come to admire since we became involved in the church community. Second, our decision to live apart was an immediate public testimony to the transformation that Christ had made in our lives. As it happened, our relationship became a strong, silent witness to three of my siblings about God's view on living together before marriage. Third, we now look at our relationship as if it had two phases ~ before Christ and after Christ. Doing so has allowed us to see many of the negative patterns that we had established before we were married and has given us a new perspective on our lives together. Sure, during those five months I missed my fiancé, my dog, and my house, but the long-term benefits of our decision far outweigh any short-term inconveniences we experienced.

Being married is a lot different than simply living together, and I'm glad the distinction between the two phases of our relationship has been so clear-cut for me. When we lived together, Chris and I were committed to each other, as long as we were in love; now we're in love because we're committed!

While our married life is not perfect, many of the problems we're experiencing are a result of our past life together. I believe that, had we waited to live together until marriage, we would have had greater respect for one another. We would have also learned to negotiate and to resolve our differences more constructively. When we lived together, we approached each conflict as one that might end our relationship. Doing so seriously hampered trust and intimacy in our relationship and encouraged fantasies about living alone. Now that splitting up is no longer an option for us we face our problems head-on, knowing that our old ways of dealing with them are inappropriate. We want our marriage to be God-glorifying, so we're getting help with our problems and are learning new communication skills.

We believe that marriage is a wonderful part of God's plan for the life of a man and a woman who want to live in a committed relationship. Our experience has shown us that living together before marriage makes the process of making that commitment more difficult, and we're convinced that others who experience the same kinds of problems that we faced will come to the same conclusion that we have. Thank you, once again, for your guidance. With God's help, we'll be able to continue to do our best to honor Him in our marriage.

Booking Information

(applicable for those getting married at a Brookside Church venue)

General Booking Information:

Because of the volume of wedding requests we receive, **we REQUIRE that at least one member of the engaged couple are regular Brookside attenders.** We also ask that you submit your request for the building at least 6 months in advance of your wedding date. This will allow time for us to make preparations and will also provide time for you to complete the pre-marital program (more on this elsewhere in the packet). Because Brookside understands and values the sacredness of marriage, we will only be able to hold the date on our church calendar after you've met with a Brookside pastor and after you have signed our Pre-Marital Covenant (page 6).

Brookside, either the Millard or Elkhorn campus, is unfortunately not available for receptions.

Dates and Times:

We offer Friday evening and Saturday afternoon time frames for weddings. On Friday evenings, the building needs to be cleared by 8:30pm. On Saturdays, the building needs to be cleared by 5:00pm because of Sunday morning programming. This gives our facilities staff and children's ministry staff time to clean and reset the venue and classrooms for activities on Sunday morning.

Wedding Coordinator:

When you book your wedding at Brookside, we will provide you with the necessary wedding coordinator to serve as your liaison to the facility management. (This person is not a wedding planner.) Any questions, concerns or requests will go through your coordinator. He/she will also assist the pastor during the rehearsal and ceremony and help things go smoothly. He/she will be available to meet with you before the wedding to go over the details as they pertain to the facility.

Holiday Weekends:

Due to seasonal demands on facilities, weddings are not scheduled on the major holidays/holiday weekends of Easter, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve or Day and New Year's Eve or Day.

Cancellations:

The Brookside Pastoral Staff and the Brookside Marriage Ministry reserve the right to cancel your wedding if you do not complete the pre-marital program or live in line with your covenant commitments. If cancellation is needed, Brookside will refund 50% of the booking deposit. Likewise, if the couple decides to cancel their wedding they will be refunded 50% of the booking deposit.

For more information:

For more information or to request a potential wedding date, please contact Brad Zook at the Brookside church office—402.895.1484 or bzook@brookside.net.

Facility Details—Millard campus

(applicable for those getting married at a Brookside Church venue)

Wedding Ceremony//Venues

Brookside Church has 2 campuses: our original Millard campus (11607 M Circle, Omaha, NE) and our Elkhorn campus (3434 N. 204th St., Elkhorn, NE).

