

Wedding Information Sheet I

Christianity and Marriage

A wedding ceremony marks the start of a marriage, and every wedding is important - whether it takes place in Church, in a Registry Office, on a beach, or halfway up a mountain! They all mark a public witness to the love that two people have for each other, and their commitment to one another.

However, a Church wedding makes certain themes clearer:

- ⊙ The fact that the promises are made within a supportive community provides a setting in which the marriage can be supported and sustained.
- ⊙ The Church building witnesses to the significance of love as the very reason for existence. The concept of covenant between the couple reflects the relationship between God and the world.
- ⊙ The idea of the 'sacrament of marriage' reflects the miracle of what God is doing in human lives as you both make the promises together in the Church.
- ⊙ Every year, hundreds of thousands of people get married in England. More than half tie the knot during a religious ceremony which, for 200,000, about a third of the total, involves the Church of England. It is the most important day in their lives.
- ⊙ Whether you are a regular churchgoer or not, getting married in church allows you to make solemn promises to the one you love, not only in front of your family and friends but also in the sight of God and with God's blessing.
- ⊙ The Church understands marriage to be 'a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they are united in that love, just as Christ is united in love with his Church' *
- ⊙ 'Marriage is given that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given that, with delight and tenderness, they may know each other in love and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given that they may have children and be blessed in caring for them and bringing them up in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.' *

** from the Introduction to the Marriage Service*