

Wedding Information Sheet 13

Summary of the Marriage Service

The Marriage Service is familiar to many people, but here is a brief summary.

- ⊙ The couple traditionally arrive separately, the bridegroom first with his best man; and the bride, at the appointed time, led down the aisle on the arm of her father or a chosen escort.
- ⊙ The groom's family and friends sit on the right and the bride's on the left (numbers and available space permitting)
- ⊙ Bride and groom meet at the chancel step.
- ⊙ The priest prays for the couple and declares the purposes of marriage before asking, as the law requires, if anyone knows any reason why the marriage should not take place.
- ⊙ Next come the questions: Will you love, comfort, honour and protect...and, forsaking all others, be faithful as long as you both shall live? Each partner is asked, and each in turn answers **I will**.
- ⊙ Turning to each other, bride and groom then make their vows, which although in contemporary language, have changed very little over more than 800 years. *"...to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part, according to God's holy law."*
- ⊙ The priest blesses the wedding rings, and by exchanging their rings the couple complete their promises.
- ⊙ The priest proclaims them husband and wife and pronounces God's blessing on them.
- ⊙ The marriage register is signed by the bride and groom, their two witnesses, and the officiating minister. The marriage is now legally complete.
- ⊙ The congregation prays for the couple, asking God's help for them as they begin their new life together, and the congregation are dismissed with God's blessing.