

The 1662 Solemnisation of Matrimony (from the Book of Common Prayer)

The Minister Begins...

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this congregation, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; and is commended of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy men's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained.

First, It was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy Name.

Secondly, It was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.

Thirdly, It was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity. Into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any man can show any just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

Addressing the Bride & Groom, the Minister then says

I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgement when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment, why ye may not be lawfully joined together in Matrimony, ye do now confess it. For be ye well assured, that so many as are coupled together otherwise than God's Word doth allow are not joined together by God; neither is their Matrimony lawful.

Addressing the Groom, the Minister will say

Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto her, so long as ye both shall live?

The Groom Responds

I will.

Addressing the Bride, the Minister will say

Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou obey him, and serve him, love, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all other, keep thee only unto him, so long as ye both shall live?

The Bride Responds

I will.

Addressing the Congregation, the Minister then says

Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?

The 'giver' (usually the Father of the Bride) responds

I do

The Minister receives the Bride's right hand from the 'giver' then ushers the Groom to take the Bride's right hand with his own right hand and asks the Groom to repeat after him

I, <Groom's Name>, take thee <Bride's Name>. to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth.

The Bride and the Groom loosen hands. The Minister will then usher the Bride to take the Groom's right hand with her own right hand and ask the Bride to repeat after him

I, <Bride's Name>, take thee <Groom's Name>, to my wedded husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I give thee my troth.

The Bride and the Groom loosen hands. The Minister then asks for the bride's Wedding Ring to be laid upon the book. The Minister then gives the ring to the Groom and asks him to place the ring on the fourth finger of the Bride's left hand asking him to say aloud

With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Leaving the ring on the Bride's finger, the couple kneel and the Minister continues...

Let us pray.

Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life: Send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy Name; that, as Isaac and Rebecca lived faithfully together, so these persons may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, (whereof this Ring given and received is a token and pledge,) and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The couple stand and the Minister joins the couple's right hands together and says aloud

Those whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Then, addressing the Congregation, the Minister continues

Forasmuch as <Groom's Name> and <Bride's Name> have consented together in holy wedlock, and have witnessed the same before God and this company, and thereto have given and pledged their troth either to other, and have declared the same by giving and receiving of a ring, and by joining of hands; I pronounce that they be man and wife together, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

The Minister then adds his blessing

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and keep you; the Lord mercifully with his favour look upon you; and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting.
Amen.

The Minister then approaches the Lord's Table and says/sings aloud either Psalm 128 (Beati onmes) or Psalm 67 (Deus misereatur)

Psalm 128

Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: and walk in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.
Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine: upon the walls of thine house;
Thy children like the olive-branches: round about thy table.
Lo, thus shall the man be blessed: that feareth the Lord. The Lord from out of Sion shall so bless thee: that thou shalt see Jerusalem in prosperity all thy life long;
Yea, that thou shalt see thy children's children: and peace upon Israel.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end.
Amen.

Psalm 67

God be merciful unto us, and bless us: and shew us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us:
That thy way may be known upon earth: thy saving health among all nations.
Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee.
O let the nations rejoice and be glad: for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God: yea, let all the people praise thee.
Then shall the earth bring forth her increase: and God, even our own God, shall give us his blessing. God shall bless us: and all the ends of the world shall fear him.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end.
Amen.

The Bride and Groom are then invited to kneel at the Lord's Table and the Minister then says to them

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The couple then answer

Christ, have mercy upon us.

The Minister then responds

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Minister continues

Our father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.
Amen.

The Minister then says aloud

O Lord, save thy servant, and thy handmaid

The couple say aloud

Who put their trust in thee.

The Minister continues

O Lord, send them help from thy holy place;

The couple say aloud

And evermore defend them.

The Minister continues

Be unto them a tower of strength,

The couple say aloud

From the face of their enemy.

The Minister continues

O Lord, hear our prayer.

The couple say aloud

And let our cry come unto thee.

The Minister then says aloud

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, bless these thy servants, and sow the seed of eternal life in their hearts; that whatsoever in thy holy Word they shall profitably learn, they may in deed fulfil the same. Look, O Lord, mercifully upon them from heaven, and bless them. And as thou didst send thy blessing upon Abraham and Sarah, to their great comfort, so vouchsafe to send thy blessing upon these thy servants; that they obeying thy Will, and alway being in safety under thy protection, may abide in thy love unto their lives' end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Should the Bride be of child-bearing age, the Minister then says the following Prayer out loud

Merciful Lord, and heavenly Father, by whose gracious gift mankind is increased: We beseech thee, assist with thy blessing these two persons, that they may both be fruitful in procreation of children, and also live together so long in godly love and honesty, that they may see their children Christianly and virtuously brought up, to thy praise and honour; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Minister will then go on to say aloud

God, who by thy mighty power hast made all things of nothing; who also (after other things set in order) didst appoint, that out of man (created after thine own image and similitude) woman should take her beginning; and, knitting them together, didst teach that it should never be lawful to put asunder those whom thou by Matrimony hadst made one: O God, who hast consecrated the state of Matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church: Look mercifully upon these thy servants, that both this man may love his wife, according to thy Word, (as Christ did love his spouse the Church, who gave himself for it, loving and cherishing it even as his own flesh,) and also that this woman may be loving and amiable, faithful and obedient to her husband; and in all quietness, sobriety, and peace, be a follower of holy and godly matrons. O Lord, bless them both, and grant them to inherit thy everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Then the Minister will continue

Almighty God, who at the beginning did create our first parents, Adam and Eve, and did sanctify and join them together in marriage; Pour upon you the riches of his grace, sanctify and bless you, that ye may please him both in body and soul, and live together in holy love unto your lives' end.

Amen.

A Sermon that details the duties of Man and Wife may be read at this time, or the Minister will go on to read the following

All ye that are married, or that intend to take the holy estate of Matrimony upon you, hear what the holy Scripture doth say as touching the duty of husbands towards their wives, and wives towards their husbands.

Saint Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, the fifth Chapter, doth give this commandment to all married men; Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the Word; that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself: for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself.

Likewise the same Saint Paul, writing to the Colossians, speaketh thus to all men that are married; Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Hear also what Saint Peter, the Apostle of Christ, who was himself a married man, saith unto them that are married; Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge; giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Hitherto ye have heard the duty of the husband toward the wife. Now likewise, ye wives, hear and learn your duties toward your husbands, even as it is plainly set forth in holy Scripture.

Saint Paul, in the aforementioned Epistle to the Ephesians, teacheth you thus; Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. And again he saith, Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.

And in his Epistle to the Colossians, Saint Paul giveth you this short lesson; Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

Saint Peter also doth instruct you very well, thus saying; Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the Word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

