

## A Minister's Role in Marriage

So you're ready for your big day! The day you've been planning for months, if not years! A day full of fun, excitement, romance, and love! The dress is picked out. The honeymoon is booked. Family and friends have "saved the date." But one question still remains...

*"Who's gonna be our minister?"*

You may not initially realize it, but selecting the minister for your wedding is an important decision. Your minister plays an intricate role in not just determining the style of the ceremony but also in speaking on the behalf of a supportive community of faith. Without the minister, and the faith community he/she represents, your marriage vows would not be much different than your promises at the time of your engagement. Community support is thus an important element of any marriage.

The preparation for marriage is also important. As relationships transition into engagements and as engagements grow into marriages, couples will likely discover that they are changing – changing in how they relate to one another *and* changing as distinct persons. While these changes are "normal" and necessary for the continued maturation of the relationship, oftentimes these changes are more easily felt than put to words. "While I know I love my partner more and more each day, why do the things that once excited me about him/her now seem so mundane?" Or, "Sometimes I catch myself wishing I were only responsible for me. It's hard coordinating life for two – *or more.*"

As a minister, it is my role to support the couple as they learn to recognize and express these changes constructively. I, therefore, require all couples to participate in premarital counseling, meeting with me at least once a month beginning no later than 4 months prior to the wedding ceremony. In rare circumstances, I will consider accepting premarital counseling through another trusted minister or professional counselor.

And finally, as a minister, it is my role to support the couple even after the wedding is complete and that photo album entitled "Newlyweds" has moved from the coffee table to the keepsake closet. My role is to continue to support the couple even through the hard days that can be surprising or slowly wearing in the years to come.

Selecting your minister is an important decision. As a Christian minister, my role is: (1) to speak on behalf of the church, affirming that this community of faith honors the couple's vows to one another before God, (2) to prepare the couple with the relationship skills that foster a healthy marriage, and (3) to support the couple following the wedding itself as they face life's challenges together. Having read my responsibilities as a minister, I ask that you determine as a couple if I am the minister best suited for officiating your beautiful day as your relationship continues to grow into a *lifetime* of beautiful days together!

First Baptist Church  
Beloit, Wisconsin

**Having read “A Minister’s Role in Marriage”**

Do you feel that Pastor Walt is able to speak on behalf of your faith community? If so, how?

Do you feel that both you and your partner will be able to participate in the preparatory work for fostering a healthy marriage?

How will Pastor Walt be able to support you in your preparation for marriage?

How will Pastor Walt be able to support you following your wedding day?

*(You may deliver your responses to the church office at 617 Public Ave. Beloit, WI 53511 or email your responses to (secretary@firstbaptistbeloit.com)*