



CHESTER ROAD

Baptist Church

Organising your wedding

“At the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a husband will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one.”

The Bible. Mark 7:7

Congratulations

You're getting married at Chester Road Baptist Church! There's a lot to think about when organising a wedding. This guide will help you plan your special day.

To start with

Come to Sunday services, if you don't already, and see for yourself Chester Road Baptist Church's facilities and approach. You'll meet some great people and spark some ideas for your layout, decorations and music. The 1st Sunday of the month in the morning is usually a good service to come to.

Make an appointment with one of our ministers/ staff, if you haven't already done so, to discuss your wedding and to see if Chester Road Baptist Church is right for you.

Who's in charge?

It's not a trick question. Lots of people often make a wedding happen. Some of your family may have waited longer than you for your day to arrive - and have had time to form opinions of what - and even, who - they think should and should not be included. But it's YOUR wedding, not theirs!

So we don't complicate things, we'll ask you both to confirm who we should liaise with and take instructions from.

Book your date with a non-refundable £100 Booking Deposit (NB balance due no less than 28 days before your wedding day).

Preparing for marriage, not just for a wedding service

Planning a wedding service is exciting and at times daunting. Your 'big day' will mark the end of a lot of planning, but is just the *beginning* of your married life together. Marriage is for 'as long as you both shall live'. We'd love to support you both with some 'marriage preparation', such as the Marriage Course. See www.TheMarriageCourses.org. Ask us about it.

12-6 months in advance

Register your intent to marry

You must both register your intent to marry with the Register Office in the Local Authority you each live in. If you each live in different Local Authority areas, you'll need to make appointments with your respective Register Offices. Birmingham Register Office ☎ 0121 675 1000 register.office@birmingham.gov.uk.

You must register your intent to marry no less than 28 days in advance, but you can register up to 12 months in advance. In case of complications, it is always best to register your intent to marry at the *earliest* opportunity. It can take weeks to get an initial appointment - do it now!

You'll need to present both of your birth certificates (and any Decree Nisi if one or both parties have been married previously), Passports or other form of photo ID, and pay the Local Authority's fee.

The Register Office will issue you each with an Authorisation Certificate ('blue slips'). These grant legal authorisation for Chester Road Baptist Church to marry you. We will only be able to marry you if we have both Authorisation Certificates and the information they contain matches exactly what you tell us. We will store them in our secure Marriage Safe.

- Remember to make an appointment with your Local Authority Register Office to register your Intent to marry - the sooner, the better!
- Remember to ensure Chester Road Baptist Church receive the two Authorisation Certificates (Birmingham City Council posts them, some Local Authorities email them.)

Not an EEA citizen?

If one of you is a foreign national/ non-EEA citizen, you will both be referred to then attend a 'designated register office' (nearest currently Birmingham, Cheltenham, Coventry, Shrewsbury, Stoke-on-Trent) to make a declaration about your immigration status. This takes longer (hence, why it's best to register your intent to marry at the earliest opportunity). You may get a quicker appointment by avoiding Birmingham.

Wedding invitations

When sending out invitations, please include:

- Additional car parking is available at nearby Chester Road Railway Station (pay and display). Please park considerately. (We want to be good neighbours to local residents.)
- For information about Chester Road Baptist Church location and facilities see www.ChesterRoadBC.org.uk
- Please only use biodegradable confetti (and not inside the building).

Picking a Best Man

There's more to the Best Man than organising a legendary 'stag do', fumbling for the rings, or 'spilling the beans' during his infamous speech. On *YOUR* wedding day, he needs to be taking care of the Groom, organising the ushers, managing the photographer, and generally ensuring the proceedings are going to plan. A good Best Man is a good and reliable friend who's committed to ensuring *YOU* have the best possible day.

Selecting Bridesmaids

If you opt to have children as Bridesmaids, it's worth also having an older Bridesmaid who can guide the younger ones on the day.

Photography

You'll want a visual record of your special day. We're relaxed about photography. We simply ask your photographer is not intrusive. A good photographer is almost invisible to the proceedings. Most couples have the bulk of their wedding photography at the reception venue (more time, more scenic?)

