

Crosswinds Church Position on Marriage and Wedding Policy



Plainfield, Illinois
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The purpose of this document is to outline a policy for weddings held at Crosswinds Church and/or performed by members of the Pastoral Staff of Crosswinds.

Biblical Principles of Marriage

The first and primary relationship spoken of in the Bible is that between a man or a woman and their Creator-God. The book of Genesis tells us that God “created man in His image; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27) These words were written in the form of a poem or song because our relationship with our Creator is something to be sung about and celebrated.

God created us to enjoy a relationship with Him. Because human beings are created in the image of God – with intellect, emotions, and will; or thoughts, feelings, and choices – we are uniquely capable of engaging in a worship relationship with our Creator. We can have thoughts about God and communicate with Him. We can have feelings for God and desire Him. We can make choices to honor God and demonstrate our love for Him. Most importantly, human beings are capable of responding to God’s call to salvation through Jesus Christ, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

In the timeline of the Bible, the second relationship spoken of is that between a man and woman in the context of marriage. Genesis 2:18 records that God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.” Thus, while a relationship with God is the primary relationship we should seek and treasure, God also recognizes the goodness and need of humans to be in a relationship with others.

Just as the words describing the creation of mankind in God’s image were written in the form of a song, the words describing Adam’s response to the creation of the first woman were also written as a song. The relationship between human beings, and particularly the relationship between a man and woman in marriage, is something to be sung about, celebrated, and honored.

Jesus demonstrated the value that God places on marriage. He attended a wedding feast in Cana and performed His first miracle there, showing His pleasure in the festivities. He frequently used the imagery of weddings in His parables. And Jesus affirmed the first words on marriage from Genesis 2:24 and added His own injunction: “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:6)

Within the pages of the New Testament, we learn that marriage has a deeper meaning than the creation of a human family. The Apostle Paul calls marriage a “profound mystery” because it is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32). Marriages that are based on the principles of the gospel – with a man calling a woman into a relationship where he provides leadership and gives himself up for his wife’s needs, and the woman responding in loving submission to her husband – are a testimony of the Gospel, honoring to God, and a joy for the family.

In conclusion, marriage is one of the foundational relationships discussed in Scripture and practiced in human society. We believe that God’s word recognizes that a family led by a man and woman united in marriage is a vital part of the church family. Furthermore, officiating at weddings and announcing God’s blessing on a married couple is a privilege of pastors when the couple makes a commitment to follow the principles of Scripture in their marriage.

Crosswinds Church Position On Marriage

Because of the implications of marriage for society and the church, we believe that we have a responsibility to carefully adhere to Biblical principles when it comes to weddings performed using church resources or by church personnel. The following points summarize our beliefs, along with Bible references.

When God unites a man and woman in marriage it is to be honored and respected.

(Genesis 2:22-25, Proverbs 18:22, Malachi 2:15, Matthew 19:4-6, Hebrews 13:4)

There are a number of reasons for honoring and respecting marriage. First and foremost, the Apostle Paul wrote that marriage is a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:32, and see below), so it is right to hold marriage in honor. Furthermore, God saw that it was “not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18) and responded by creating a helper for Adam. Whenever God brings a man and woman together, it shows that He remains concerned about our welfare and is actively involved in providing our basic need of companionship. Lastly, marriage is not solely a private arrangement between two individuals, but is a relationship of public interest. Friends celebrate love and marriage (Song of Solomon 1:4), as well as do all that they can to encourage love and fidelity in others.

Honoring marriage ultimately falls on the persons in the marriage. All sexual relationships outside of marriage are condemned in the Bible (Leviticus 18:22, 26:15-56, Romans 1:24-29, and I Corinthians 5:9-13, 6:9-12, 15-20), so marriage partners are responsible for fidelity as well as fulfilling their marital duties as a guard against sexual temptation (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). Furthermore, ongoing and growing obedience to the Word of God promotes a stable and productive family life. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 declares that Christians are to come out of sin, understanding that we are set free, washed, sanctified (set apart for God’s purposes) and cleansed by Jesus Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, who enables us to be obedient to God’s commands.

A Godly marriage is a reflection of the gospel.

(Ephesians 5:31-32, 1 Corinthians 6:16-17)

The gospel is about what God does in calling us into a relationship with Him, and about God’s display of His glory and wisdom (Ephesians 3:10).

Marriage, also, is rooted in *what God does* and *what God displays*. “What God has joined together” (Matthew 19:6) means that God does what parents cannot do for their children, or what we as individuals cannot truly do for ourselves – only God can join two persons together as one flesh. Furthermore, the covenant involved in leaving father and mother and uniting with a spouse as one flesh is a portrayal of the covenant between Christ and the church. Thus, marriage exists ultimately to display the glory of the covenant-keeping character of God.

The male-female roles in marriage are also linked to what God does and displays in the gospel. What the woman does in responding to the calling and leadership of her husband, submitting to him out of reverence for Christ, is to display Jesus’ submission to His father. What the man does in providing for the needs of his wife is to display something similar to Jesus’ headship (source of life and supply) of the church and the giving of His life for the church.

Because marriage is a reflection of our union with God in Christ, then marriage should principally be only between a man and woman who belong to God's family.

(Genesis 2:21-25, Genesis 24:2-4, Nehemiah 13:25-27, 1 Corinthians 7:39, Ephesians 5:32)

We believe that since marriage is truly a reflection of the relationship between Christ and the church, only a Christian man and Christian woman can unite together in a covenant marriage that is proper and pleasing to God. Even so, in instances where a Christian has married an unbeliever, or two unbelievers have joined together in marriage, the marriage should be honored and respected as a working out of God's plan and design for all human life created in His image.