At our Millard campus, we offer 3 venues to choose from, depending on size: Room 221, the HUB, or occasionally, our main auditorium.

- "Room 221" seats about 100 (max)
- "The HUB" seats about 180 (max).
- The auditorium seats a maximum of 500, *but is only allowed occasionally for weddings. It is, unfortunately, not available on Saturdays or Sundays due to set-up for our Sunday a.m. services.*

To see the other 2 venues (besides our main auditorium), please set up a time to view these rooms by contacting Brad Zook (bzook@brookside.net); or ask a Host Team member on a Sunday morning between services if you can view them.

The following is a list of what we provide for your wedding ceremony at Brookside:

VENUE SET UP:

- All chairs will be set up.
- The stage will be cleared except for the drum set (this can be covered with black cloth, if requested).
- Tables for guest book, gifts, etc. will be available for you to use.

PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN:

- A production tech is provided for your ceremony. He or she will arrive 1 hour before your *rehearsal* to set up lighting, sound, & music. Also, he or she will arrive 45 minutes before your *wedding* to make sure everything is ready to go.

DRESSING ROOMS:

- Two dressing rooms (Bride's Room and Groom's Room) with mirrors and clothes racks.

Facility Details—Elkhorn campus

(applicable for those getting married at a Brookside Church venue)

Wedding Ceremony//Venues

At our Elkhorn campus, the main auditorium is the only option for wedding ceremonies (as of now), and it seats 200 comfortably (or 250 maximum, uncomfortably).

The following is a list of what we provide for your wedding ceremony at Brookside:

VENUE SET UP:

- The stage will be cleared except for the drum set, though this can be covered with black cloth.
- Tables for guest book, gifts, etc. will be available for you to use.

PRODUCTION TECHNICIAN:

- A production tech is provided for your ceremony. He or she will arrive 1 hour before your *rehearsal* to set up lighting, sound, & music. Also, he or she will arrive 45 minutes before your *wedding* to make sure everything is ready to go.

DRESSING ROOMS:

- Two dressing rooms (Bride's Room and Groom's Room) with mirrors.

Rows and Aisle

There are 12 rows set up from the front to the back of the room. You may need this information if/when you plan decorations for the aisles.

Policies and Guidelines

(applicable for those getting married at a Brookside Church venue)

Building Guidelines

- ✓ We do not allow any alcoholic beverages or tobacco/smoking on church premises.
- ✓ Bubbles, rice, glitter, confetti, or real flower petals (silk petals are permitted) may not be used inside the building.
- ✓ No childcare rooms are available for nursery use during weddings.
- ✓ No animals are allowed in the building.
- ✓ Brookside does not rent out rooms for bridal showers or receptions.
- ✓ All food/beverages are restricted to the Bride's Room & Groom's Room.

Decorating Guidelines

- ✓ The Wedding Coordinator will review decorating plans with you.
- ✓ All candles must be enclosed in glass, with the exception of the unity candle and/or candelabras.
- ✓ In most rooms, nothing can be hung from the ceiling, and anything hung from the wall can ONLY be attached using painter's tape.
- ✓ Due to the nature of our auditorium set designs (at both campuses), sets/props may be located on the stage at any time of the year. Sets/props may not be altered or moved unless approved by the Production Technician.

Flowers

If you have arranged flower delivery, have your florist deliver the flowers 2-3 hours before your ceremony begins.

The Wedding Coordinator will arrange a time with you to bring the decorations and accessories into the building.

Set up and Clean-up

- For Friday weddings, the church is available at 10:00 a.m. for set-up and deliveries; and it needs to be cleared (after the ceremony) by 8:30 p.m.
- For Saturday weddings, the church is available at 8:00 a.m. for set-up and deliveries; and it needs to be cleared by 5:00pm in order to clean and set-up for Sunday morning programming.
- The wedding party must remove all non-church items that were brought into the church, including the Bride and Groom dressing rooms, before leaving the church.
- We understand that every effort will be made to protect personal items. However, the church will not be liable for lost, stolen or damaged personal items.

