

## PASTOR'S WEDDING POLICY

Rev. Ryan T. Bailey  
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409 South Beach Drive  
Monticello, Indiana 47960

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Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! You are about to embark on a new life together, and I am honored that you are thinking of including me at this extremely significant moment. To help you decide whether or not you would like to invite me to officiate your ceremony, let me share some of my thoughts about weddings with you.

Marriage has both civil and religious significance. From a civil or legal perspective, marriage affects, among other things, how you file your taxes, who is eligible to be included on your insurance policies, and, in some cases, your name. That's why, if you like, you could get married at the county courthouse or by an Elvis impersonator in Las Vegas. As far as the State is concerned, all that is required is your signature on the marriage license. You, however, have indicated a desire to be married in a church by a minister. I assume that means you want your marriage to be more than a legal contract. You want God to be a part of your new life together, and you want the church to recognize and support you in that journey. In a Christian marriage ceremony, the bride and groom stand before God and the community to make public their intent to love one another as Christ loves us. The community also pledges their support to help you honor your solemn commitment. It is a beautiful service of worship that seeks to honor God and affirm that marriage is about more than a contractual relationship between two parties. This is why weddings ought to take place in church, not for merely sentimental reasons.

Since marriage is a covenant entered into in the sight of God, it is not something any of us should do lightly. Marriage is a holy institution, and that is why I have set some basic expectations for any wedding I am asked to officiate. If you decide to include me in your ceremony, I trust that you will understand and abide by them.

- **Pre-marital preparation** I will meet with you at least three or four times (perhaps more) before the wedding ceremony to discuss your relationship as well as your expectations of one another and marriage. There may be a small additional fee for assessment tools used in this process. We will also plan the details of your ceremony during these sessions. If you do not reside within driving distance of Monticello, or if you or I determine the services of a professional counselor would be beneficial, other suitable arrangements can be made to fulfill the expectation of pre-marital preparation.
- **Church involvement** If you are not active in the life of another congregation, I strongly encourage you to attend worship here at First Baptist Church as you prepare for your wedding. Sunday morning worship is at 9:30. If it is not at all possible for you to attend worship, there are others ways to be involved.

In addition to my expectations, there are some other items you should note. If you have not done so already, contact the Clerk of the Circuit Court here in White County as soon as possible to begin the process of applying for a marriage license. The phone number for that

office is (574) 583-7032. You will need to get the license to me no later than one week before the date of the ceremony. If you do not have a license, there will not be a wedding.

**Fees**

The professional fee I require for weddings for those not active in the life of First Baptist Church is \$200. This fee includes planning and leadership of the ceremony itself as well as pre-marital preparation sessions. If the wedding is held away from the church other fees or payment of expenses may be required as well. Please make the check payable to me and not the church.

If you would like to invite me to officiate the ceremony, but have concerns about my expectations, please feel free to discuss them with me. Extenuating circumstances may allow for some flexibility. May God bless your marriage.