



Wedding

Policies and Procedures

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Welcome! Whether you are a life-long member or someone who has no previous relationship to our family of faith, we are glad that you have inquired into the possibility of making your marriage covenant in our church.

We have no greater joy or privilege than sharing in the union of two unique individuals into, as the Bible says, *one flesh*. So great does God view this union of husband and wife that He uses it as an illustration of the union between Jesus Christ and His Church on earth. Marriage is, in fact, the highest expression of physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual union this side of heaven!

Since God is the author of marriage, we at Praise Center Church take marriage very seriously. We want to do everything in our power to help you achieve a mutually enriching relationship expressed in a lifelong, constantly deepening commitment to each other. For us to do anything less would be to shirk our responsibility to our Lord.

This packet describes the means by which we as a church try to fulfill this high and holy responsibility.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN WEDDING?

That is the first question to ask yourselves. Perhaps another way to say it is, "Why do I want to be married at Praise Center Church? Why not simply a civil ceremony?" All of the attire, pageantry and festivity which we normally associate with weddings can be present without the wedding actually being part of a worship service officiated by a minister of the Gospel.

Obviously, there is a difference between Christian and civil ceremonies. What is the difference to you?

A Christian wedding involves:

- Vows taken before God
- Scriptural teaching and references which pertain to Christians
- A blessing and benediction from God upon the husband and wife
- A time of testimony to their faith in Christ
- A commitment to build their marriage upon biblical teachings
- A time of celebration and praise

Two things become immediately obvious. In a Christian wedding, the vows and covenant a couple makes to God are as important as the vows and covenant they make to each other. Just as we believers try to live out our faith in all aspects of life, in a Christian wedding, a couple must have the intentional desire to build their marriage on their personal faith in God and upon the teachings of His Word. We hope that you are approaching your future marriage in this way and with this spiritual motivation.

If you are confused or uncertain as to what a personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ really means, the pastor will be eager to talk about these things with you. All of us are growing in our faith commitments. None of us have "arrived." The key question is, "Have you begun, or are you willing to begin, the journey of faith?" If not, then a civil ceremony might be every bit as meaningful for you as a religious ceremony.

If you have or are now willing to begin the journey of faith in Jesus Christ, we look forward to joining you on this part of your journey. If at present you do not have a church home, we extend a warm invitation to you to join our family of faith.

THE PASTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO YOU

Upon being asked to marry a man and woman, the minister will participate in the instruction and discussion of the privileges and obligations they will assume in Christian marriage. He bears responsibility for providing education and counsel in preparation for marriage. If the minister is convinced that Christian commitment and responsibility are lacking, and the marriage is not one which offers promise of being blessed by God, he will not perform the ceremony.

Obviously, the pastor needs to know you well. We also feel that there are certain crucial issues each couple should discuss as they approach this most solemn commitment of their lives. Consideration of these issues now, before the marriage, increases the potential for building a strong foundation that will last a lifetime. Some of the issues are:

Spiritual Foundation for Marriage
Becoming One Flesh
Communication: Listening, Expressing Yourselves and Resolving Conflict
Roles and Responsibilities in Marriage: Moving Beyond the Cultural Stereotype
Financial Aspects of Marriage
Intimacy: Sexual Communication in Marriage

We have found that to discuss adequately these and other concerns that you might raise ordinarily requires seven or eight counseling sessions, each approximately one hour in length. In this process, each couple will have opportunities to tailor-make the counseling so that it will be most beneficial to their individual needs. Some areas may consequently receive more than the usual treatment while others receive less. Your cost for counseling materials (books) will be approximately \$30 per couple.

WHO CAN BE MARRIED AT PRAISE CENTER CHURCH?

At Praise Center Church, we desire to have an “open door” policy toward the Visalia community. Hence, we are open to holding non-member weddings. However, because of our deep beliefs regarding the spiritual foundation of a distinctively Christian marriage as outlined above, we want to do all we can to encourage couples to be spiritually grounded before and after their wedding ceremony. We do require both parties join us in worship regularly in the three months prior to the wedding date.