Pricing, Payment & Booking Contract

(please read this entire page whether you are using a Brookside facility for your ceremony or not – certain fees may apply even if you are not using the facility)

Costs directly associated with using a Brookside room/venue:

ROOM/VENUE COST: ***\$700.00**
PAYMENT INFO: Payment is due upon booking

*This payment includes compensation for both the wedding coordinator/facility person & the tech person, as well as for other general rental costs.

The easiest way to pay these fees and complete the booking contract is to fill out [THIS ONLINE FORM](#).

Other costs to factor in:

(These fees may apply whether you are using the Brookside facility for your ceremony or not. If these fees apply, please pay each of the following with separate checks.)

DAMAGE DEPOSIT: A damage deposit of **\$100** is required upon booking a wedding at Brookside. \$100 will be returned if premises and items used are satisfactorily maintained. If damages exceed \$100, an additional fee in the amount of the damages will be allocated.

PRE-MARITAL SUPPLIES: **\$20.00** for two (2) *Preparing for Marriage* books that will help shape the time you spend with your pre-marital mentor couple. (Cash, check (made out to Brookside Church) or pay online at the link above.)

OFFICIATING PASTOR: If you're using a Brookside pastor, payment for services is **\$200.00**. Please make this check out to the pastor directly, as a separate payment at the rehearsal.

MUSICIANS: If you have asked any musicians at Brookside to play for your wedding, including the worship pastor, you are responsible for working out separate payment with them directly.



Millard Campus
11607 M Circle
Omaha, NE 68137

Elkhorn Campus
3434 N. 204th St.
Elkhorn, NE 68022

Brookside Pastors to Officiate Ceremonies

Please contact directly the pastor you are requesting to officiate your wedding as they will need to check their calendars for availability. Please be sure to contact them at least 12 weeks prior to your wedding date. Brookside Church will not be able to guarantee a pastor to officiate your wedding if you do not allow the 12 week minimum.

Brad Zook
Elkhorn Campus Pastor & Director of Care Ministry
bzook@brookside.net

Tim Wiebe
Teaching Pastor, & Director of Training & Development
twiebe@brookside.net

Blaize Smith
Director of College Ministry
bsmith@brookside.net

Obtaining a Marriage License

For weddings at a Brookside Church campus, visit www.douglascountyclerk.org/marriage-licenses, and click on the "Marriage License" tab on the left side. There you will find out the requirements for obtaining a license. You can also download a Marriage License Application. This application must be filled out and submitted in person to the Douglas County Clerk's Office at:

Douglas County Clerk's Office
1819 Farnam Street
Room H08
Omaha, NE 68183
402.444.6080

If you are getting married outside of Nebraska, you need to obtain a marriage license from the state or country in which your wedding ceremony will be performed. Contact the jurisdiction you will be married in for more information.

* Please remember to have your marriage license present at the wedding ceremony!!! It is highly recommended to give the license to someone else (e.g., the maid of honor or the personal attendant) and ask that they keep it handy for when it's needed.

** When you get the marriage license, it often comes with a pre-addressed envelope. Consider sticking a stamp on the envelope before your wedding so the person mailing it can do so as quickly and easily as possible. The officiating pastor or wedding coordinator can help make sure your license is filled out and mailed promptly after your ceremony.

Wedding Ceremony Helps

(order of service)

About 8-10 weeks before your wedding date, you will sit down with your officiating pastor, catch up on a few things, and begin to put together an order of service for your wedding ceremony. (Please contact the officiating pastor if you have not heard from him 8 weeks before your wedding.)

The pastor will bring some suggested ideas and suggestions for you to include in the service, and you will be allowed to converse with him about questions you have and work towards personalizing the service. If you have questions about what's included in this "service planning meeting" before you get together, please contact the officiating pastor directly.

Wedding Ceremony Helps

(sample order of service)

PRELUDE

SEATING OF FAMILY

Grandparents

Groom's parents

Bride's mother

Mother's light tapers (optional)

Pastor & Groom proceed to stage

PROCESSIONAL

Wedding Party

Ring Bearer (s)

Flower Girl (s)

Bride & Escort

GREETING & DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

PRESENTATION OF BRIDE

SCRIPTURE READING

MESSAGE (5-7 min.)

