



HARVEST
CHURCH

Getting Married At Harvest
*Wedding Guidelines, Premarital Counselling &
Wedding Application*

Getting married is one of the most important journeys we make in life and we are excited to help you take those first steps. To get started, please read the following wedding guidelines and our premarital counselling policy that the Elders of Harvest Church have established for couples who wish to be married by a Harvest Pastor.

WEDDING GUIDELINES

1. Harvest Church affirms the biblical standard of marriage being between one man and one woman bound together in a lifelong monogamous union.
2. Both the bride and groom must be followers of Jesus Christ and at least one must be an active member of Harvest Church.
3. Couples must complete the premarital course as prescribed by our Elders. The book "Catching Foxes" by John Henderson will be provided. A mentoring couple, determined by one of our Pastoral Staff, will be provided to walk through the book with you.
4. It is the couples responsibility to secure a location for the wedding ceremony subject to the approval of the Pastor who is performing the marriage. If you wish to use our Harvest location in Huntsville or Parry Sound, please review our Facility Use Policy.
5. Our Pastors are happy to help you celebrate your commitment before God and they do so on their own time. If there are any expenses involved, such as out of town travel or hotel accommodations, it is anticipated that these expenses will be covered by the couple in addition to any honorarium they may choose to provide.
6. Harvest Church does not announce banns of marriage.

PREMARITAL COUNSELLING

The purpose of this policy is to outline the details regarding expectations on you, the couple, and what you can expect of the Pastor who will be performing the marriage ceremony. We understand that you may have another individual planned to officiate the ceremony but would still like your premarital counselling done through Harvest Church and we will do our best to accommodate this. If after reading this material you feel that you want to proceed, please schedule a preliminary interview with a Harvest Church Pastor, to discuss introductory matters, by contacting our Executive Assistant (hilary@myharvestchurch.ca)

The Meaning of Marriage

Marriage was ordained by God at the very outset of human history. When the first man and woman were joined, it was much less complicated than today...there was no need for premarital counselling since sin had not yet invaded the world. There were no guests to invite, no tuxedos or dresses to get and no better place than where they were for a honeymoon. The foundational Bible passage for marriage is found within the context of that first marriage, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24)

The Pastor's Role

Of paramount importance is the recognition that because we are an evangelical, Jesus-centred, Bible-believing church, we are under moral obligation to only perform marriages that join together one man and one woman who would describe themselves as followers of Christ. This will be covered in more detail during your initial meeting with a Harvest Church Pastor.

This Pastor will pledge himself to you, the couple, as a partner in establishing the marriage. It is our goal to give you the strongest foundation possible so as to ensure that the vows made are kept throughout a life-long relationship. The Pastor will then assign you a mentoring couple to lead you through your premarital counselling.

Expectations of the Couple

Being a believer as described above demands a life of obedience to God. The Bible says, "We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands...this is love for God: to keep his commands. And His commands are not burdensome." (1 John 2:3; 5:3). In other words, when we really do love God, we will want to live according to how His Word, the Bible, says we should live.

One important area where this affects the engaged couple is concerning cohabitation prior to marriage. The Bible makes it clear that living together before marriage contravenes God's standards (Galatians 5:19). In addition, even secular research shows cohabitation couples have a higher-than-average change of divorcing later on than couples who do not live together prior to marriage.

Our recommendation to couples who are cohabiting and who desire a Bible-based marriage is to move apart until the wedding day, giving yourselves the best possible start. We are unable to

perform a marriage ceremony for anyone who remains in a cohabitational situation. We are willing to discuss this in more detail should you have any further questions.

Premarital Counselling Requirements

Generally there will be 6 premarital counselling sessions, which include the initial interview and a ceremony walk through. The book "Catching Foxes" by John Henderson will be the basis for discussion during these counselling sessions. You both will receive a copy of this book on behalf of Harvest Church. The details of what will be covered and what questions need to be completed will be worked out after your initial interview. In most cases, we will not accept a request to perform a marriage unless there is ample time to complete the premarital counselling program.

Counselling after the Ceremony

Follow up to the ceremony is very important. Think of it as a post-operative check up - radical surgery has been performed to join two people together and post-op therapy and consultation is critical. This follow up will take place within the first year of marriage and will include continuing to meet with your mentoring couple, the reading of one marriage book from an Elder approved reading list, doing an evaluation and meeting with the Pastor from your initial meeting once about six to eight months after your wedding day.

Mentoring Couple

You will be assigned a mentoring couple that has been married for at least ten years and who have proven to be a solid Christian couple and who model a biblical marriage. You will meet with your mentoring couple for counselling both before and after the ceremony. *This mentoring couple could be an Elder and his wife, a Pastor and his wife, Small Group Coaches or Small Group Leaders.*

Cost of Counselling

There is no fee structure for premarital counselling or the performance of the wedding ceremony.

WEDDING APPLICATION

Bride's Information	Groom's Information
Name:	Name:
Email:	Email:
Phone Number:	Phone Number:
Additional Information	
Have either of you been married before?	
What is your connection to Harvest Church? (ie: member, attendee) How long have you been attending? Bride: Groom:	
What Small Group do you attend?	
Do you have pre-marital counselling arranged? If yes, please provide details.	
Wedding Information	
Wedding Date (first choice)	Wedding date (second choice)
Additional details (time, location etc):	
Name of the Pastor or Elder you are Requesting to Officiate the wedding:	
Do you wish to use our Harvest Huntsville or Parry Sound Location?:	