

Blessing of Marriage

This service may be used after a civil marriage. It may take place in a church building or another place – on the same day as the civil marriage or on a subsequent occasion. It is desirable that Elders and members of the local church are present, along with the person conducting the service (normally a minister), to make evident and real the presence of the Church.

A service of blessing does not supersede or invalidate any marriage previously solemnised and no record should be entered in a marriage register.

This service may be used for opposite and same sex marriages.

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Welcome

The Minister welcomes the people and continues:

Welcome to ... church,
for the celebration of the marriage between A and C.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ.

Let us worship God.

This is the day that the Lord has made;

All **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

or

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a raging flame.

Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.

If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

Song of Songs 8:6b-7a

or

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and
God abides in them.

1 John 4:16b

or

Jesus said: I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

John 13:34

Hymn or song

Prayer

Eternal God,
you are with us this day
in the fullness of your love.
Your love fills our hearts
and draws us to one another with holy desire.
Your love in us offers forgiveness
and sets us free to be together in peace.
Your love creates community
and heals our deepest loneliness.
This love you renew continually in A and C
and in all your people.
Make them today a sign to us of your love in all creation,
of your enduring affection and faithfulness,
and of your joy in all that you have made.
May we see this day, before our eyes,
the joy of love and the hope of faith.
Bless our celebration with your presence
and touch us with your Spirit,
in Christ's name we pray,
Amen.

Statement

A and B have been married in law.
They have made solemn vows
and have contracted to live together as
husband and wife or as faithful partners or as husbands
or as wives
until death parts them.
Now they come before God, in the presence of the Church,
to ask for a blessing for their marriage.
We rejoice in the love they share
and gladly pray for the blessing of God upon them.
In marriage, the partners promise to be faithful, in good times
and in bad,
and to honour one another for all their days.
(In marriage, children may be born and grow up, in the
security of a loving home.)
In marriage, a new community is made
and all may celebrate a sign of unity and faithfulness.
Marriage is a gift and a calling,
and God's blessing strengthens us
to live according to the promises we have made.

Prayer

Let us pray

Eternal God,
whose love is always faithful and whose promises never fail,
we pray for A and B
as they ask for your blessing on their marriage.
Strengthen them by your Spirit,
that they may remember the vows they have made,
grow in love and honour for one another
and live according to your holy will.
Fill them with joy, guide them in future days
and surround them with your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings from Scripture

Some suggested readings:

Old Testament:

Psalm 67

New Testament:

Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 3:12-17

Matthew 5:1-9, John 2:1-11

Sermon

Hymn or song

The Promises

Each partner says in turn

... B ... , you are my husband/wife.

I promise to be faithful to you, to love and honour you,
to comfort and protect you, as long as we both shall live.

This is my solemn promise.

If either, or both, has children the Minister may say to the couple:

Do you promise to include ... N ... (and ... N ...)
within the circle of your love?

We do.

[Do you promise to care for the children you now have,
and to welcome those who may be given to you?

We do.]

URC Worship Additional Resources to complement this book can be found online, along with this Worship Book, as A4 downloadable versions in PDF and Word format for printing: www.urch.org.uk/worship-book

The Rings

If rings have not been exchanged at the civil marriage they are given to the minister who prays:

Eternal God,
whose love, like a circle, never ends, we pray that these rings may be signs of unending faithfulness. Give A and B a love that lasts,
joy in one another, and years of peace together.
And may your presence, the perfect Trinity of love, be always with them.

Amen.

If there is only one ring, the Minister prays:

Eternal God,
whose love, like a circle, never ends, we pray that this ring may be a sign of unending faithfulness.
Give A and B a love that lasts, joy in one another, and years of peace together. And may your presence, the perfect Trinity of love, be always with them.

Amen.

Each partner says in turn:

I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
all that I have I share with you, within the holy love of God.

or

I give you this ring in God's name
as a sign of all that we have promised
and all that we shall share.

The minister prays:

God our Creator,
you make us in your image,
and bless us with the gift of love.
In the longing of our bodies,
the passion of love's touch
and the strong bonds of affection,
your love and blessing are already known.
We pray for your blessing to be upon
A and B married in your sight.
Lord Jesus Christ,
who once blessed a wedding by turning water into wine,
we pray that A and B may taste the good wine
of a happy and joyful marriage. Holy Spirit,
bless them with your gifts of love and joy,
of peace, patience and kindness,
that they may be good for one another through the years
to come,
and have strength to go on
through times of sorrow and struggle. May your love, bound
with theirs, keep them faithful to one another,
and close to you all the days of their life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Prayer of Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to
you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you
peace.

Amen.

Numbers 6:24-26

Declaration

The minister says:

A and B you are married
and have declared your commitment to one another,
before your friends, and before God.
In the presence of the Church,
in the strength of God's grace,
you have made solemn vows.
Let no-one separate you.
Be together always.

Greeting

The couple may kiss. The people may applaud. The sign of
Peace may be shared.

Hymn or song

Blessing

May God who is light shine in your darkness.
May God who is love be the love between you.
May God who is life be your life everlasting.
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
(Creator, Christ and Spirit)
be with you all, now and for ever,
Amen.

or

May the God who made us for one another,
who loves us with a faithful love
and whose spirit makes us passionate and strong,
bless you and embrace you, now and for ever,
Amen.