

*Trinity
Presbyterian Church
(TPC)*

Christian Marriage Policy

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To the Christian, marriage is a God-ordained, God-controlled, God-directed way of life created for the glory of God and the good of mankind.

The following are the principles that govern a good and proper Christian marriage.

1. Both the man and woman¹ in the marriage relationship realize they are choosing to make a lifetime contract or covenant of companionship and loyalty. This involves faithfulness in the most intimate of matters, loving communication with each other, support of each other, encouragement and help of all kinds – “For better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health till death us do part.”
2. Marriage must be acknowledged as a love relationship between one man and one woman, exclusively. Husbands are called to love their wives as themselves, and even as Christ loves His Church; wives are called to respect their husband (Eph 5.33). Love is a decision to sacrificially seek the welfare of the one we love and is a lifetime commitment to that end. To love one another is God’s command and can only be fulfilled with His help. Being willing to trust and obey God opens the door to His enablement to fulfill this command. Love cares, feels responsible, and respects the one loved. It is other-person centered, concerned for the joy, welfare, contentment and peace of its object, demanding nothing in return.
3. Marriage is a means of witness for Christ and a means of growth in Christ for the man and woman in that marriage relationship. Created in the image of God, mankind was made male and female implying that in this male-female relationship God’s very nature was to be reflected. The New Testament teaches that God holds the love in marriage on such a high plain that He likens it to Christ’s love for the Church (Eph. 5.22-33), even to the giving of His life. “Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and died for the Church.” So for the Christian, a husband’s love for his wife is more than just a relationship between two people but fulfillment of God’s overall plan for His people. Wives in turn are to be submissive and respectful of their husbands in love as the Church acts towards Christ and thus the loving relationship between husband and wife is to reflect Christ to all who know them and visit their home.
4. Marriage is to be a true union between one man and one woman. The diversity between husband and wife in sex, gifts, backgrounds, skills and even interests are to be molded into a true union where each is complimentary to the other. Again, marriage is to reflect in this way the unity of the God-head; the God-head which is made up of the diversity of three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and yet one

¹ The words “man” and “woman” are used in this policy to identify those individuals who, by virtue of gender birth, are identified as “man” or “woman,” and do not refer to any declared gender identity by either party.

Godhead. Husband and wife are to leave all others and cleave to each other and are to become “one flesh” (Gen. 2.24)

5. Marriage should be recognized as the only Biblical basis for sexual intercourse and other sexually related activities. Scripture declares that sexual activities should always have the protection of the marriage covenant between two believers (1 Cor. 7.2, 9).
6. God willing, marriage is also a God-given opportunity to have children and to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord – “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1.22; 9.1, 7) was the Lord’s command.
7. All aspects of marriage and its intimate and complex relationship should be always subject to the clear teaching of the Word of God. And to this end the following scripture passages should be diligently studied: Genesis 1, 2, 3; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:4-9; I Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5:22-6:4, I Peter 3:1-7; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; I Corinthians 13 and similar passages.
8. It should also be emphasized that marriage is not only a covenant or contract between husband and wife, but there is a third party to the contract, God. The vows marrying couples make to each other are vows not just to each other, but also to God in solemn obligation to Him as well as to one’s mate.
9. As to marriages between two non-Christians, while the spiritual implications are not present, it should be noted that the Bible teaches that marriage is honorable in all regards and since marriage is marriage in God’s sight, even non-Christians who marry are responsible to one another and to the Lord to keep their vows and faithfully discharge the responsibilities they have undertaken. What God has joined together, let no man separate (Mt. 19.6).
10. It is also the clear teaching of Scripture that Christians are not to marry non-Christians. Christians are to marry only “in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7.39). For a believer to knowingly marry a non-believer would be a serious act of disobedience to God.
11. Finally, it should be said that the above statements are indeed a presentation of the ideal. Since although no one reaches a state of perfection in this life, the above should be looked upon as the goal of a Christian marriage. While we strive to that end, we should not expect to find the perfection in each other that is only found in God.