Crosswinds Church recognizes that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. For example, in Mark 10:2-9, Jesus clearly states that God's view of marriage is the holy union of a man and a woman. Clearly, God's plan is that marriage involves a man and a woman. No other partnerships can be deemed a marriage in God's sight and this church will not recognize, participate in, or support any other concept of marriage. Homosexual marriage is unbiblical and necessarily involves approving conduct that the Bible clearly describes as sin. (Genesis 18-19, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9) Accordingly, this church, its pastors, or staff will not participate in same-sex civil unions, same-sex marriages, or the blessing of same-sex unions, nor shall its property or resources be used for such purposes (Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9).

We cannot compromise with what the world says is acceptable. The Biblical covenant of marriage preceded any governmental laws regulating marriage. Since the inception of the church, followers of Jesus Christ have stood for what is true and right in the eyes of God, not in the eyes of the world. (Acts 4:19- 20)

Crosswinds Church Wedding Policy

For these reasons, and given the place of honor and holiness that marriage is given in the Bible, Crosswinds Church adopts the following policies:

For Pastors

Only Pastors employed by or licensed by Crosswinds Church shall conduct wedding ceremonies on the Crosswinds Church premises.

An exception is granted for pastors who are not employed or licensed by Crosswinds Church to perform a wedding at Crosswinds Church, but only after agreeing to follow the policies of the church, including this document, and provided that the pastor receives the approval of the Crosswinds Pastoral Staff to conduct the wedding.

Marriages entered into at Crosswinds Church shall only be between a man and a woman.

A Pastor employed by Crosswinds Church who performs or officiates over a same sex wedding ceremony or civil union shall be subject to discipline by the Executive Pastors, possibly leading to termination, following the practices described in the Crosswinds Church By-Laws.

For Wedding Applicants

All persons desiring to be married by a member of the Crosswinds Church Pastoral Staff must complete and abide by the “Pre-Marital Covenant” that is included as part of this policy.

All persons desiring to be married at Crosswinds Church or by a member of the Crosswinds Church Pastoral Staff are required to complete a course of pre-marital counseling with the pastor or a qualified counselor. At a minimum, the pre-marital counseling must include presentation of the gospel and lay out the Biblical principles for marriage. The counseling should consist of multiple sessions to give the pastor adequate opportunity to assess the preparedness of the Wedding Applicants for marriage.

Pre-marital counseling may be performed by a qualified counselor who is approved by the Crosswinds Church Pastoral Staff, if such pre-marital counseling is consistent with the pre-marital counseling provided by Crosswinds Church.

If the wedding will be performed by a member of the Crosswinds Pastoral Staff, the applicants must be involved in the life of the church through regular worship attendance to aid in the pre-marital counseling relationship between the applicants and the pastor. This policy is also in keeping with our position that marriage is not solely a private arrangement between two individuals, but is a relationship of public interest to the life of the church. Consequently, those getting married by the church should be known to the church. An exception is granted for Crosswinds staff members to marry applicants who are adult children of regular attenders. An exception is also granted that the applicants do not need to be regular attenders if the wedding is not performed by a Crosswinds staff member.

The Pastor conducting the pre-marital counseling must assess the readiness of the applicants for marriage. Factors influencing readiness for marriage include 1) spiritual unity, 2) compatibility, and 3) maturity. The Pastor has authority to determine, in his judgment, if the applicants are ready for marriage. He will discuss his impressions with the other members of the Pastoral Staff. A consensus among the staff is needed before the wedding can proceed.

Spiritual unity in marriage is commanded in Scripture. With that in mind, only if both applicants have a testimony of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation (Romans 10:9, 1 Corinthians 7:39) can they be married by a member of the Crosswinds Church Pastoral Staff or at Crosswinds’ facility. Likewise, if both applicants are unbelievers, they may be married by a Crosswinds staff member or at the Crosswinds’ facility. This latter position is in keeping with our view that marriage between unbelievers should be honored and respected as a working out of God’s plan and design for human life. In no case will the wedding of a Christian to an unbeliever be conducted by Crosswinds Church staff or at the Crosswinds’ facility.

If, in the judgment of the staff, the applicants are not ready for marriage, the couple will be advised that Crosswinds Church has declined to allow the marriage to be held at the church or to be performed by Crosswinds Church Pastors. At that time, the applicants may be encouraged to pursue further counseling in hopes of preparing them for marriage. Applicants will not be married at Crosswinds Church or by a Crosswinds Church pastor until it is determined they are ready for marriage.

The Crosswinds Church Elders and Pastors reserve the right to decline the services of any pastor or the use of Crosswinds Church property or facilities to perform any wedding ceremony that is inconsistent with the Biblical standards for marriage or with this wedding policy.

Pre-Marital Covenant

(To be reviewed and signed by Wedding Applicants and Crosswinds Pastor)

Wedding Applicants

- We agree to complete the course of pre-marital counseling prescribed by *Crosswinds Church Position on Marriage and Wedding Policy*.
- We agree to remain sexually pure during the time of our pre-marital counseling and until we are married.
- We understand that the Pastoral Staff at Crosswinds Church may determine that marriage between us is not appropriate at this time. If this is the case, the Pastors at Crosswinds Church are not obligated to perform our wedding.

Pastor

- I will provide Biblically-based counseling on marriage to the Wedding Applicants, and to the best of my ability prepare them for a marriage that imitates the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- I will pray for the couple, that God would increase their love for the Lord Jesus Christ, that He would increase their mutual respect and love for one another, and that by the power of His Holy Spirit He would help them to live under the principles of Scripture.
- I will do my best to assess the readiness of this couple for Christian marriage.

Wedding Applicants

Pastor

Date

Date