

# *First Southern Baptist Church of Avondale*

## Wedding Guidelines

*We thank you for inquiring about holding your wedding at our church, and we look forward to helping you. Our desire is to be able to help those who want a distinctly Christian marriage ceremony. As a result, we have adopted the following guidelines:*

### **General Church Policies**

1. A wedding ceremony is both a time of celebration and a time of worship that honors Christ. Therefore, the details of the service should be approved by a pastor of this church in advance. One of our pastors will officiate, unless special permission is granted by the senior pastor for a guest pastor to do so.
2. We believe that marriage requires preparation, so we do we require premarital counseling. Effective counseling takes 6-8 sessions and/or classes, usually spread out over 2-3 months, and it is best done early in the engagement period. The counseling includes sessions on a commitment to Christ, on the nature of marriage, on communication, finances, and on other vital issues. We provide this counseling as a courtesy to our members, and we ask non-members to make a donation of \$200 for the time and materials. For members of other churches, a letter from a counselor or pastor stating that counseling has been done elsewhere is considered sufficient.
3. We believe that our church is dedicated to God and to His service. Therefore, we expect Christian etiquette and behavior from the wedding party and guests.
4. Church functions are our calendaring priority, so weddings, rehearsals, and receptions should be scheduled well in advance through the church office. We do not schedule weddings on major holidays, on Sundays, or after 2:00 pm on Saturdays. Weddings of non-members cannot usually be scheduled more than 90 days in advance.
5. Scheduling a wedding does not guarantee exclusive use of our church campus. Other meetings and events may be scheduled in other buildings at the same time of the wedding.

### **Scheduling a Wedding**

1. We ask you to first read and agree to our guidelines. Our office staff will be glad to check for available dates and temporarily hold a date for you while you review our guidelines and schedule a meeting with a pastor.
2. The date will not be considered firm until a \$100 deposit has been paid and an initial meeting with one of our pastors or our office manager has been held. At this meeting, the pastor will set up counseling, confirm the date, answer any questions you may have, and give you the number of our church wedding hostess who will help you with further details.

### **Facilities**

1. Our sanctuary holds up to 400 people

## *Wedding Guidelines (Page 2)*

2. We have an arch, two large candelabras, a table that can be used for a unity candle, and some very simple decorations that can be used. We encourage wedding parties to donate any nice decorations that they do not want to keep to the church for future wedding parties.
3. Our lower level fellowship space can accommodate up to 150 guests at a reception and our Ministry Activity Center accommodates up to 500 people. We have separate building guidelines and fees if you plan to hold a reception here.
4. A bride's room and changing rooms for the men are available.
5. We ask that no alcohol be served in our buildings. We are also a no smoking campus. Food can be served only in the reception areas. (Light snacks in the dressing rooms are permissible.) We ask you not to throw rice and to keep birdseed outdoors. Please do not use tacks, nails, or screws in walls or furniture. Any damage to the buildings will be paid for by the bride and groom.
6. Photographers are welcome, and flash is allowable. We ask photographers to stay off the platform during the ceremony and to use discretion during the service.
7. All personal items should be removed immediately following the wedding and/or reception.

### **Fees**

1. A donation of \$650 covers the use of the sanctuary, dressing rooms, and restrooms, for a wedding and a rehearsal. It includes honorariums for a wedding hostess, sound technician, and a pianist or organist, if these people are needed and requested well in advance. It does not include an honorarium for a pastor or any other musicians. The wedding party is responsible for providing an honorarium for them directly.
2. If our sound system or any of our projection equipment is to be used, then we will provide our own sound technician to run our system. Please let us know well in advance—60 days if possible.
3. We have quality pianists who are affiliated with our church. If you would like to use one of ours, please let us know well in advance—60 days if at all possible. We cannot guarantee that one will be available if the request is made on short notice.
4. The donation does not include the use of our facilities for a reception. A fellowship hall *may* be available for receptions at additional cost.
5. The church *may* be available for advance decorating, but we don't guarantee this ahead of time. Normally, the church is available two hours prior to the wedding and for one hour after the wedding, for a total of four hours. If no other event is scheduled, we will allow groups to decorate the day or night before. Check with the church early in the week of the wedding.
6. An initial deposit of \$100 should be paid when scheduling the wedding. The balance of the fees should be paid two weeks prior to the wedding.
7. In case of a cancellation, a full refund of fees will be given if the cancellation was made more than 60 days in advance. After that time, the fees will be returned except for the \$100 deposit.

## *Wedding Guidelines (Page 3)*

I understand and I agree to abide by the terms of these wedding guidelines, as well as the reception guidelines, if appropriate. This agreement is only considered binding after the signatures of either the bride or groom and a pastor is secured and the \$100 deposit has been paid.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Bride or Groom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pastor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Deposit Received

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time of wedding

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time of rehearsal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name / address of primary contact person

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date And Amount of Fee Received

### **For Church Office Use**

Pastor doing ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor/Counselor doing counseling (or other arrangements): \_\_\_\_\_

Pianist: \_\_\_\_\_

Sound Technician: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Hostess: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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