If you are not currently an active church member, we want to encourage you to become one during the time leading up to your wedding. We hope that you may ultimately choose to join our fellowship. We simply want to encourage you to begin your life together as part of a community of faith, centered on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

What if you are not a member of Praise Center Church, but a regular attender? When a person requests to use the church facilities for a wedding, and they are not a listed member, it will be necessary for the attendance secretary and/or a member of the pastoral staff to identify and approve by signature that they are in fact a regular attender.

What if one or both of you are members of another congregation, but want to be married at Praise Center Church? We are not in the business of “renting out” our sanctuary for the use of other religious groups. We are not able to approve requests for marriage simply because our sanctuary is larger, nicer, etc., than the facilities of your congregation. While we welcome those who currently have no church home, we respectfully encourage those who do have a church home to hold their wedding within the context of that church family. The one exception to this policy is that we do allow Christian weddings to be performed in our sanctuary in instances where space limitations are involved or if your congregation does not have a sanctuary. If any minister other than an ordained minister of Praise Center Church is to officiate, approval must be obtained from the pastor.

What about children of current members who are no longer members themselves? We are glad to hold the weddings for children who grew up in this church but since that time have become inactive or moved away from the Visalia area.

However, we make the same stipulation that you either worship at Praise Center Church on a regular basis leading up to your wedding, or that you worship regularly in the church of your choice where you are currently residing.

What about individuals on our membership role who have become inactive? Again, because you have a relationship with Praise Center Church, we are glad to have your marriage here. There may be many reasons why you have not been involved over the recent past. The pastor will want to discuss this with you during your first meeting together. Because of our beliefs about Christian marriage, we would ask you to fulfill the same requirement to worship at Praise Center Church regularly during the three months preceding your wedding date.

All couples married at Praise Center Church are required to attend our premarital counseling program. In rare cases where distance makes this impossible, couples will be required to participate in a premarital counseling process with someone approved by the pastor where they reside.

PROCESS FOR SECURING A WEDDING DATE ON THE CHURCH CALENDAR

The procedure is as follows for *non-members*:

1. Download this packet from our website or obtain a copy from the church office.
2. Read it carefully and consider if our church's desires, motivations, and expectations regarding marriage match your own.
3. Come and worship with us to explore if our fellowship may be "right" for you. Also, explore other churches in town.
4. If you conclude that our church could become your church home, complete the form and return it to the church office. The secretary will call to set up an appointment.
5. Ordinarily after meeting with the Pastor, if both of you concur, your wedding and rehearsal dates may be entered on the church calendar. At this point, a wedding hostess will contact you to confirm the dates, make further plans, discuss ideas and quote costs.

For *members* of Praise Center Church, the procedure is:

1. If you have a tentative date in mind, it should be entered on the church calendar as such. *However, it is not officially reserved at this time.*
2. Read this booklet carefully and consider if our church's desires, motivations, and expectations regarding marriage match your own.
3. Assuming they do, complete the form and return it to the church office. The secretary will call to set up an appointment.
4. Ordinarily after meeting with the Pastor, if both of you concur, your date will be confirmed on the church calendar by the wedding hostess who will contact you to make further plans, discuss ideas and quote costs.

Obviously, the earlier you begin this process, the better! In most cases we suggest that you contact the church a minimum of six months before your anticipated wedding date. Dates will be entered in the church calendar on a first come, first served basis, and only by following the procedures above.

SOME SPECIAL CONCERNS

1. *Pastors other than those on our staff officiating:*

In most cases, we welcome *sharing* the leadership of your marriage service with another Christian minister if this person's presence would make the service more meaningful to you. However, our pastoral staff must retain the right to lead you through your covenant vows and pronounce you husband and wife.

