



# A2A Marriage Rites

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A marriage ceremony is a sacred event which is designed by God to celebrate the exclusive, lifelong union of a man and a woman. As the representative of God, the officiating A2A minister conveys this sense of the sacred with great joy. The couple coming to form this lifelong covenant will normally be making *dual* vows.

Appropriately, the first vow is made *to God* about the triangulated covenant they are making.

The second of the two vows they make is *to each other*.

The marriage ceremony is built around the exchange of vows which form the crux of the rites.

## Why Have Rites?

All religious bodies, such as A2A, which are granted permission by the Attorney General's Department to endorse *religious* marriage. Celebrants are permitted to do so on the basis that their ministers conduct marriages within the *rites* of their *denomination* (how each religious group is distinguished). The word *rite* comes from the word *ritual*. Thus, marriage rites incorporates the rituals involved in marrying a couple.

A2A ministers have some flexibility in how they conduct weddings. There are, however, some components which should be included as part of the official marriage rites of the Acts 2 Alliance. It is foreseeable that these rites may afford our ministers certain legal protections and potentially prevent unwelcome conflicts.

Marriages that A2A Ministers solemnise are to be on the basis of the following 5 key principles

- i) Marriage is to be entered into between a man and a woman
- ii) Marriage is to be entered into with the intent that it be for life.
- iii) Marriage is to be entered into with the intent of it being an exclusive relationship with both parties to the marriage remaining faithful to each other.
- iv) Marriage is to be entered into with the intent that it endure through all kinds of circumstances, whether favourable or not.
- v) Marriage is to be entered into with the intent that both parties will commit to loving, cherishing, protecting and honouring each other.

We recognise that A2A ministers will be called upon by couples seeking to be married who might be in one of three categories:

- i) A Christian couple.
- ii) A couple where only one party is a Christian.
- iii) A couple who are not Christian.

Because we assist couples in each of these three categories, we have adopted marriage rites which accommodate the differences.

## Forms of Vows

A2A has adopted 3 alternative sets of vows that the officiating minister and the couple entering into marriage may choose from. They are:

- i) where the bride and groom have different vows
- ii) where the bride and groom have identical vows
- iii) where either the bride, the groom or both are not Christians

## For A Christian Couple

For a Christian couple, the ceremony is more likely to contain elements of worship including: prayer, praise, Scripture reading, Gospel musical item/s, and Communion.

Where the parents of the couple are also Christian, it is appropriate to involve them in the ceremony by having them pray for the couple after the exchange of vows. The couple may wish to prepare a prayer for each other to be read during their wedding ceremony, or a statement of promise to each other. Neither of these should, however, supersede their vows to each other.

Two alternative sets of vows are provided for a Christian couple to choose from.

- i) The first set of vows take “complementarian” approach where it is viewed that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, religious leadership, and elsewhere. Consequently the first reflect different vows for the bride and the groom based on the different responsibilities of a husband and wife as mentioned in Ephesians chapter 5.
- ii) The second set of vows for a Christian couple take an “egalitarian” approach and may be used when the couple wish to make identical vows.

## For A Couple Where One or Both Are Not Christians

For a Christian marrying a non-Christian or in the case of neither of the couple being Christian, the ceremony may contain elements of worship including: prayer, praise, Scripture reading, and Gospel musical item/s.

These components however are not mandatory and it may be that the marriage vows are limited to vows each other and not to a God who they may not believe in. The Marriage Act does not require ministers of religion to contain vows to God.

Where one or both of the couple do have a belief in God, they may choose to make a vow to God in line with either the first or second vows.

## The Wording Of The Vows

The wording in the vows below is recommended rather than prescribed. This means that the A2A Minister officiating will be able to change the wording of the vows used to be culturally appropriate, provided that the intended meaning of the vows is not changed.

## Alternative Vows

### i) Where the bride and groom have different vows.

#### First Set of Vows (To God)

### For the Bridegroom

Having a full understanding of the privileges and obligations of the Christian marriage, **BRIDEGROOM'S FIRST NAME**, will you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you promise to love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health, for better and for worse, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?

The man shall answer: "I will".

### For the Bride

Having full understanding of the privileges and obligations of the Christian marriage, **BRIDE'S FIRST NAME** will you promise to have this man to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you respect him, and serve him, love honour and keep him, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live?

The woman shall answer: "I will".

## **Second Set of Vows (To Each Other)**

### For the Bridegroom

I **MAN'S FIRST NAME** take you **WOMAN'S FIRST NAME** according to God's Holy Word to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, to share my faith in Christ, to guide you and make my home with you for better, for worse for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until we are parted by death. Before God, I pledge you my faithfulness.

### For the Bride

I **WOMAN'S FIRST NAME** take you **MAN'S FIRST NAME** according to God's Holy Word to be my husband to have and to hold from this day forward, to share my faith in Christ, to be guided by you and make my home with you, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until we are parted by death. Before God I pledge you my faithfulness.

## **ii) Where the bride and groom have identical vows.**

## **First Set of Vows (To God)**

### For the Bridegroom

Having a full understanding of the privileges and obligations of the Christian marriage, **BRIDEGROOM'S FIRST NAME**, will you take this woman to be your wedded wife, to live together after God's plan? Will you promise to love her, comfort her, serve her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health, for better and for worse, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for her, so long as you both shall live?

The man shall answer: "I will".

### For the Bride

Having full understanding of the privileges and obligations of the Christian marriage, **BRIDE'S FIRST NAME** will you take this man to be your wedded husband, to live together after God's plan?

Will you promise to love him, comfort him, serve him, honour and keep him, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, and forsaking all others, keep yourself only for him, so long as you both shall live?

The woman shall answer: "I will".

## **Second Set of Vows (To Each Other)**

### For the Bridegroom

I **MAN'S FIRST NAME** take you **WOMAN'S FIRST NAME** according to God's Holy Word to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, to share my faith in Christ, to make my home with you, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until we are parted by death. Before God I pledge you my faithfulness.

### For the Bride

I **WOMAN'S FIRST NAME** / take you **MAN'S FIRST NAME** /according to God's Holy Word/ to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, to share my faith in Christ, to make my home with you, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until we are parted by death. Before God I pledge you my faithfulness.

## **iii) Where the couple aren't Christians**

### **Set of Vows (To Each Other)**

#### For the Bridegroom

I **MAN'S FIRST NAME** take you **WOMAN'S FIRST NAME** to be my wife. I promise to comfort you, serve you, honour and keep you, forsaking all others, to have and to hold from this day forward, to make my home with you, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until we are parted by death. I pledge you my faithfulness.

#### For the Bride

I **WOMAN'S FIRST NAME** take you **MAN'S FIRST NAME** to be my husband. I promise to comfort you, serve you, honour and keep you, forsaking all others, to have and to hold from this day forward, to make my home with you, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until we are parted by death. I pledge you my faithfulness.

## **The Pronouncement**

### **Proceeding the vows, and exchange of rings, the minister declares -**

In the name then, of Jesus Christ, and before God and these witnesses, I pronounce you husband and wife. What God has joined together, let no- one separate.

## **Marriage Preparation**

A2A strongly recommends that ministers provide marriage preparation which covers- communication skills, conflict resolution, budgeting, the role of sexual intimacy, and an understanding of the covenantal vows the couple will be making.