3-1 months in advance

Order of Service

There are a number of different components to a wedding service. They vary in length, depending on the number of songs/ hymns, readings and prayers. They can be as short as 30 minutes or as long as you like (within reason!)

An example order of service is:

Entry of the Bride
Welcome
Worship song/ hymn
Reading
Marriage Ceremony
Talk
Prayers
Worship song(s)/hymn(s)
Signing of the Register
Worship song/ hymn
Exit of the Bride & Groom

Providing your guests with a printed Order of Service gives all access to the song words, a souvenir of your special day, and information about any later celebrations. Please liaise with your Minister/ staff member *before* going to print.

- Remember to make an appointment with your Minister to go through the order of service.
- Remember to produce a printed Order of Service.

Worship songs/ hymns

Worship songs and hymns are a key feature of a Christian wedding service. If you're a regular church attender, you'll probably have a clear idea of which songs/ hymns you want. If you're less familiar with church, we can suggest some appropriate songs/ hymns. Either way, please discuss this with your Minister.

Your guests will need the song words. Including them in your printed Order of Service is simplest. If you're a regular worshipper at Chester Road Baptist Church you will already know who our worship leaders and musicians are and may therefore want to personally invite one of them to lead worship at your wedding service. Please remember, they are all volunteers with busy work and home lives. Spoil them and acknowledge their voluntary service to you!

- Remember to select worship songs/ hymns.
- Remember, if you worship regularly at Chester Road Baptist Church, ask a worship leader to lead worship for you.

Vows

The vows are the centre piece of the marriage ceremony. Make these to each in the presence of the Registrar ('Authorised Person') and your two witnesses, and that's it - you're married! Whilst there is scope to personalise the rest of the wedding service with different prayers, readings, declarations/ promises to each other, parts of the vows are legally required for the marriage to be registered as legal. For example, you must both say the 'declaration' and 'contracting words'.

Declaration:

Standard: Are you, [full name], free lawfully to marry [full name]? I am

Alternative 1: I declare that I know of no legal reason why I [full name] may not be joined in marriage to [full name].

Alternative 2: I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I [full name] may not be joined in matrimony to [full name].

Contracting words:

Standard: I, [full name], take you, [full name] to be my wedded [wife/husband].

Alternative 1: I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, [full name], do take thee, [full name], to be my lawful wedded [wife/husband].

Music

Music creates atmosphere and tone. Think about what music you want:

- Before the service, as people are arriving.
- As the Bride enters
- During the signing of the register
- For the Bride & Groom to exit
- After the service has finished, as people are leaving.

You'll need to provide the music. Whilst you can provide it on a CD, or MP3 files, it's simplest to prepare a play list on an iPod or MP3 player (anything with a 3.5mm audio output).

- Remember to collate all the music.
- Remember to ask someone on the day to control the music.

Payments

If you haven't already done so, please remember to pay Chester Road Baptist Church the balance of whatever fee has been agreed. You'll also need to provide a £100 Security Deposit. This will be fully refunded to you if the service begins within 30 minutes of the agreed start time (if it begins 30-60 minutes late, you will receive back 50%; if it begins 60+ minutes late, you'll receive 0% and we then also reserve the right to cancel at this point without our liability.)

- Remember to pay Chester Road Baptist Church.

In the week before

Wedding rehearsal

This is usually scheduled 1-3 days before your wedding date. It's an opportunity for you both, along with key participants, to 'walk through' the service and check final arrangements. The rehearsal should take 30-45 minutes. Please be on time and remember to bring your entrance/exit music.

To complete the Register, you'll need to notify us of both the Bride and Groom's father's full names and occupations.

- Remember to invite the best man, bridesmaids, ushers, the witnesses and the person who will walk down the aisle with the bride to the rehearsal.

Flowers/ decorations

You may want to provide flowers or other decorations for the Church (and use them at your reception afterwards).