2. *Biblical Witness and Human Sexuality:*

Legitimate sexual relations are exercised solely within marriage. In our view, premarital sexual activity is a serious breach of Biblical ethics regardless of the norms of behavior in our secular society. (*See Genesis 2:23-24; I Corinthians 7:1-9*) Such an ongoing sexual relationship raises questions about a couple's sincerity to enter into a solemn covenant with God as described previously. Couples living together before marriage will not be married in our facility unless they move apart immediately and until their wedding date. The pastor will discuss with you your current lifestyle as he determines whether he can proceed with your marriage. Ordinarily, some kind of expression of your commitment to view marriage as outlined here will be required. It should be noted that Praise Center Church recognizes marriage as exclusively the legal union of one man and one woman. (See Romans 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22)

3. *Couples where one or both have been previously divorced:*

From a biblical viewpoint, divorce may or may not be an impediment to remarriage depending on the particular circumstances. The pastor will want to discuss these very important concerns with you at your first meeting.

LEGAL DETAILS

The state, as well as the church, is interested in your marriage. Since the Wedding Service is binding in the eyes of civil as well as ecclesiastical law, there are certain legal requirements with which you must comply.

You must apply for a marriage license at the office of a County Clerk-Recorder. Marriage licenses are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance. You must be married on or after the issuance date, and on or before the expiration date. With a valid marriage license issued by any of the California counties, you may be married anywhere in California in the presence of at least one witness, and your marriage must be solemnized by a person authorized to perform marriages in California.

You should bring your marriage license to the minister or the wedding hostess before the day of the wedding, preferably at the time of rehearsal, if possible.

DETAILS REGARDING THE CEREMONY ITSELF

WEDDING HOSTESS

Your wedding hostess plays a very important part in your wedding plans. She will contact you to confirm your wedding and rehearsal dates, and then again about six weeks prior to your wedding to assist you with your plans and answer all questions. She will coordinate the rehearsal and the ceremony. Please feel free to call her. All weddings will be assigned a wedding hostess.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The pastor will review the form of service he ordinarily uses at weddings in order to familiarize you with the promises to be made and the vows to be taken. This is *your* wedding service and your input is welcomed.

FACILITIES

You may be married in either the Sanctuary or the Chapel depending upon the type of wedding desired and the number of people likely to attend. Our Chapel is adequate for a wedding of up to 100 guests. A bridal party of four or six may use the Chapel. For larger weddings, the Sanctuary, with a seating capacity of 300, is advised. Your service may be formal or informal and simple.

There is to be no smoking and no drinking of alcoholic beverages on the church premises, inside or outside. Please instruct ushers and attendants to help carry out these requests so that your guests do not violate the rules set by the church. No rehearsal or wedding will be conducted when any member of the wedding party is under the influence of drugs or alcohol. No dances are permitted.

Please care for and leave the church building in the best possible condition and have your guests do so also. It is best to ask your parents, ushers, or best man to see to these details for you. Remember, others will be using the church building for worship services, prayer meetings, etc. Help us to keep it presentable for them. Rice, confetti or birdseed are not permitted inside or outside the church.

Fees charged for building use are listed on page eight; said fees cover operational costs of the facility, including utilities and additional janitorial services, as well as staffing provided by individuals. The request form and the deposit should be turned into the church office as soon as possible, preferably a minimum of six months before your wedding. The fees, as calculated by the wedding hostess, will be due no later than two weeks prior to the wedding.

MUSIC IN THE SERVICE

We have an instrumental wedding CD that can be played before and after the service. If you have music that you would like played either before, during or after the service, please discuss your selections with the wedding hostess. Since the wedding ceremony is a Christian Worship Service, it is most important that the words do not contradict or appear out of place with the Christian message of faith and practice.

If you'd prefer to use live musicians, please discuss this with the wedding hostess. Should the musicians be from Praise Center Church, their fees would be paid directly to the church, then the church would pay the musicians.

