



ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS

At APC, we firmly believe that marriage is a sacred union instituted and ordained by God, a holy covenant that unites a man and a woman together as one flesh. We believe that on the day of the wedding, God is a witness to this marriage covenant and becomes a covenant partner with the husband and wife. Everything about an APC wedding service is designed to witness that this is a Christian wedding. As ministers of the Gospel, we believe that by conducting a marriage ceremony, we, as God's representatives, are officiating over the creation of this union. Therefore, we believe that we have a responsibility to God, the couple and the church, to set certain standards and to assist the intended couple to prepare well by laying a solid foundation for a strong, healthy and happy marriage that lasts a life-time. We reserve the right to decline to perform any engagement or wedding ceremony that we feel, does not honor God or the institution of marriage as He designed it to be as described in the Holy Bible.

What are the specific requirements to be engaged and married at All Peoples Church or by an APC pastor?

The pastors of All Peoples Church have determined the following requirements:

The first 4 requirements must be met prior to APC conducting an Engagement Ceremony. All 7 requirements must be met prior to APC conducting the Wedding Ceremony.

1) The bride and groom must individually confess a personal commitment to the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

All Peoples Church will not marry unbelievers, or join an unbeliever to a believer in marriage (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). God's Word is clear about spiritual compatibility between marriage partners.

2) The bride and groom must abstain from physical intimacy or living together.

Sex is a gift from God. He is the one who created it! Therefore, we must follow God's directions alone regarding our sexuality. The Bible gives us clear instructions for sex within the parameters of the marriage relationship (Hebrews 13:4). God's Word also gives us clear warnings and consequences when sex is used outside of marriage.

While many of those who come to All Peoples Church are honouring God through abstaining from sexual intimacy, there are many that do not fall into this category. Couples who are physically intimate or are living together are asked to move apart and covenant (see below) with All Peoples Church (a pastor) to abstain



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from their sexual relationship until their wedding day. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to make this commitment with us, understanding that this is God's best for your marriage relationship.

Pre-Marital Covenant

We are committed to God's ways in preparing for our marriage. We agree to abstain from sexual intimacy until we share our marriage vows together. We believe it is God's will for our life and marriage to be sanctified, to be set apart for pure and holy living.

We also understand that God does not look at our past failures. Instead, He looks at us as broken people whom he can make anew. With His forgiveness, we can start all over again. As we ask God to forgive us through Jesus, He will see us as a completely new couple.

We seek to trust God and honour Him by upholding His parameters of sexual intimacy within the context of our future marriage. We believe that with God's power, we will be able to keep this covenant and be greatly blessed by our obedience to Him

3) Membership:

Either both or at least one (bride or groom) must be a member of APC and have attended APC regularly for a minimum period of 6-months after becoming a member.

4) Parental Consent:

It is important that as a way of honouring our parents, that both the bride and the groom have the consent of their parents/legal guardians.

Before the Marriage Preparation Course commences, parents of the couple along with the couple must meet with Ps. Ashish. Ps. Ashish will brief both parents about the process, the importance of the MPC, the importance of feedback that comes from the Marriage Counselor during the MPC, the possibility that the preparation process may be extended to resolve any issues that are identified, etc. Ps. Ashish will also meet individually with parents on both sides to confidentially obtain their support and concerns if any, on the proposed marriage, so that these can be addressed.

IF the parents are living outside Bangalore, then, as an alternative, Ps. Ashish will speak to both sides via phone and also communicate to them via email.

(Hence contact details of both parents are required in the marriage application form).



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5) Marriage Preparation Course (MPC):

We require 6 months to go through the Marriage Preparation Course. Couples desiring to get married must complete this course with a counsellor designated by the church. The Marriage Preparation Course requires the couples to go through the 19 lessons in the APC Publication '*Marriage & Family*', work on the questions at the end of each chapter and then meet with the assigned counsellor for the marriage preparation. MP3 audio, videos of all these sessions are available online at: apcwo.org/marriageAndfamily

Who will facilitate the Marriage Preparation Course?

Once the above 'point 4)' is completed, Ps. Jeyakumar will assign a Marriage Counselor for the couple. The MPC will be done only by Chrysalis (the counseling ministry of APC) Counselors. We felt that trained professionals are necessary to do the MPC to identify unresolved issues, address conflicts and help couples find proper resolution. Hence the couple will be assigned a professional Chrysalis Counselor to walk them through the MPC.

The couple is welcome to meet with any APC pastors for spiritual support and teaching from the Word, but MPC will be done exclusively by a professional Chrysalis counselor.

Mid-way through the MPC the Chrysalis counselor will do an assessment to identify any issues, etc. The couple will also meet in person with Ps. Ashish to address any challenges. At this point, the Marriage Counselor will provide an honest assessment to the parents, the couple, and Ps. Ashish. If everything is going well, the families can go ahead with their wedding plans. This will be about 3 months before the tentative wedding date and hence there will be sufficient time for preparation. If there are challenges that need to be addressed, the Marriage Counselor will inform parents and the couple, requesting that they wait until the issues are properly addressed before finalizing a wedding date and making arrangements. Our intent here is that it is better and easier to resolve issues before getting married, rather than carrying unresolved problems into a marriage.

What should one expect from the marriage preparation experience?

You should expect to be challenged, strengthened, educated and better prepared for your upcoming marriage. You will probably experience some laughs, tears and some pleasant surprises.

You should leave your sessions with some problem areas identified, some new marital skills learned and most importantly - a more realistic expectation of what marriage will be like!



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6) Marriage Application Forms:

Kindly fill the APC Marriage Application Form (separate form for each person) and submit either via email, post or in person. The completed forms must be submitted a minimum of 6-months prior to your tentative wedding date.

7) Other details:

Banns of marriage: Banns of Marriage will be announced only for those who satisfy points 1) to 6)

Membership Certificate for Marriage: Those who will be getting married at another church and who need a No-Objection or related certificate from APC must satisfy points 1) to 4) above.

Outstation Weddings: APC pastors typically solemnize APC weddings within Bangalore City. If you wish to hold your wedding outside Bangalore, please note, that APC pastors normally will not solemnize the wedding. In some exceptions an APC pastor may consider doing so. However, please check directly with the APC pastor regarding their availability and please consider making travel and accommodation arrangements for them in case they agree to travel outstation to solemnize the wedding. Outstation weddings will not be registered by APC and will have to be done by the local church in that city.

Marriage Registration: Kindly finalise your marriage registration with the registrar of Christian Marriages (Mr. Daniel Christopher) or anyone else. The registration is to be done during or before the wedding ceremony. APC will not be able to solemnize the wedding if this process is not finalized.

Order of Service: The order of service and other details pertaining to this may be finalized a month before the wedding date in the church office with Ps. Jeyakumar and Arthi.

May God richly bless you individually and as a couple, as you embark on this exciting journey together!

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So, they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate” Mark 10:7-9 (NIV)