EXPECTATION CHURCH

Wedding Policy and Procedure for Expectation Church

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Introduction

In his book, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry*, Robert H. Welch provided invaluable prospective concerning the creation of several administrative tools for ministry. One such tool is that of written policies and procedures. In developing a policy concerning weddings several topics should be addressed. Therefore, Welch's advice that, "if several policy statements would best address the topic, then present each policy with its implementing procedures,"[1] was followed in the development of the following, original wedding policy for Expectation Church. The policy begins with general statements concerning marriage that are congruent with the guidelines as set forth in the church's bylaws. The policy then proceeds by answering basic questions about the procedure for conducting a wedding at Expectation Church. These questions arose from the guidelines Welch provided with respect to writing policies and procedures for weddings.[2]

Statement on Marriage

Scripture teaches that marriage is to be honored by all.[3] Because of the doctrinal stance of Expectation Church with regard to the inerrancy and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, the guidelines for marriage as put forth in Scripture therefore dictate the guidelines for marriages to be conducted by, in, and with Expectation Church. Such guidelines include, but may not be limited to:

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[1] Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry*, Second Edition ed. (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2011), 61.

[2] Ibid., 350-52.

[3] Hebrews 13:4, ESV.

> (1) Marriage is to be between one man and one woman, both respectively born as a man and a woman.[4]
>
> (2) Marriage is to be a lasting covenant for the duration of at least one of the party's lifespan with special exemptions in cases of marital infidelity.[5]
>
> (3) The Spiritual condition of each partner is to be on equal grounds, that is, either both parties have not yet received the Lordship of Jesus Christ in faith, or, vice-versa, both parties have.[6]

The remaining procedural items also help to further define Expectation Church's policy regarding marriage and weddings at Expectation Church.

Who Can Use the Facility?

Expectation Church desires to be a blessing to the participants in the church as well as to the community.[7] Therefore any couple, provided they adhere to the policy guidelines throughout this document, is welcome to conduct wedding services with Expectation Church.

Who is Authorized to Conduct the Ceremony?

All officiants must be legally recognized, ordained ministers of the gospel belonging to Expectation Church staff. However, special exemptions may be made at the request of the wedding party pending approval from a member of the Pastoral Team. In any case, the officiant must be legally recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia with the rights and privileges to officiate weddings.

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[4] Mark 10:7-8, NIV.
[5] Mark 10:9, NIV; Matthew 5:32, NIV.
[6] 2 Corinthians 6:14, ESV.
[7] Galatians 6:10, NIV.

When Can the Ceremony be Conducted?

The wedding ceremony can be conducted anytime providing that the ceremony does not conflict with previously scheduled church activities and is approved by a member of the Pastoral Team.

Are there Counseling Requirements?

Each couple will be subject to an initial interview with a member from the Pastoral Team or designee by the Pastoral Team. The purpose of this interview is to ascertain if and how to proceed with the wedding services and the best course of action for premarital counseling.

Each couple must be available for a minimum of at least four pre-marital counseling sessions (not including the initial interview) with either a member of the Pastoral Team, a designee from the Pastoral Team, or one that has been approved by a member of the Pastoral Team.

What are the Format Requirements of the Ceremony?

The format of the wedding ceremony is subject to the wedding party's discretion providing that (1) the gospel of Jesus Christ is clearly presented and (2) the format is submitted using a Wedding Format Form and approved by a member of the Pastoral Team or designee of the Pastoral Team.

Are there any Other Restrictions or Responsibilities?

If at any point during the application process or wedding planning, it becomes known to a member of the Pastoral Team that any of the aforementioned marriage and wedding guidelines is not being followed then the Pastoral Team reserves the right to postpone and or cancel the wedding until the prohibitive issue(s) can be addressed.

How Much does a Wedding Cost?

While each wedding is different and therefore will incur different costs, the following items are compulsory commensurate with the needs as determined by examination of the Wedding Format Form:

> (1) Hourly cost of church staff. Note, this cost will be defined by determining an employee's hourly rate based on salary and a 40 hour work week. Because weddings are considered as extracurricular of the general workweek, an additional 25% will be assessed with the hourly cost.
>
> (2) Hourly cost of church usage and facilities. Based upon assessment of the Wedding Format Form, the Facilities Director will determine and provide an itemized list of charges to be incurred.
>
> (3) A Refundable deposit of either 10% of the assessed cost or at least $250 will be made after approval of the Wedding Format Form and approval after the initial interview.

Any exemptions or discounts to the aforementioned fees will be at the sole discretion of the Pastoral Team.

Conclusion

The aforementioned policy and procedures are in no way meant to be overly prohibitive or punitive. Marriage is a special occasion and ordained by our Creator. Because of the great weight and Scriptural call to honor marriage, the above guidelines are meant to ensure that Expectation Church practices faithfulness to that which Scripture calls for. In all things, including weddings, the purpose of Expectation Church is: To Reach People far from God so the will Experience Faith in Christ.

Appendix

Wedding Format Form
Expectation Church

Bride's first and last name:_____

Groom's first and last name:_____

Date:_____Requested Date of Ceremony:_____

Reception Required at Church? Y N

If Yes, please provide the details for the reception below (location, times, number of people, food and beverage requirements, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Officiant:_____

Ceremony Format:

Please provide a detailed outline of the order that the service will take. Include music selections, speakers, bridal party responsibilities, and any other ceremonial elements you wish to use during the ceremony.

_____

_____

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Bibliography

Welch, Robert H. *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry*. Second Edition ed. Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2011.