

**TALKING POINT #23**  
**LIFE'S TURNING POINTS #3: THE MARRYING CHURCH (PART I)**

**“YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER!”**

Frank Sinatra made that line famous in his song, “Love and Marriage.” Marriage remains one of the key aspects of our society that is still connected to Church. Many people who rarely attend Church will still want their wedding either conducted in a Church building or by a Minister of Religion. Indeed, this is such a large topic that we will spend 4 Talking Point Papers on this subject: 1. Preparing to be married; 2. The Wedding Ceremony; 3. Supporting Marriages; and 4. When Marriages Break Down.

There are three sides to any marriage preparation: the relational aspect, the legal requirements and the Christian emphasis. What do people mean when they come to the Pastoral Team and say, “We want a Christian Wedding,” or “We want a Church Wedding.”? Let's explore the Church's role in preparing a couple for a “Christian Wedding.”

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

The first thing we need to affirm is that we believe that marriage has been instituted by God (Genesis 2:18-25). Indeed, Jesus gave His divine imprimatur to marriage when he performed His first public miracle at a wedding (John 2:1-12). Jesus said that a Divine and miraculous transaction occurs when a couple is married, “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:6)

On the basis of the seriousness of marriage in God's eyes, the Bible also commands people to take marriage seriously and to make healthy and prayerful choices about their spouse. For example, Paul warns of the danger in Christians marrying unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6), though he still commands them to honour marriage (1 Corinthians 7). In all cases Christians are to invest in their marriage and show genuine phenomenological love (Ephesians 5:22-33).

**NOW FOR US AT FOREST LAKE**

At FLBC, we take these Biblical principles seriously. On that basis, when a couple approaches a member of the Pastoral Team to perform their wedding, we have 3 conditions:

- I. To meet with us at least 3 times to go through the 3 aspects of marriage mentioned above;
- II. To accept we will declare that marriage has been instituted by God and that it is on His terms;
- III. To accept we will declare at their marriage that Jesus is the best foundation for marriage.

The other important thing we can do to prepare for weddings is to encourage our single people to live holy lives in preparation for future marriage. This includes being emotionally prepared, living with sexual integrity, learning to take ownership in a society that teaches people to abrogate their responsibilities, and dating with integrity.

**CONCLUSION**

Marriage is a beautiful gift from God to humanity and it should be treated with the dignity and respect it deserves. An old phrase is “one should honour the sanctity of marriage.” Like many things, the more effort we put into our marriages, the more blessed they can be and the more rewarding they become. This starts with our attitude to getting married and how we enter marriage.

Next month, we'll cover the second part of this series, “The Wedding Ceremony.”