**LIGHTHOUSE FAMILY CHURCH HEART FOR MARRIAGE**

At Lighthouse Family Church we believe that marriage is a holy covenant made by a man and a woman with each other and with God, the One who has ordained marriage. It is the lifelong union between a biological man and a biological woman (Gen 1:26-27). This is the biblically sanctioned union that God blesses. In Gen 2:24 we have the first reference to God’s plan for intimacy and marriage. This is God’s purpose for mankind as he created it to be. Jesus (Matt 19:4-6) and Paul (Eph 5:22-23) both quote this passage in affirming this truth.

As a result, Lighthouse Family Church facilities can only be used to solemnize marriages where the couple agree and support our high view of marriage that honours God.

We also believe that all people struggle with sin, and so we provide an environment that welcomes people who struggle with sexual sin. We seek to lovingly point people to Jesus so that they can experience Christ’s power to forgive and heal. The Bible teaches that those who sin sexually, sin against their own bodies (1 Cor 6:18), while at the same time we cannot rank sexual sin as any worse than other forms of sin. For this reason, we will seek to minister God’s love and redemption to those caught in sexual sin.

Because of these truths, we make the following request of couples who want either to be married at Lighthouse Family Church or be married by a pastor of our church:

1. Complete the Lighthouse Events Checklist for marriages document and submit it to our secretary as soon as possible.
2. Attend a pre-marriage course with a pastor or sanctioned person from our church or the church you regularly attend that holds to the same beliefs about marriage as Lighthouse Family Church. The purpose of this is to ensure that you learn God’s plan for marriage and practically begin to grow your desire for a God honouring marriage.
3. Regularly attend worship services together in this church, or the church where you attend, if not Lighthouse. This is clearly God’s will for your lives (Heb 10:24-25), as it gives you the opportunity to worship God communally, fellowship with other believers and place yourselves regularly under God’s Word. Statistics also show that families who prioritize worshiping together are less likely to experience divorce.
4. If you have been sexually active with each other, this will be dealt with in pre-marriage, but we expect you to refrain from sexual intercourse until your wedding. The ability to control your sexual urges is vital to a successful marriage – if you are not governing your sexual desires before marriage, it is unlikely that you will be successful in doing so after marriage. A couple who value sexual purity before marriage are much more successful at maintaining that sexual purity in marriage.
5. If you have been living together, we expect you to change or adjust your living arrangements until the wedding. This may mean moving back to separate accommodation, or where that isn’t possible, living in separate rooms and inviting a friend/chaperone to come live with you to keep you accountable in a way that leads you out of temptations way. While we understand what society says about the value of cohabitation as the opportunity to “test drive the car before you buy it”, we believe that God’s plan is better. The statistics prove it: couples who cohabit before marriage have a divorce rate of about 80%. By contrast, couples who don’t live together and stay sexually abstinent before marriage, have a divorce rate of less than 40%. Clearly, God’s plan is still the better option to the way of the world.
6. Church pastors will not marry couples or use church facilities if the couple are “unequally yoked” spiritually (2 Cor 6:14). Both people must have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and must be committed to establish a Christian home.
7. Regarding those people who have previously been divorced, where one or both are considering marriage, a meeting can be arranged with a pastor to consider your individual case. We acknowledge the importance of displaying the grace Jesus would show and so if there are other extenuating circumstances that relate to your divorce, they can be discussed with the pastor who is journeying with you through these matters.

Additionally, we highly recommend that remarriages after the divorce of a spouse be performed only after a year from the time the divorce was finalized to ensure that hurts have been processed sufficiently towards restoration. A divorce recovery program like Divorce Care must be completed to pursue individual health and recovery. Also, it must be clarified that a new relationship should only be pursued once all work has been exhausted in attempts to bring healthy reconciliation to the previous relationship.

1. We highly recommend that remarriage following the death of a spouse should occur not sooner than one year after the spouse’s death to allow sufficient time to grieve and restore.
2. Understand that all of this is not so much an agreement to a set of rules and regulations to govern your happiness, but an investment in working towards the fulfilled, blessed life you look forward to together because you honour God’s marriage blueprint in your lives.

In reading through this document, we agree with and commit to building towards our marriage in this way. Should we unilaterally deviate from this above commitment, the church and pastor may need to reconsider their commitment to the wedding.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Groom Bride

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Pastor