

# MARRIAGE POLICY

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*Our Elders have written the MBC Marriage Policy as a guideline for what we believe to be a Christ honoring marriage, according to His Word. Couples who have questions or comments about the policy are welcome to meet with a pastor for further discussion. Couples who wish to have an MBC pastor officiate their wedding, or who wish to use our building for their wedding ceremony, must abide by our marriage policies.*

It is the desire of McLean Bible Church that your marriage will be all that God intends for you. Since God designed the marriage relationship, He knows best how to build a marriage that will last a lifetime.

As we read His Word, we are able to discern basic principles which must be understood and applied if we hope to experience joy and fulfillment in marriage. Ignoring these principles will result in frustration and possible failure in the marriage relationship.

Because we are committed to building healthy marriages that can go the distance, we want to present the following guidelines. Our purpose is not to condemn or reject anyone, but to comply with God's principles for marriage.

1. We recommend a minimum of six months of marital preparation. This allows plenty of time for couples to walk through pre-marital counseling with a pastor or through an MBC marriage preparation course. This course is required for all couples who desire to be married by one of the pastors at MBC.
2. We recommend a minimum of a one-year dating relationship before pursuing marriage. Even though some people have the skills and maturity to build a committed relationship sooner than others, there really are no shortcuts to building intimacy, trust and communication.
3. Divorced persons may be considered for marriage at MBC, provided that their situation is in accordance with our statement on [Divorce & Remarriage](#) and meets the applicable biblical criteria below:

- The former spouse is now deceased. ([Romans 7:2](#), [1 Corinthians 7:39](#))
- The divorce occurred because of sexual unfaithfulness by the former spouse. ([Matthew 19:3-9](#))
- Desertion by an unbelieving spouse. ([1 Corinthians 7:15](#))
- The former spouse initiated divorce and has remarried. ([Romans 7:3](#))

NOTE: If none of the above criteria apply to your situation, a meeting with a pastor may be arranged to consider your specific situation. We acknowledge that other extenuating circumstances often relate to divorce.

4. Remarriage following the death of a spouse should occur after one year from the spouse's death. We highly recommend that widows, widowers and their fiancé(e)s must attend a grief recovery class, or attend individual counseling, before they consider marriage again.
5. MBC Pastors will not marry couples if they are "unequally yoked" spiritually ([2 Corinthians 6:14-18](#)). Both people must have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, be actively seeking to follow Jesus in their own lives, and be committed to establishing a Christian home together.
6. The couple must remain celibate and not live together prior to the wedding ([Genesis 2:24-25](#), [Hebrews 13:4](#)). The pastor will not perform the ceremony if the couple is living together. This is a protection for you against divorce, as research has found that couples who live together have a higher divorce rate than those who do not.
7. No other Pastor on the MBC staff will marry a couple if another pastor of the church has refused to perform the ceremony, based on spiritual reasons.

In conclusion, these guidelines have been created based upon MBC's belief in God's plan for marriage, and are meant to encourage, protect, and strengthen the couple's commitment to Christ. Due to the nature of interpersonal relationships and individual levels of maturity, there may be some exceptions to these guidelines, as determined on an individual basis by the couple's Pastor and other Marriage & Family staff in conjunction with the Elders of McLean Bible Church.

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