

## SonCoast Pentecostal Church

# Marriage Guidelines

The purpose of the following guidelines is to establish a firm and godly foundation on which to build a marriage. Understanding that each proposed union has unique circumstances, the Pastor has the spiritual authority to modify these guidelines as needed.

### **SonCoast Pentecostal Church Standard**

*Required Reading:* “The Act of Marriage” - Tim & Beverly LaHaye  
“The Unequal Yoke” - Pastor Charles R. Grisham

### **General Criteria**

Both bride and groom must:

- Be in good standing and a member of SonCoast Pentecostal Church.
- Have the Holy Ghost and have been baptized in Jesus’ Name
- Have completed the Abundant Life New Converts Doctrinal Course
- Complete a marriage application for Pastor to review and approve.

This is a sacred vow before God; the Pastor will give prayerful consideration to each couple wanting to be married. As shepherd and overseer, they have the spiritual authority to express any concerns or misgivings he may have concerning your relationship. Approval must be given *before* any wedding plans are made.

### **-ENGAGEMENTS**

*\*Special Note: Approval from Pastor should be given BEFORE getting engaged. This will ensure his participation in the marriage ceremony as well as confirm this decision to be God’s will. The pastor’s approval must be given before a date can be set and permission to use the church facilities given.*

### ***Pre-Marital Counseling***

After becoming engaged, each couple will complete pre-marital classes. You will need to meet with the wedding coordinator to complete marriage application and review wedding guidelines. A copy of the approved application must be turned in to the church office. There will also be a mandatory consultation with the couple and Pastor Johnson once the wedding is approved to go over ceremony details. Pastor Johnson will be the officiating Minister of the ceremony unless *he* directs otherwise.

### ***Length of Engagement***

The length of engagement should be discussed with Pastor during your preliminary meeting after engagement has been approved.

***\*Special Note: Only First-time Marriages (both bride and groom), will be allowed full scale weddings in the church building.***

*Second marriage ceremonies require certain decorum and must be discussed with Pastor as they are subject to different guidelines.*

*Marriage is sacred and until death, and so the house of God should be treated with the utmost respect.*

We do not encourage any individual who is divorced or widowed marrying someone who has never been married. As put forth in the SPC Dating Policy, one element that helps ground a good marriage is having similar backgrounds and experiences. Obviously a divorced person will be much more experienced than someone who has never been married. Many times there are children involved, and they add a whole new dimension to a marriage. Instant parenthood, ex-spouses, and emotional wounds can create an unstable foundation on which to build a relationship.

Second marriage ceremony protocol and location must be discussed with Pastor. The ceremony should be very small, short, and discreet. There should be no more than two witnesses to stand with the couple. The Bride should not wear white and the dress should be tea length - not formal. Because housekeeping has already been set up, presents should not be expected, but kindly accepted if offered.

#### **-DIVORCED:**

If you have been divorced while in the church, a second wedding will not be performed in the church. If you fall under the biblical principles of remarriage after divorce, you must wait a period of one year AFTER the divorce is final before dating and remarrying. You must consult with the Pastor regarding guidelines for your ceremony.

#### **-NEW CONVERTS**

I Peter 4:17 - Judgment must begin at the house of God. What happened to you before you were born again is under the blood and judgment will be made by the pastor as to where and when a marriage will be held. In the case of public knowledge of a physical relationship before marriage (child, pregnancy, etc.), the Bride will need to follow the standard for dress as described in the Dress Guidelines.

We ask that new converts wait at least six months to a year to establish a grounded relationship with God and your church family before entering a serious romantic relationship.

## **Biblical Guidelines for Marriage & Divorce**

**MARRIAGE - Believers marry Believers:** The Lord has instructed that a man or woman is not to marry a non-believer - II Corinthians 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers". Believers are those who have been filled with the Holy Ghost, baptized in Jesus Name, and living a holy life as instructed in Acts 2:38.

#### **DIVORCE**

The only biblical reason for divorce is if a spouse has had a sexual relationship outside of marriage.

*\*SonCoast Pentecostal Church strictly prohibits same sex dating and marriage.\**

# C.O.P. Wedding Guidelines and Procedures

**Wedding Coordinator:** Keep in mind the wedding coordinator is not a consultant. She is acting on behalf of the church and specifically for Pastor, to ensure these guidelines are followed. If you wish to hire her services as a consultant you will need to make financial arrangements with her personally.

## **General Information:**

Each couple will need to individually complete a marriage application form. After this form is completed and approved by Pastor, you will need to set up a meeting with the WC to go over guidelines, pay wedding fee, and secure your wedding date. *The date will not be confirmed on the church calendar until it has been approved by Pastor and the fee has been paid.*

## **FEE FOR CHURCH OF PENTECOST MEMBERS**

See attached form for break down of fees. Rental of buildings is at the discretion of the Pastor and must have his approval before deposit is given. 50% non-refundable deposit is required to reserve the facilities and date, the balance is due 30 days prior to event.