The use of all church-owned musical instruments and special sound equipment by other than staff musicians and authorized church personnel must be approved by the Executive Pastor, or in his absence, by the Music Director. The wedding hostess will assist you with requests for approval.

SOUND SYSTEM

It is required that you use the sound technician from Praise Center Church. The wedding hostess will contact the technician to make arrangements with him concerning rehearsal times, etc. Fees for the sound technician's services must be paid directly to the church, then the church will pay the person operating the sound. An audio CD recording of the ceremony is included in the cost of the sound technician.

PHOTOGRAPHS

We request that the photographer (or family or friends) not in any way detract from the sacredness of the ceremony in their effort to get the perfect shot. The photographer should perform his or her services with professionalism and discretion. The wedding hostess will meet with your photographer prior to the ceremony to answer any questions he or she may have with regard to church policy concerning photography. Please advise your guests, particularly family members, that guests are asked **not** to take pictures during the service.

DECORATIONS

It is best to keep your floral arrangements simple. Decorations used by your florist or someone helping you may not be attached to any part of the building in a way that will mar the finish or leave a lasting mark of any kind. No tacks, pins, nails, scotch tape or glue may be used. Pew bows may be attached to the chairs along the aisles with corsage pins. All floral arrangements must be in place no later than one and one-half hours preceding the service. Silk plants in the platform area of the Sanctuary are not to be moved without the assistance of the wedding hostess.

Only dripless candles may be used to prevent the spilling of wax on the carpet. Please note that dripless candles can be rented from your florist or party rental supply; they are not the same as those sold at craft stores or discount stores. The bridal party is responsible for making arrangements for the removal of all floral decorations after the ceremony. All rented equipment must be removed as quickly as possible and not later than the second business day following the ceremony. The church does not own candelabras, kneeling rail, etc.

REHEARSAL

A rehearsal is usually held the day before the wedding. All members of the wedding party should be present. If everyone is aware in advance of their place in the wedding, it will save last minute directions.

RECEPTIONS IN THE CHURCH

The church facilities are available for receptions. The fellowship center will comfortably seat approximately 120 guests for dinner. We ask that refreshments be handled by a professional caterer or a person responsible for the overall coordination of the reception. There is absolutely no smoking or drinking on the church premises; this includes champagne toasts. Red based beverages such as punch or juice are not permitted in the fellowship center.

Use of our kitchen facilities and equipment must be cleared in advance with the church office. Kitchen use does not include paper plates, napkins, or other disposable items. The services of a kitchen coordinator, arranged by the wedding hostess, are required.

The fellowship hall is not outfitted with a sound system, so parties will need to make their own arrangements for sound equipment. Your wedding hostess can recommend a Christian disc jockey. No dances are permitted in the fellowship hall.

Twenty banquet tables (96x30) are available for your use, as are approximately 120 folding chairs. Wedding parties are expected to set up the tables and folding chairs, and to return them to their proper storage carts/cabinet at the conclusion of the reception. Those using church facilities must accept full responsibility for any damage incurred to the building or equipment during that use.

RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER BUILDING USE

It is the responsibility of those using the facility to set up, clean up and return the facility to the normal setup after the wedding.

With regard to the reception:

- Collect all garbage into bags and place them in the dumpster. Do not place garbage bags in the recycle side of the dumpster.
- Wipe off tables. If food or drink is involved, wipe all tables clean using a mild soap and water solution. If stains occur, please notify the kitchen coordinator so correct cleaning solutions can be used to remove stains.
- Return all tables, chairs, and other equipment to their proper places after the reception. Return all rooms used to

their normal setup.

