

A Time for a Wedding

Minister reads from the Bible:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

A time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to seek, and a time to lose;

A time to keep, and a time to throw away;

A time to tear, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak:

A time for love, and a time for hate;

A time for war, and a time for peace.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Minister:

Now is a time for a wedding.

Friends, _____ and _____, have invited us here today to share in the celebration of their wedding.

We come together, not to mark the start of a relationship but to recognize a bond that already exists. This marriage is one expression of the many varieties of love. Love is one, though its expressions are infinite.

It is fitting to speak briefly about love. We live in a world of joy and fear and search for meaning and strength in the seeming disorder. We discover the truest guideline to our quest when we realize love in all its magnitudes. Love is the eternal force of life. Love is the force that allows us to face fear and uncertainty with courage. But, you must "be of love a little more careful than of anything." For the giving of yourself in love is difficult: you must learn to give of your love without total submission of yourself. Therefore, in your giving, give your joy, your sadness, your interest, your understanding, and your knowledge—all expressions that make up life. But in this giving, remember to preserve yourself—your integrity, your individuality. This is the challenge of love within marriage.

Minister to Groom:

_____, do you come before this gathering of friends and family to proclaim your love and devotion for _____? Do you promise to respect her, and to care for her during times of joy and hardship? Do you commit yourself to share your feelings of happiness and sadness? Do you pledge to remain faithful to her?

Groom:

I do.

Minister to Bride:

_____, do you come before this gathering of friends and family to proclaim your love and devotion for _____? Do you promise to respect him, and care for him during times of joy and hardship? Do you commit yourself to share your feelings of happiness and sadness? Do you pledge to remain faithful to him?

Bride:

I do.

The Minister may ask God's blessing on the rings as follows:

Bless, O Lord, this ring, to be a sign of the vows by which this man and this woman have bound themselves to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Creator, Savior, Loving Spirit, bless this couple who have committed themselves to each other in marriage and have come seeking your blessing. Surrounded by their families and friends, may they feel encircled by your love as well as theirs. Assure them of your presence in days of joy like this one and in days of sorrow, pain, and bereavement. Strengthen their relationship through all the tests of adversity and brighten it with a generous measure of happiness.

Help them make their home a place where they love children and welcome friends. Spare them from interference by those who, through wanting to help, may intrude in what are the proper responsibilities of husband and wife, father and mother, and children. Make them good neighbors, doing for others what they would have others do for them. Teach us all to love each other as we love ourselves.

Exchange of Rings:

The Groom says:

I offer you this ring to wear as a symbol of our unity.

The Bride says:

I offer you this ring to wear as a symbol of our unity.

Minister:

May these two find happiness in their matrimony. May they live faithfully together, may they ever remain compassionate. May years be rich in the joys of life, and their days be long upon the earth.

I now pronounce you man and wife. You may kiss the bride.