## **DRESS:**

Because of the dramatic and many times immodest dress of worldly weddings, wedding dresses and bridesmaid dresses should be approved by the WC *before* purchase. Dresses should be modest, with sleeves, not show any cleavage of the bosom, no off the shoulders or very low cut in the back. There should be no long splits in the skirt and no mini skirts. If our guidelines for dress are not followed, we will supply a covering to make the dress modest. The ceremony will not go on with immodest clothing.

In the case of public knowledge of a physical premarital relationship (child(ren), pregnancy, etc.), and pastoral approval has been given for a church wedding, the Bride should wear a color other than white such as ivory, light pink, etc. This applies to all church members.

No colored make-up, nail color, or extra jewelry should be worn by the Bride or her attendants. If a wedding party individual is not a member of this church, it is the responsibility of the Bride to inform them of what is acceptable or not according to the Church of Pentecost dress code. Your wedding party should be a reflection and enhancement of you. If they do not want to abide by these guidelines, they should be replaced. **DO NOT EXPECT PASTOR TO POLICE YOUR ATTENDANTS.**

## **CEREMONY:**

Pastor Johnson is the officiating minister in the wedding ceremony, which includes saying the vows and exchanging the rings, unless he approves otherwise. If you want to include another minister to participate in saying a prayer or saying a few words, etc., this **MUST** be talked about and approved by Pastor Johnson in your initial meeting with him. The minister must be in good moral standing or acknowledged by Pastor Johnson. The ceremony vows are at the Pastor's discretion. Suggestions will be considered, but Pastor will have the final say. Please respect your pastor's wisdom and right as Shepherd of his flock in this matter.

All aspects of the service must be approved by the WC, who will provide Pastor with an outline of the ceremony. A wedding is a sacred moment and the service must be in good taste. The WC is in charge of *all* weddings. She will take your ideas into consideration and direct and guide you to the best choices. All wedding plans, decorations, wedding party, songs, etc., must meet her approval. Battery Operated Candles only in Worship Center Clear plastic vinyl must be purchased to lay on the carpet under any burning candles.

## **SONGS:**

Because a wedding is a service, all songs must be fully written out so they can be reviewed. If a song is not proper for a church wedding, you will be asked to make another selection. Under no circumstances will you be allowed to have a song that has not been approved. No more than 3 to 5 songs should be sung.

## **REHEARSAL:**

Once the Pastor and WC have been consulted for the rehearsal time, it is the Bride and Groom's responsibility to inform the wedding party of the rehearsal time and place. The WC is in charge of the rehearsal. Please inform your wedding party prior to the rehearsal who is in charge.

## **ATTENDANTS:**

All attire for the attendants must be pre-approved by the WC **PRIOR** to purchasing. Price of the attire should be agreed upon by all attendants. Number of attendants is limited to eight.

## **RECEPTION:**

The reception may be held in the SPC if so desired (see attached fees). You may consider renting a tent to provide additional seating. All details and arrangements, including furniture and Disc Jockey must be discussed and approved by the WC. Cake, mints, and punch are adequate, but if a more elaborate affair is desired the WC should be informed. **NOBODY** in the church is responsible for your wedding reception. Do not incorporate members of the church to subsidize your wedding. It can foster feelings and unprofessional dealings. Please use professional businesses unrelated to SPC to provide your services.

You must provide all of your own provisions such as plates, cups, silver wear, coffee and condiments, table coverings, decorations, dish cloths, serving ware, and trash bags etc. The church is not responsible in any way for expenses incurred for the reception.

Special Note: It is the wedding party and family's responsibility to set-up, break down, and clean all items used for the reception including all furniture, decorations, rented equipment etc. The only service provided by the custodial service is to sweep and mop the floor, and clean restrooms.

***\*Under no circumstances do we allow or endorse alcohol or dancing at the reception, no matter where it is being held\****

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

**Minister:** The minister's fee is included if you are a member of the church. However, you may give a love offering should you choose to do so.

**Furniture:** You must have approval from the WC to move or use any furniture. Furniture must be put back immediately following the wedding. Again it is the wedding party and family's responsibility to put the church/fellowship hall back in order and return any rented items. SPC furniture may not be used for offsite weddings.

**Time Restrictions:** No wedding will be held later than 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays

**Alcoholic Beverages and smoking on the church premises are absolutely forbidden.**

**Disclaimer:** *These guidelines are subject to amendment at the Pastor's discretion for any given circumstance and he must be allowed the latitude to make any changes or make exceptions as he feels necessary.*