

Getting Married Through Fellowship Bible Church

Are you getting married?

Congratulations to you both! We are delighted to hear that you are taking this step toward marriage and we look forward to helping you start your new life together in the Lord. A quick glance at the opening chapters of the Bible shows that the institution of marriage stands at the apex of God's creation. Apart from coming to know Christ, there is no more critical, important, or crucial step in your life than the step into marriage.

What Does FBC Offer for Engaged Couples?

We offer premarital counseling at FBC for engaged couples who are being married by an FBC pastor, using our facilities, or are being married elsewhere but would still like premarital counseling. *(Please reference FBC's Wedding Policy within this document for further detail.)*

There is a growing recognition that with guided preparation and discussion, significant marriage problems can be headed off before they occur. Well-documented statistics bear this out. *The divorce rate of those who complete five sessions of premarital counseling is one-tenth that of those with no premarital counseling!*

Fellowship Bible Church has long recognized the effectiveness of this principle and has designed a personalized, comprehensive premarital counseling program. We want to help you get your marriage started in the right direction. Our premarital program addresses important biblical principles so that you can "hurdle the hindrances" to an effective marriage and begin your life together on a sure and solid foundation.

How do we begin premarital counseling?

To begin the process, contact the administrative assistant of the Family Ministries office at sherril@fbcva.org or 540-662-7743. She will send you premarital intake forms and any additional information you may need by email or postal mail.

After you complete and return your intake forms, you will be scheduled to meet as a couple with John Morrison, the Pastor of Family Ministries. During the meeting, he will ask about your relationship together, your relationship with the Lord, and your basic wedding plans to assure that there is nothing prohibiting FBC from assisting with your wedding. At this time you can request a particular pastor to perform the ceremony (pending his availability). If you would prefer a minister other than one of Fellowship Bible Church's pastors perform your wedding, please discuss this during the meeting.

Upon satisfactory completion of the initial meeting, we will register you for two online tests which make up an important part of our premarital program: the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis® and the Prepare Inventory®.

After completing the tests, you will be matched with one of our trained premarital mentor couples who are mature Christians and members of FBC. You will meet with your mentor couple for six sessions over an approximate three month period to study and discuss relevant Bible passages on marriage and to discuss important topics concerning the marriage commitment.

How much does premarital counseling cost?

We do not charge for our premarital counseling but there is a cost for testing and resources used. You will need to pay **\$80 (cash or check)** after your intake meeting in order to be registered for the online tests.

What is the timeline of premarital counseling?

Premarital counseling must be completed *prior* to wedding announcements being mailed. If during the counseling process the mentor couple communicates concerns about your marriage or the timing of it, the

pastor may delay the wedding (or recommend so to whoever is officiating). ***Though this rarely happens, please realize that wedding plans are contingent upon satisfactory completion of premarital counseling.***

What is FBC's Wedding Policy?

1. At least one of the couple (or their parents) must be a member or regular attendee of FBC.
2. Both the man and woman being married (see Doctrinal Statement on "Man") must have a relationship with Christ and know Him as their Savior. The marriage must comport with FBC's Statement of Faith and Beliefs, including the Statement on Marriage and Sexuality; FBC's Wedding Policy DOES NOT permit weddings that do not adhere to these policies.
3. If you hope to have an FBC pastor or use FBC facilities, wedding requests must be made at least five months in advance so that you have adequate time to complete premarital counseling and to secure your preferred date.
4. The couple must complete premarital counseling at least 6 weeks prior to their wedding date.
5. Due to the schedule of our custodial staff and the extent to which our buildings are used for ministries, we regret that FBC facilities are unavailable for weddings for those outside the church family.
6. Our facilities are available for use for first-time marriages and celebration of re-marriages after reconciliation to your first spouse.

What if I want to rent FBC facilities for my wedding?

Due to a busy schedule and limited staff for special events, FBC can only be used to host weddings for members and regular attendees. We are unable to offer our facilities to those outside the FBC church family.

If you are interested in hosting your wedding or reception at FBC, please request additional information and the *Wedding Arrangements Request Form* from the Family Ministries office to begin the process of securing your event date. (Please note that the time schedule for weddings at FBC is very limited; your event must be finished and all decorations, food and wedding-related items *removed from the premises by 3:00 p.m. Saturday*).

What is FBC's policy on divorce and remarriage?

The elders at Fellowship Bible Church recognize that there are various views regarding remarriage after divorce. Godly biblical scholars and pastors do not always agree on these views.

After much study, prayer, and biblical deliberation, FBC elders have determined that because marriage ranks so highly in God's estimation and because we believe that the Bible teaches that marriage is for life (a covenant bond broken only at death, cf., Romans 7:2-3), we cannot support remarriage after divorce. This means we are not able to provide premarital counseling or perform weddings for people who are divorced and whose spouse is still living. We do not judge those who disagree with our policy, but we must obey what we understand God is teaching us.

If a couple wishes to speak with an elder or pastor concerning this view, please call the church office to set up an appointment. A policy paper and a study guide of the biblical passages concerning divorce and remarriage will be provided, and the various views of divorce and remarriage can be discussed.

Knowing that the families of many of FBC's elders and pastors have been painfully impacted by divorce, we do not hold this policy lightly or with a lack of love for those whom it affects. We follow it because we believe God's Word teaches it, and our policy is to obey His Word. If we did not, we would cease to be a church whose witness is of Jesus Christ and of His Word.