Your florist/dresser will want to deliver and set-up in advance. Please liaise with the Church Office to agree a mutually convenient time for delivery/ set-up. The Church Office is generally staffed 9.15 am till 12.00 noon Tuesday to Friday. Please remember that the Church Main Hall is sometimes used by other groups during the week. If you require extra time to 'dress' the church, there may need to be an additional 'room hire' charge.

Please remember that all flowers/ decorations will need to be removed immediately after the wedding service (so the church can be ready for Sunday worship).

Remember to organise for the removal of the flowers/ decorations immediately after the service.

On the day

Be on time

Whilst TV dramas have the Bride arriving late, *good* weddings are well organised and to time. Weddings can be stressful enough without the added stress of either the Bride or Groom arriving late. Being on time is also respectful to your Minister and the volunteers who may be assisting. Assuming the service begins within 30 minutes of the agreed start time, you'll receive back 100% of your Security Deposit. If it begins 30-60 minutes late, you will receive back 50%; if it begins 60+ minutes late, you'll receive back 0% and we then also reserve the right to cancel at this point without our liability.)

Remember to liaise with the Minister about what time the building will be opened up.

Registrars' questions

The Registrar ('Authorised Person') is required by law to ask the Bride and Groom separately a few basic questions to confirm you still have a legal right to marry. It only takes 1-2 minutes but has to be done just before the service. The Groom can answer these on arrival (usually as guests are arriving). The Bride will answer these on her arrival in the lobby. It's a good opportunity to 'catch a breath' in between any 'arrival' photos and the Bridal entrance.

Signing the Register

You will be legally married once you have made your vows to each other in the audible presence of your two witnesses and the Registrar ('Authorised Person'). This is confirmed by signing the Register.

Signing the Register should take 5-10 minutes (more if your photographer gets carried away).

The Registrar ('Authorised Person') can only begin to complete the Registers once he/she has witnessed you make your vows (they can't be prepared beforehand). For your marriage to be legally registered, the entries must be very precise/ accurate. With two Registers and a Wedding Certificate to complete, this can't be rushed! Don't worry. You'll appreciate a chance to relax. You're now Mr & Mrs! And your guests can catch up with each other.

You'll need to ask two people (aged 18+ and who speak English) to be your witnesses. They'll join you in signing the registers. Parents/ carers can still join you around the table, even if they're not the witnesses.

You might want to have some music played in the background.

Remember, who will you choose as your two witnesses?

Car parking

Chester Road Baptist Church has 32 car parking spaces on site. It's important your 'official' wedding party car(s) can easily access the church car park.

When inviting people to the wedding, please direct them to use the nearby Chester Road Railway Station car parks (300 metres, 180 spaces, pay and display).

On the day, please organise one or more of your 'ushers' to direct cars to Chester Road Station car park. We can supply high-vis vests or jackets!

If you are providing your guests with transport e.g. a bus, please instruct the driver not to obstruct neighbours' access to their properties. We want to be good neighbours!

Remember to task an usher to.. usher cars to Chester Road Station car park (we can provide a high-viz vest or jacket!)

Seating

Conventionally, the Bride's family and guests sit on the left hand-side (if facing from back to front) and the Groom's family and guests sit on the right. Your wedding may not be conventional.

Your ushers - all but the one(s) on car park duty! - should welcome all guests on their arrival, distribute any printed Orders of Service, and guide people to their seats.

Children & babies

At Chester Road Baptist Church we welcome and value children/ babies, and those that care for them. In doing so, we're following Jesus' example. Young children and babies make themselves seen and heard. After all, God put the wiggle in kids! If you're not bothered, we're not either! For those that need 'time out', there's a crèche room with sound relay.

Confetti

Please only use biodegradable confetti (and not inside the building - your new 'in laws' won't thank you if they have to stay behind to clear up confetti from inside the church).

Afterwards

You will be distracted by now being Mr & Mrs. It's important that others 'step up' to assist with picking-up left-behind possessions, the music, decorations and flower arrangements etc...

Remember, who will take away the flowers/ decorations?

Please contact the Church Office if you have any further questions:

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Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands, B73 5HU.

☎ 0121 350 2779

email: office@ChesterRoadBC.org.uk

web: www.ChesterRoadBC.org.uk