

Marriage Policy

It is our desire that your marriage be the most joyful relationship possible, and that it be all that God intended it to be.

Marriage is the union of two lives into one. It is an earthly model of the relationship the church will one day enjoy with Jesus Christ at the final wedding when they truly become one with each other. (Ephesians 5:21-33) *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. Revelation 19:6-9 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.)*

As we read God's Word, we are able to discern foundational principals which must be built upon if we hope to experience joy and fulfillment in marriage. Ignoring these principles will result in frustration and ultimate failure in the marriage relationship.

Our goal is not just to marry people, but to enter into a relationship with them. Because we are committed to building strong marriages, we want to share the following guidelines with you.

- 1) We ask that any couple desiring to be married by Millheim Baptist Church attend a minimum of two worship services before setting up a premarital meeting with one of our pastors.
- 2) Couples who desire to be married at Millheim Baptist Church are to participate in a series of premarital counseling sessions offered by the church. These sessions are important and will make a lasting impact in your marriage. It will be up to the discretion of the Pastor to forgo the sessions if the couple does not need or desire counseling.

(Proverbs 15:22 *Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.* Proverbs 19:20 *Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.* Proverbs 20:18 *Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.*)

- 3) Our desire is that every couple being married at Millheim Baptist Church be committed to establishing a Christian home. Scripture advises that we “not be mismatched,” specifically meaning the marriage of a believer in Jesus Christ to an unbeliever. The spiritual compatibility of the couple will be reviewed with them by a pastor.

(II Corinthians 6:14-16 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and I will be their God, and shall be my people.*)

- 4) When marriage is being considered with either one or both parties divorced, the couple will be asked to study Matthew 19:3-9 *“The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”* They will be asked if their previous mate was sexually unfaithful to them or if their divorce occurred prior to their commitment to Jesus Christ. If they answer affirmatively in either case, the minister may perform the ceremony, according to their word, laying the responsibility on their shoulders before God. If they answer negatively to both cases, acknowledging that other extenuating circumstances often relate to divorce, they may request a meeting with the pastor to consider their case. We want to be especially sensitive to individual situations while at the same time maintaining our commitment to Scriptural integrity.

*No remarriages after divorce of a spouse will be performed until at least three years has passed from the time the divorce is finalized.

- 5) In case of premarital pregnancy, the marriage may or may not be performed depending on the maturity of the persons involved and other considerations. The final decision to perform the ceremony will be left to the discretion of the pastor.
- 6) Couples should remain celibate prior to their marriage and should not live together at any time prior to the wedding ceremony. If a couple is living together it reveals some core issues that need to be dealt with, again it is our desire that your marriage be the most joyful relationship possible and that it be all that God intended it to be.

I Thessalonians 4:3-5 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God. I Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's)

- 7) No pastor on the Millheim Baptist staff will marry a couple if another pastor of the church has refused to perform the ceremony based on spiritual reasons.