

Wedding by Rev. Dr. Ron James

Introduction

Welcome to the wedding! We are here today, in this beautiful place, at the invitation of _____ and _____, to share in their marriage ceremony. The love of this couple was vital before the ceremony and will be vital after it. It is, indeed, the reason for the ceremony, and an affirmation of their love. The marriage ceremony is an outward sign of a sacred and inward commitment, a commitment which the church may consecrate and the state may legalize, but which neither can create nor annul. Such a union can only be created by their love, a union which only belongs to the heart. Friends and family, all of you are here to celebrate this union of hearts and this commitment. _____ and _____, all of us are with you in presence and others in spirit. We support you and love you in your decision to be husband and wife.

Question of Support

Do you, family and friends of _____ and _____
Promise your continuing friendship and love? Will you strengthen them by staying in touch, by your encouragement and prayers, by your affection and regard, that they may grow in their individual lives and in their relationship as husband and wife? If so, please we do.

Invocation

God of love and grace, your blessing makes every relationship rich and your presence lights up our lives. We ask you to be present to this couple, _____ and _____, to bless the covenant they make to each other. In the mystery of life, and of your purpose, you have brought them together. Even so make them ready for the years that lie ahead. Give them hearts open to your love and guidance, tenderness toward each other, understanding of themselves so they may live good, happy and useful lives. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Message on Marriage

_____ and _____, in presenting yourselves here today to be joined in holy union, you perform an act of faith. This faith can grow, mature and endure through the day to day occurrences of life, especially if you both determine to make it so. A lasting and growing love is not automatic nor guaranteed by any ceremony, but is to be nurtured and tended throughout the days of your lives.

If you would have the foundation of your union be the love you have for each other, not just at this moment, but for all the days ahead, then cherish the hopes and dreams that you bring here today. Resolve that your love will not be blotted by the commonplace nor obscured by the ordinary. Faults will appear where now you find contentment and wonder can be crushed by the mundane. But you can keep your love alive by graciously giving your selves each to other in real ways such as in humility and forgiveness. Devotion, joy and love will happen and grow when you nurture them together. Stand fast in that hope and

confidence, believing in your shared future just as strongly as you believe in yourselves and in each other today. In such a spirit you will create a partnership that will sustain and strengthen you each and every day.

And remember, as God considers us each free and unique so too shall you respect each other. Your real task is not to be alike, but to be together, not to mold, but to receive, not to change, but to abide. It is through this accent of acceptance that true love is fulfilled. It is always through your giving that you will gain. The more you let each one be, the closer you will become. For as God love us for who we are, so too, shall you. May God bless you each in your own way and in your lives together.

Preparation to Vows

_____ and _____, as you are about to speak your vows each to other, remember that openness, honesty, forgiveness and loyalty are the foundation of an enduring love. No other ties are more tender, no vows more sacred, no promises more profound, than these you now make.

Question

_____, do you pledge your love to _____ in the presence of your friends and family, and in the sight of God? Do you promise to work together at the kind of openness, honesty, tolerance, and patience that will build an enduring love? Do you promise to share life and love together, in good times and bad, nourishing and cherishing each other?

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Vows

I, _____, take you _____, to be my wife. I promise to stand with you and beside you always; in celebration and in sorrow, in pleasure and in pain, in sickness and in health. I will live with you and love you always.

I, _____, take you _____, to be my husband. I promise to stand with you and beside you always; in celebration and in sorrow, in pleasure and in pain, in sickness and in health. I will live with you and love you always.

Ring Exchange

In the giving and receiving of rings, the man and the woman give to each other an outward sign of an inward commitment. Each takes a circle of gold which is unbroken, and will not tarnish, as a symbol of enduring love. _____ and _____, the rings are tangible reminders that you each give the gift of yourself to the other. Let them be signs of your love.

O Lord, we ask your blessing upon these rings. May the rings truly be signs and reminders of sacred love and union. Especially do we pray your blessing upon they who give them and wear them. May they abide in your peace now and forever more. Amen.

_____, accept this ring as a sign of my promise
and the pledge of my love, now and forever.

_____, accept this ring as a sign of my promise
and the pledge of my love, now and forever.

Prayer for Pledges

God of mystery, beauty, and love, as you give yourself to
us in creation and in the Christ, so let _____ and _____
give themselves to each other, finding new meaning in life
together. Help them to build a home where no one is a stranger,
and where there is peace and joy, at work, at leisure, in good times
and bad. Help them to accept each other, forgive and trust each
other. O Lord, as you love and sustain and nourish us in word and
creation, may they love and sustain and nourish each other in word
and creation. Amen.

Pronouncement

_____, and _____, since you have expressed your love for each other in this place, since you have made promises in the presence of your friends and family, since you have given each other gifts of rings and asked God's blessing on your marriage, and mostly by your own love, I now pronounce that you are husband and wife in the sight of God and everyone.

Benediction