

FAQs on Solemnisation of Marriage at Zion Bishan BP Church

We hope that couples planning to get married in Zion Bishan BP Church will find these FAQs helpful. Please feel free to speak to Pastor Dev Menon (dev@zionbishan.org.sg) if anything is not clear.

1. If I am planning to get married in ZB, when should I inform the pastor?

The earlier the better, at least 12 months ahead is recommended. Please inform Pastor Dev.

2. Why should there be 12 months' notice to the church?

Firstly, you want to ensure that our pastor is available to conduct the wedding. Secondly, there is the pre-marital preparation course conducted over several months that you must attend. Thirdly, if there are any issues arising in your relationship, there is time to work through them before the marriage.

3. What is the pre-marital preparation course?

It is a compulsory course organized by our church to prepare couples for marriage.

4. How long is the course, and when is it conducted?

The course takes around 8-10 months, meeting once a month together with other couples who are getting married around the same time frame.

5. What is covered in the course?

It will deal with the major issues of marriage, such as: what it means to have a Christ-centered marriage; learning to become "one" and the roles of the husband and wife. There will also be an opportunity to learn from older married couples.

6. Do both of us need to be baptized to be married in church?

Both of you should be baptized Christians (Protestants), before you are married in church.

7. What if one of us is not a Christian?

You can wait till he or she becomes a Christian and is baptized. Or else, you could have an ROM solemnization and have a Church Blessing when both are believers and baptized.

8. What is a Church Blessing?

A Church Blessing is different from a Church Wedding. The bride will be unveiled, and the vows and parts of the ceremony will be different.

9. How are the vows different in a Church Blessing?

You will no longer "take" each other as husband and wife, since you are already husband and wife. You will "affirm" each other as husband and wife. There will not be a pronouncement, neither the unveiling of the bride.

10. What if one of us is not from Zion Bishan BP Church?

We strongly encourage both to belong to the same church since in marriage you become one. Membership of the same church is not a requirement for marriage at the time of the wedding, however you should have agreed on one church where you both will worship after the wedding.

11. When do I give notice to the Registry of Marriages (ROM)?

Legally, you have to do it between 3 weeks to 3 months before the wedding date.

12. Can I have my marriage solemnized at the ROM, and then have a wedding in the church?

No, if both are baptized believers, we believe the marriage should be solemnized either at ROM or in the church, not at both places. It should not be a legal marriage followed by a spiritual union; the two should be done together.

13. Could we have our marriage conducted outside of the church building?

We believe that if you are baptized Christians, weddings should be conducted in the presence of God and His people. For this reason, we recommend that you hold your wedding inside a church building, except in extenuating circumstances. You may have your reception and other wedding activities at non-church venues if you wish.

14. What is the church's position on sex before marriage?

The church affirms the Word of God in keeping sex within the safe walls of the marriage covenant. We stand against the increasingly common practice which views sex as something detached from marriage. We find it highly destructive to pre-marital relationships.

15. What is the church's position on a couple living together before marriage?

Our church does not approve of cohabitation of a couple before marriage. We will not solemnize a wedding for such a couple unless they live apart prior to their marriage.

16. What is the church's position on a couple going on vacation together before they are married?

We realize it is a common practice, but we believe such a practice cannot be pleasing in God's sight for a number of reasons. Firstly, sex is reserved for marriage. Secondly, the couple should not do anything to expose themselves to such a temptation.

17. What if they are already committed to be married, e.g. they are already engaged or given notice at ROM?

Even so, it is not pleasing to God. Sex is designed by God for marriage and a clear line needs to be drawn between a married couple and an unmarried one. That is one of the reasons why the wedding gown is white, a symbol of purity and chastity.

18. Can a couple therefore go on vacation with family or friends?

That is a different matter and greatly encouraged. A couple planning for marriage should include in their circle common friends who can share their joys and divide their sorrows. Going off on their own only narrows their circle of friendship. Joining family members for vacation is also a good idea for the extended family to get to know one another.

19. What about if we are dating and not quite ready for marriage?

We recommend that if you are dating, you continue to be active in the Christian community. Many relationships benefit greatly by having good Christian peers, mentors, and even going on group dates with other couples.

20. If I am widowed, may I request for remarriage and church wedding?

Yes, since marriage is “till death do us part.” On the death of our spouse, we are free to remarry.

21. If I am divorced, may I request for remarriage and church wedding?

It depends on the grounds on which the divorce took place. The church allows divorce on grounds of adultery if you are the offended party (not the offending party), and in a few other circumstances. In such a case, remarriage and church wedding may be permitted. We suggest you discuss the matter in person with one of our pastors.

22. What if the divorce took place on other grounds such as “irreconcilable difference”?

Since such a ground is not acceptable, the marriage covenant is deemed to be still valid. An attempt should be made for reconciliation before remarriage is considered. We suggest you discuss the matter with one of our pastors.

23. Do I still need to attend the pre-marital course if I am marrying the second time?

Yes, you and your partner are still required to attend pre-marital sessions, but it will be different course. Do speak to one of the pastors for more information.