

Why Have a Wedding Ceremony? - Part 1

[A few years ago] I shared this with an engaged couple that was considering not having a wedding ceremony because of the trouble and difficulty that planning and carrying out such an event always brings. I haven't attempted to document these thoughts; I have simply shared my heart as a one-time groom, as a husband, as a father of several adult married children (with 9 more "unmarrieds" to go!), and as a pastor (who has performed enough weddings to learn).

I do believe that a ceremony before other believers is a very good idea:

1. Since God ordained marriage, **marriage is a God-thing**, not just a man-thing.
2. **A marriage ceremony is intended to affirm Christian beliefs as two come together.** The couple is publicly affirming their belief in God's creation of, purpose for, and design in marriage. (The ceremony may also serve to teach those that are unaware of these truths.)
3. **A marriage ceremony is a public declaration of the covenant of marriage before others.** The couple is surrounded by those that witness their vows, and therefore can attest to and hold the couple accountable for their vows.
4. **A marriage ceremony often (usually?) precipitates preparations of heart and mind through required counseling.** Trust me – You know less about marriage than you think you do. (I would say that to anyone.) You need to talk through Biblical teachings (that you may be fully aware of) and get common agreement and understanding before entering into marriage. I would suggest (and if I had the power, require) all engaged couples to have pre-marital counseling with a seasoned couple (i.e. married for many years) before entering into marriage. I could not in good conscience perform a marriage ceremony for a couple that has not done so. I'm not sure what pastor would do so.
5. **A marriage ceremony allows an initial bonding with extended family.** Though brief, it does allow for the couple to meet the family/extended family of the spouse.
6. **A marriage ceremony blesses the parents to experience the wedding of their child.** It is a formality, but a nice one.
7. A wedding is **something (usually) that a young lady dreams about** growing up.
8. A wedding is a tradition affirmed by history of the church to encourage (often require) couples to **present themselves before God's people** to be joined together.
9. A wedding **lets others rejoice** in the union.
10. A wedding ceremony of some type is **required by Iowa law.**

With that said, there is no particular mandate about the size or elaborateness of the ceremony.



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1. I encourage spending less on the wedding, and more on the honeymoon. Simple is good. (We practiced this by having our men wear dark suits, and I just bought them matching ties. Sounds dumb, but it worked for us.)
2. Inviting many or few is fine. I would recommend at least including close family (see #6 above).
3. I would encourage the groom to let this be the bride's day (see #7 above). It may not mean as much to us as men, but it does mean more to the gals. It's not just an event, but a key transition. Make it a special day for her.

Why Have a Wedding Ceremony? - Part 2

Here I give just a few brief additional thoughts about weddings. I would hope to whet the appetites of those reading to investigate this further.

Wedding ceremonies are a big deal in the Bible. The Bible pretty much begins and ends with wedding ceremonies. Wedding ceremonies also have a prominent place in Jesus' ministry and teaching.

1. **The very first human to human interaction was a wedding**, conducted by God Himself. It was His main point of the moment, and it set in motion the entire idea of marriage for the human race for all of history. God established marriage with a wedding ceremony that remains the pattern for all humanity today as evidenced throughout the Bible. (Gen 2)
2. **Jesus performed his first recorded miracle at a wedding ceremony.** Jesus' attendance affirms the importance of such a ceremony. Jesus was invited along with the disciples to attend this wedding. He apparently considered it worthy of His time to witness and celebrate this God-designed union. (John 2:1-10)
3. **The parable of the ten virgins indicates the "big deal" that weddings held in Jesus' day.** The uniting of a husband and wife was a huge, important event that took several days. Jesus explains the kingdom of God using wedding ceremony terminology. (Matt 25:1-12)
4. **The key celebratory culminating event that the church looks forward to is a wedding ceremony!** Although not much is said about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, it is obvious that it is something prophesied with the intent of yielding great anticipation by the Church. God pictures the formal uniting of the Church with her Savior by nothing less than an elaborate marriage ceremony, which included preparations throughout this age. It is the formal beginning of an eternity of blessing. God is into formality! The last two chapters of Revelation also highlight this event by continuing to refer to the Bride. (Rev 19:7-9; 21:9; 22:17)

I could further discuss the importance of marriage as expressed throughout the Bible as a key indicator of the importance of a wedding, and the marriage relationship being a huge responsibility as the primary picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church, but that will have to be reserved for another time.



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