PRAYER

MARRIAGE VOWS

EXCHANGE OF RINGS

LIGHTING OF UNITY CANDLE

BLESSING

DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

WEDDING KISS

PRESENTATION OF THE BRIDE & GROOM

RECESSIONAL

POSTLUDE/DISMISSAL OF GUESTS

Wedding Ceremony Helps

(sample wedding vows)

The following are examples of wedding vows for your ceremony. The pastor who will be performing your ceremony will need to know which sample number you select or if you will be writing your own.

Sample Vow #1

Groom: I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part. With all my heart I commit this vow to you.

Bride: I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part. With all my heart I commit this vow to you.

Sample Vow #2

Groom: _____, I love you. I believe the Lord has brought us together and in the spirit of His love, I take you, _____, to be my beloved wife. I commit my life to serve the Lord as one with you. I promise to encourage you and pray for you and to be your faithful husband for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part. With all my heart I commit this vow to you.

Bride: _____, I love you. I believe the Lord has brought us together and in the spirit of His love, I take you, _____, to be my beloved husband. I commit my life to serve the Lord as one with you. I promise to encourage you and pray for you and to be your faithful wife for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part. With all my heart I commit this vow to you.

Sample Vow #3

Groom: I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife. With deepest joy I receive you into my life that together we may be one. As is Christ to His Body, the Church, so I will be to you, _____, a loving and faithful husband. Always I will perform my leadership of you even as Christ does me. Knowing that my desire is to keep Christ the Lord of my life, I promise you my deepest love, my fullest devotion, my most tender care. My dedication to you will be second only to my dedication to God. I promise I will lead us into a life of faith and hope in Christ Jesus ever honoring God's guidance by His Spirit and through His Word. No matter what may lie ahead of us throughout life, I pledge to you my life as a loving and faithful husband.

Bride: I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband. With deepest joy I come into my new life with you. As you have pledged to me your life and love, so I too happily give you my life. And in confidence submit myself to your leadership as to the Lord. As is the church in her relationship to Christ... so I will be to you. I will live unto our God and then unto you... loving you, following you, caring for you, and ever seeking to support you. God has prepared me for you, and so I will ever strengthen, help, comfort, and encourage you. Therefore, _____, through life, no matter what may be ahead of us, I pledge to you my life, as a loving and faithful wife.

Wedding Ceremony Helps

(sample wedding Scripture)

You are encouraged to consider finding a Scripture passage that can be read during your wedding ceremony and that will serve as a sort of "launch pad" into a short message during the service. As you consider options, think about Scriptures that have ministered to you as a couple or that you want to guide your future lives together. A few recommendations are suggested below:

Genesis 2:4-7, 15, 18-24

(4) This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens – (5) and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, (6) but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground – (7) the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

(15) The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it....

(18) The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.' (19) Now the LORD God had formed out the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. (20) So, the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. (21) So, the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. (22) Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (23) The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; and shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' (24) For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you as well.

1 Corinthians 13

¹ If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹² Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Wedding Ceremony Helps

(sample wedding Scripture, cont'd from previous page)

Ephesians 5:21-33

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1 John 4:7-16

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

¹³ We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴ And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

The Wedding is Over – Now What?

(continuing steps for a lifetime of God-honoring marriage)

Much of the work you've done thus far has been preparing for your ceremony – that beautiful time of making promises to each other before God and in the presence of those attending your wedding.

And though the wedding is over, the marriage is just beginning! As you begin officially adjusting to married life, one of the first things we recommend is Community Groups. You may have heard us talk about Community Groups – smaller groups of 5-6 couples who gather together regularly to get to know each other, stay connected to God's Word, and help each other pursue God honoring marriage.

Check out our Community Groups page at www.brookside.net and find out how to get connected!

Keep watch for **FAMILYLIFE's** Weekend to Remember marriage getaways that come to the Omaha/Lincoln area each Spring. These are great weekend experiences that will help build a Godly marriage.

Learn more at www.familylife.com/weekend



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