

Grace E-Free Church - Denison, Iowa

Marriage and Pre-Marital Counseling Requirements

What We Believe

Marriage is one of the most important commitments a person can make. Aside from your decision to follow Christ, no other decision will have as great an impact on your life. It is our belief at Grace Church that the reason so many marriages are failing in our time is in part because of lack of influence of Christian churches in the lives of couples and the failure of many churches to recognize their responsibility to properly equip people to enter into the marriage relationship. It is our goal to try to attempt to equip you for your marriage in a Christ-centered and Biblically-based way.

It is our belief that performing wedding ceremonies is a privilege extended by Grace Church. This means that if we feel that you or your fiancé are not ready, or should not be married, we will decline to perform your wedding or continue the pre-marriage counseling.

In a Christian marriage, a man and a woman are making a vow to God to fulfill all that God requires for their marriage as outlined in the Bible. Because of the great significance and importance of the marriage vow, all parties should approach marriage prayerfully, patiently, humbly, and honestly.

What We Require

There are a few situations in which we will automatically refuse to perform your wedding or pre-marriage counseling:

1. If one of you is not a born-again follower of Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly teaches that we are not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14)
2. You are sexually active in your relationship and refuse to abstain until after the wedding ceremony. The Bible clearly teaches that sex is for marriage only (Hebrews 13:4, 1 Corinthians 6:18)
3. Grace Church will not perform any same-gender union (so called “marriage”) ceremonies. The Bible clearly teaches that same-gender sex is sinful and dishonoring to God and his people (Romans 1:22-28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)
4. Grace Church will not perform any multiple-partner unions. The Bible clearly states that Christian marriage is reserved for one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4-6)

The following is a list of requirements that must be met before we will agree to perform your marriage:

1. Both the man and the woman must be a born-again follower of Jesus Christ who are in active fellowship at Grace Church for at least six months (exceptions may be made for those in active fellowship of other biblically-based, Christ-centered churches)
2. Grace Church must be contacted regarding the proposed marriage ceremony at least six months prior to the planned wedding date.
3. Each couple must complete the Pre-Marital Questionnaire before counseling will be scheduled.
4. After submitting the Questionnaire, an appointment will be made with a pastor in order to determine whether to continue with the process.

5. Before a date is set, the couple must agree to complete a minimum of four counseling sessions with the pastor(s) at Grace Church.
6. The pastor(s) providing the counseling must approve of the wedding before any final dates are set.
7. Other Christian pastors may use Grace Church's facilities to perform a marriage ceremony if they hold to the essential doctrine of Grace Church. This must be approved by the Board.
8. The purpose of pre-marital counseling is to get to know each other better, to better prepare you for the marital relationship, and to help ground you and your marriage in Christ and His word. The hope is that all marriages performed by Grace Church will be honoring and glorifying to God. This will take commitment and obedience to God from all parties involved.
9. A Christian wedding is a sacred event. Therefore, the entire ceremony should be seen as a worship service and must be conducted with reverence and centered on Jesus Christ. All parties must be appropriately dressed and the music glorifying to God. There must be no alcohol present during the rehearsal or ceremony.

Pre-Marital Questionnaire

The questionnaire must be filled out completely and turned in to the church office. After being reviewed, an appointment will be made to meet with a pastor. At that time it will be determined whether or not to begin the pre-marriage counseling.

Note: We reserve the right to discontinue the planning process at any time, at our discretion.

Both you and your fiancé need to complete a questionnaire.

Personal information

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Fiancé's Name: _____

Marital Status

Have you been married before? ____ If yes, how many times? ____ For how long? ____

Are You: Divorced ____ Widowed ____ Separated ____

When? _____

Do you have children from a previous marriage _____

If yes, what are their names and ages? _____

If you are divorced what is your custody arrangement?

Engagement Period

How long have you known each other? _____ How long have you been dating? _____

How long have you been engaged? _____

Are you sexually active with your fiancé? _____

If yes, are you willing to abstain from sex until after the wedding ceremony? _____

Religious Background

Are you a Born-again Follower of Jesus Christ? _____

Attach a separate sheet briefly describing what it means to be "born-again" and when in your life you became a born-again Christian.

Do you regularly attend Grace Church? ____ If yes, which ministries? _____

For how long? _____ If no, where do you attend church? _____

Please answer the following questions keeping in mind our goal to help you prepare for your marriage. Be honest with your responses. Don't simply write the answers you think we expect.

1. Write a definition of love

2. How do you know you "love" your fiancé?

3. How have you prepared for your marriage (books, articles, videos)?

4. What do you expect from marriage that you cannot have staying single?

5. Give some reasons why you want to marry your fiancé.

6. What do you see as your role in the marriage?

7. What do you see as your future mate's role in the marriage?

8. With so many marriages failing today, why do you think your's will succeed?

9. How do other members of your family feel about your fiancé?

Please note:

Performance of marriage ceremonies is an extended privilege by Grace Church, not an obligation that must be performed. Grace Church, and its pastors, reserve the right to refuse pre-marriage counseling and/or a marriage ceremony based on Biblically-informed discernment. We are not, nor do we claim to be "Professional" counselors. Our counsel is based solely on God's word, the Bible. Be sure you understand our guidelines, expectations, and positions before signing below.

I acknowledge and understand the above information provided to me by Grace Church and I promise that all of the information I have provided is true.

Signature

____ / ____ / ____
Date