

A Promise of Love

Minister:

We have come together today in the presence of God to witness the joining of _____ and _____ in Holy Matrimony. This is a special time of celebration that _____ and _____ will long remember, and because of this, they are thankful you are here to share their joy. From the dawn of human history, it has been customary for the community to place its seal of approval upon the union of two persons in marriage. If these solemn vows that they are about to make are kept faithfully, God will bless their marriage.

Gracious God, before whom we stand: Look with favor upon this man and this woman who desire to make their vows before you and this gathering of family and friends. We are grateful for their families, which have reared them to maturity; and for the church, which has nurtured them in the faith. May they experience your presence as they pledge their lives, one to another, and may they ever walk the pleasant paths of righteousness. This we pray through Christ our Lord.

There is a skill to marriage, as there is to any activity people engage in. This art requires that we pay thoughtfulness to the little things as well as the big ones that are part of the closeness of matrimony.

Develop the capacity to forgive and forget and heal quarrels as they happen. Say, "I love you" and speak words of appreciation often. Do not come to take each other for granted, and demonstrate your gratitude in thoughtful ways. Never grow too old to hold hands. Do not expect perfection of each other, perfection is only for God. Make your search for the good and the beautiful a common search.

A good marriage evolves when two separate souls face life's pleasures and sadness in harmony, not in unison.

As Rainer Maria Rilke wrote in Letters to a Young Poet:

"Once the realization is accepted that, even between the closest human beings, infinite distances continue to exist, a wonderful living side by side can grow up, if they succeed in loving the distance between them which makes it possible for each to see the other whole against a wide sky!"

Each phrase is spoken first by the Groom and then repeated by the Bride (or vice versa):

I promise to be your lover, companion, and friend,
Your partner in parenthood,
Your ally in conflict,
Your greatest fan and your best friend.
Your comrade in adventure,
Your student and your teacher,
Your consolation in disappointment,
Your accomplice in mischief,
Your strength in your need and vulnerable to you in my own,
And most of all, your associate in the search for enlightenment.

The Groom places the ring on the Bride's finger and says:

_____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I

honor you, in the name of God.

The Bride places the ring on the Groom's finger and says:

_____, I give you this ring as a symbol of my vow, and with all that I am, and all that I have, I honor you, in the name of God.

Minister:

Before this gathering, you have promised each other your love and have given each other rings to wear as a sign of your deep commitment. It is my distinct pleasure to declare that you are now husband and wife.

You may kiss one another.