

So You're Planning To Be Married . . .

Dear Engaged Couple,

Thank you for contacting us concerning the request that your wedding ceremony be held here at the South Waterboro Bible Chapel. This is one of the most exciting times of your life and we are happy that you have shared your plans with us. Marriage is a wonderful gift from God when it is a union of two people who truly love one another and are faithful to the Lord.

Because we consider a wedding conducted by our pastor in our church building to be a sacred and distinctly Christian ceremony, we want to be sure that it honors God. When a pastor joins two people together in marriage, he does so by the authority committed to him as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That means that he is serving God and does so by God's authority. Otherwise, your wedding would be just a civil arrangement. Marriages may actually take place almost anywhere and be conducted by various authorized officials from a legal perspective. The desire to pursue a church wedding, and in particular, here at the South Waterboro Bible Chapel, should be a reflection of each of your commitments to Jesus Christ first of all, followed by an indication that this local church holds a place of importance to you. Considerations therefore such as the building is "such a beautiful church" or "my parents were married in a church and therefore I want to be" or "I've always dreamed of a church wedding"... etc., should not be the reasons for being married at the South Waterboro Bible Chapel.

We want God's full blessings to be upon you in your marriage. For that reason, we want you to know that a Christian marriage is one in which:

- (1) Both husband and wife have individually and definitely expressed faith in the death, burial & resurrection of Jesus Christ as the only way to be forgiven of sin and therefore have a personal relationship with God. This is a fundamental commitment to Christ in this life and indicates a trust and dependence only upon Him for eternal life.
- (2) Both husband and wife intend to make Christ the Lord of their home, consistently worship Him together, and train their children in the Lord.
- (3) Both husband and wife commit to be faithful and loving toward each other as long as they are both living. This is also modeled through being willing to sacrifice themselves for the other and practicing forgiveness of each other's faults & shortcomings.
- (4) Both hold the conviction that sexual intimacy be reserved only for each other after marriage, to bind them together and to seal the union made before God in the presence of witnesses (the wedding ceremony).

Here at the South Waterboro Bible Chapel, we hold God's plan concerning marriage in very serious and high esteem. Because of our commitment to upholding God's design for marriage as outlined in the Bible, we have adopted the following policies consistent with our understanding of Scriptural teaching:

(1) In the context of Christian marriage, both parties (bride & groom) must give testimony through words and lifestyle of being born again believers in Jesus Christ, having received Him as their personal Lord and Savior. No ceremony can be performed between a believer and a non-believer. (2 Corinthians 6:14)

(2) Because marriage is an illustration of Christ's relationship with His church and in compliance to the standard of marriage between a man and a woman only which is taught in the Bible, no wedding between persons of the same gender will be considered. (Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:21-28, Ephesians 5:31-32).

(3) Both parties should either be (a) never married previously or (b) widowed (the combination of these two situations is included). On the basis of Scripture, no ceremony can be performed between a couple when one or both have been previously divorced except in situations of adultery or desertion on the part of the other spouse (which will be discussed with the pastor and/or elders).

(4) Both parties must be living separately at each of their own individual residences. No ceremony will be performed between an unmarried couple who is living together except for very unusual circumstances (to be determined at the pastor and/or elder's discretion). (Hebrews 13:4)

(5) Before a decision can be made about the use of the building of the South Waterboro Bible Chapel for a wedding ceremony, a consultation meeting of both the bride and groom with the pastor and/or elders of the church must be held regarding testimony of salvation and Christian principles of marriage.

(6) Both prospective bride and groom are required to attend together a series of instructional sessions in preparation for the wedding and marriage that is conducted by the pastor.

If you desire a Christian wedding in accordance with the policies of the South Waterboro Bible Chapel, please complete the following application and return it to the church office. The pastor will then contact you to schedule a consultation appointment. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the church office or speak personally with Pastor Dan Lambertson. The telephone number is 247-6293. The church address is:

South Waterboro Bible Chapel
911 Main St.
P.O. Box 190
Waterboro, ME 04087