- If using the kitchen, please wash and dry all dishes used and return them to the correct cupboard. Take all extra food and beverage items with you unless specific plans for usage have been made. Wipe counters and leave kitchen clean and ready for the next use. Leave used dish cloths and towels in the sink. They will be picked up and laundered.
- Sweep floors and wipe up all spills. Report any damage to equipment or property promptly to the kitchen coordinator. All decorations should be removed after your event.
- Janitorial services will vacuum the sanctuary or chapel, their respective lobby areas, and any dressing areas used, and will empty trash cans in said areas. Janitorial services will clean the restrooms and will mop the fellowship

FEE SCHEDULE

For Members and Regular Attenders of Praise Center Church

Sanctuary (seats 300)	\$300
Chapel (seats 100)	\$100
Use of Fellowship Center	\$150
Ministerial Fee* (Includes consultation, counseling, preparation and administration of the service)	\$200
Wedding Facility Hostess*	
Rehearsal and Wedding	\$125
Rehearsal, Wedding & Reception	\$175
Reception Only	\$50
Sound Technician* (Rehearsal and Wedding)	\$100
Kitchen coordinator** (approximately 5 hours)	\$15/hr
Musician (Keyboard player carrying major part of wedding—prelude, postlude, etc)	\$100
Deposit required to secure date* (refundable)	\$200

* Required for weddings held at PCC

** Required for rehearsal dinner and/or receptions held at the church

center.

All monies are due and payable to Praise Center Church. Payment should be made in full two weeks before the wedding. Please give to the wedding hostess or the church secretary.

Saturday weddings should begin no later than 3pm (or 2pm if the reception is also at the church), to permit buildings to be restored to order for Sunday services. A maximum of 4 hours is allowed for your event. Church facilities are not available on Sundays.

Your security deposit will be returned to the person in charge of the wedding no later than two weeks following the wedding, if the church is left in good condition. In the event of property damages, should costs exceed the amount of the security deposit, you will be responsible for paying any additional charges.

To prevent scheduling conflicts, the following form should be completed and returned to the church with your deposit as soon as possible.

QUESTIONS

Should you have any questions, please contact Vikky Escobedo, at (559) 733-2744 x19 or by e-mail at vikky@praisecenterchurch.org.

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WEDDING REQUEST FORM

After reading our Wedding Policies and Procedures, if you are interested in having your wedding at our church, please complete this form and submit to: Praise Center Church, Attn: Vikky Escobedo, 503 N Floral St, Visalia, CA 93291

Return this completed form with a \$200 deposit. Completion of this form is not a guarantee of placement of your wedding date on the church calendar. Additionally, a minimum of six months notice prior to any requested wedding date is strongly recommended.

Once Praise Center Church receives this completed form, the master calendar is checked for availability and your request is reviewed by our pastoral staff. The wedding hostess will contact you to confirm the date and to make further arrangements.

BRIDE'S INFORMATION

Bride's Full Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: Cell _____ Home _____ Work _____

Number of Previous Marriages: _____

If applicable, last marriage ended in _____ by Divorce Death
Month/Year

Church Membership: Member of this Church? Yes No

If no, what is your church affiliation?

Your current pastor's name, address, phone: _____

Your Parents Names:

GROOM'S INFORMATION

Groom's Full Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone Numbers: Cell _____ Home _____ Work _____

Number of Previous Marriages: _____

If applicable, last marriage ended in _____ by Divorce Death
Month/Year

Church Membership: Member of this Church? Yes No

If no, what is your church affiliation? _____

Your current pastor's name, address, phone: _____

Your Parents Names: _____

YOUR WEDDING

Approximate number of guests you anticipate will attend: _____

Please indicate which of the following church facilities are being requested to be reserved:

Sanctuary (seats 300) Chapel (seats 100) Fellowship Hall (seats 120 for dinner)

Dates Requested—1st Choice:

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Dates Requested—2nd Choice:

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

Reception Location: _____

If your reception will be held at the church, will a meal/food be served? Yes No

If yes, will it be catered pot-luck type prepared on the premises

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read the Wedding Policies and Procedures. I understand this is a building designed for Christian usage and I pledge to abide by the rules of the church.

Date: _____

Signature of the Bride or Groom