

A FORM OF PRAYER AND DEDICATION AFTER A CIVIL MARRIAGE

The married couple enter the church together.

The presiding minister says

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all.

And also with you.

INTRODUCTION

God is love and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.
1 John 4: 6

Unless the Lord builds the house, those who labour build in vain.
Psalms 127: 1

... and ... you stand in the presence of God as husband and wife to dedicate to him your life together, that he may consecrate your marriage and empower you to keep the covenant and promise you have solemnly declared.

The scriptures set before us marriage as part of God's creation and a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

[Marriage was ordained that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in plenty and in need,

in sorrow and in joy.

It is intended that with delight and tenderness
they may know each other in love,
and through the joy of their bodily union
they may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives.

It is intended that they may be blessed
in the children they may have,
in caring for them and in bringing them up
in accordance with God's will
to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife begin a new life together in the community.
It is a permanent commitment that all should honour.
It must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly or selfishly,
but by God's help, with reverence, responsibility,
respect and the promise to be faithful.]

You now wish to affirm your desire to live together as followers of
Christ, and you have come to him, the fountain of grace, that strength-
ened by the prayers of the Church, you may be enabled to fulfil your mar-
riage vows in love and faithfulness.

A hymn may be sung.

THE COLLECT

The minister says

God our Father,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law.
Grant to your servants that, loving one another,
they may continue in your love until their lives' end:
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Proclaiming and Receiving the Word

One or more readings from the Scriptures. When there is Holy Communion there are at least two readings, of which the final one is the Gospel.

THE SERMON

A hymn may be sung.

The Dedication

The husband and wife face the minister, who says

.... and you have committed yourselves to each other in marriage, and your marriage is recognised by law.

The Church of Christ understands marriage to be, in the will of God,

the union of a man and a woman,

for better, for worse,

for richer, for poorer,

in sickness and in health,

to love and to cherish,

till parted by death.

Is this your understanding of the covenant and vow that you have made?

Husband and wife

It is.

The minister says to the husband

.... you have taken to be your wife. Will you continue to love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers

I will.

The minister says to the wife

.... you have taken to be your husband. Will you continue to love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers

I will.

The minister may say as the husband and wife join their wedding-ring hands

Heavenly Father, may *these rings* be to and a symbol of unending love and faithfulness, to remind them of the vow and covenant they have made; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister says to the congregation

Will you the family and friends of and, who have gathered here today, continue to support them in their marriage?

The congregation answers

We will.

The husband and wife kneel and say together

**Heavenly Father,
we offer you our souls and bodies,
our thoughts and words and deeds,
our love for one another.
Unite our wills in your will,
that we may grow together
in love and peace
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The minister may say one or both of the following:

Almighty God give you grace to persevere,
that he may complete in you
the work he has already begun;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace
all the days of your life. **Amen.**

A hymn may be sung.

PRAYERS

The couple kneel at the Lord's Table.

*The prayers are led by the minister or by others appointed by the minister
using the following or other suitable prayers.*

For husband and wife

Lord God,
bless these your servants.
May your word be a lamp to their feet
and a light to their path;
that they may obey your will,
live in safety under your protection,
and abide in your love unto their lives' end;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, giver of life and love,
bless and, and all others whom you have joined in marriage.
Grant them wisdom and devotion in their life together,
that each may be to the other
a strength in need, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy.
So unite their wills in your will,
and their spirits in your Spirit,
that they may live and grow together in love and peace
all the days of their life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O God, you consecrated marriage
to be a sign of the spiritual unity
between Christ and his Church:

Bless these your servants,
that they may love, honour and cherish each other
in faithfulness and patience,
in wisdom and true godliness;
that their home may be a place of blessing and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

God our Creator,
we thank you for your gift of sexual love
by which husband and wife may delight in each other,
and share with you the joy of creating new life.
By your grace may the love of ... and ... remain strong
and may they rejoice in your goodness all their days,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the gift of children

Heavenly Father, maker of all things,
you enable us to share in your work of creation:
Bless this couple with the gift of children,
and give them grace to make their home
a place of love, security and truth,
that their children may grow up to know and love you
in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For Christian witness in marriage

Eternal God, true and loving Father,
in marriage you make your servants one:
May their life together witness to your love
in this troubled world,
may unity overcome division,
forgiveness heal injury,
and joy triumph over sorrow;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you gave marriage to be a source of blessing.
We thank you for the joys of family life.
May we know your presence and peace in our homes:
fill them with your love,
and use them for your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE PEACE

The minister says

Jesus said, A new commandment I give to you,
that you love one another:
even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. *John 13: 34*

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

It is appropriate that the congregation share with one another a sign of peace.

This may be introduced by the words:

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

A hymn may be sung.

When Holy Communion Two is celebrated the service continues at Celebrating at the Lord's Table on (page 208), Holy Communion One at Lift up your hearts ... (page 186).

PROPER PREFACE

We give you thanks
because you have made the union between Christ and his Church
a pattern for the marriage between husband and wife:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

If there is no celebration of Holy Communion the minister says

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray

Our Father in heaven ...

or

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say
Our Father, who art in heaven ...

ENDING

The minister may say

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

or

God the Holy Trinity
make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side,
and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
be with you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

NOTES

- 1 This service is used at the discretion of the minister. It is one in which the couple, already married, wish to dedicate to God their life together. Because it is not a marriage service, no entry may be made in the register of marriages.
- 2 Because the marriage has already taken place, no ring is to be given or received in the course of the service.
- 3 All readings in Proclaiming and Receiving the Word must be from Holy Scripture.
- 4 The minister and the couple should together choose the readings, hymns, music and the prayers to be used in the service.
- 5 If Holy Communion is celebrated at this service, all communicants should be free to receive.