



## Wedding Information: Officiant

You are probably reading this because you are a couple who has contacted me about officiating your wedding. It's truly an honor to be trusted to lead you through one of the most important events in your life. The purpose of this information sheet is to clarify how I approach weddings, so you can determine as a couple how you want to move forward.

### A Quick Introduction

My name is Jon. I'm a normal dude who is also clergy. I became a pastor in 2007 and work full time as the pastor of Gibbon Baptist Church in Gibbon. I am a prior-service combat vet who became a chaplain in 2009 and work part time as the chaplain of the 67th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade in Lincoln, which is part of the Nebraska Army National Guard. As it pertains to leading you toward your wedding: I have been married to my first wife Tiffani since May 28, 2005. We have three kids aged 6, 8, and 10. I am a Prepare/Enrich facilitator, which plays into how I will help you get ready for your future together. I have officiated weddings so far at Offutt AFB Capehart Chapel, Ponca State Park, Wilderness Ridge in Lincoln, The Ridnour Room in Lincoln, Ashland United Methodist Church, and Country Pines in Lincoln.

### Some Basic Things to Understand About Me

I work full-time as the pastor of Gibbon Baptist Church, which means I approach weddings as a Christian pastor. This does have implications that I want to be up front about:

- First, I approach weddings as Christian worship services and I only officiate weddings for heterosexual couples. Our denomination has stated "we affirm that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" and our church has defined marriage as "the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment."
- Second, I do not require a couple to be Christian in order for me to officiate their wedding. I just want to be clear that I will approach your counseling and ceremony as a Christian pastor. I use traditional Christian vows and am open to changes made by the couple but I will need to approve any changes. My biggest concern with vows is when the ideas of commitment through hard times and for a lifetime are watered down.
- Third, I require a couple to successfully complete 5 premarital counseling sessions with me. Each session takes about an hour, and the sessions must be at least a week apart. In plain English, your counseling will take at least 5 weeks to complete. So far, this is the only reason I have ever turned a couple away. I am not willing to be involved in your wedding if you are not willing to invest 5 hours in your future life together. Until these sessions are complete, my participation in the wedding is written on the calendar in pencil not ink. I have never had a couple not finish counseling successfully, but as a pastor I believe I need to maintain the integrity to not marry a couple that I have serious reservations about. (In the far-out circumstance that you attended all five sessions and I was not willing to marry you, I would refund the \$250 counseling fee.)

### **Typical Wedding Process**

1. **Initial contact.** You've made it, which is how you come to be reading this info sheet.
2. **Face-to-face meeting.** The three of us sit down together to meet each other in person, discuss this information, and address any questions or concerns you have.
3. **Commitment.** You pay me a non-refundable fee of \$300, and I pencil the date on my calendar.
4. **Counseling.** Before we meet for the first counseling session, you will each complete a relationship assessment online through Prepare/Enrich (cost included in fee). We will meet five times, for 60-90 minutes each time. I will provide you with the materials (cost included in fee), which includes a book and a workbook. Each of the five sessions you will do homework prior, then we will talk during the session about your homework and do an assignment together. It is not a test, and it is more fun than scary. I am really a spectator and friend, helping you guys talk intentionally about your relationship.
5. **Rehearsal.** Couples typically have a rehearsal the night before the wedding. I typically lead the rehearsal. If there is a rehearsal dinner or social event, I like to participate because I think it makes everyone more comfortable with my leadership the next day.
6. **Ceremony.** I block my whole day off for your wedding. If there is anything else I feel I need to be part of that day, I will run it by you first. Last year a funeral came up at the last minute, but the couple was fine with me doing the funeral in the morning and then devoting the rest of the day to their wedding.

### **Costs**

The non-refundable \$300 fee covers all of the costs (materials, time, travel) associated with the 5 required sessions of premarital counseling. I do not charge any fee for the rehearsal or ceremony. If cost is a prohibitive factor, please let me know. I know couples spend a lot of money on many things for their wedding, and feel my leadership brings significant value that is worth paying for. The time I spend with you is work for me in addition to my normal duties, and the rehearsal/wedding is a couple of days away from my family.

I do not charge any fee for members of Gibbon Baptist Church.

If your wedding is over 40 miles from Gibbon, I ask that you provide either \$100 or a room after the rehearsal. If your wedding is over 250 miles from Gibbon, I ask that you pay mileage at the current IRS standard rate of 54.5¢/mile or provide transportation (if that is more appropriate) round-trip from Gibbon.

### **Clothes**

My typical attire for a wedding is a suit. I always officiate weddings in my capacity as a civilian pastor, never on military orders. But I am willing to wear my Army Service Uniform in cases where the groom is an active member of the United States military who will be wearing his uniform for the ceremony.

### **Next Steps**

If you have any questions or would like to begin plans for a wedding at Gibbon Baptist Church, please contact Elaina, our church secretary, or myself anytime at 308-468-5323 or [office@gibbonbaptist.org](mailto:office@gibbonbaptist.org).

*Pastor Jon Wymer*