

"Marriage Policy"

South River Baptist Church in Statesville, NC

This marriage policy is a guideline for what we believe to be a Christ-honoring marriage, according to God's Word. Couples who have questions or comments about the policy are welcome to meet with the Pastor or a member of his Staff for further discussion. Couples who wish to have a Pastor officiate their wedding, or who wish to use our building for their wedding ceremony, must abide by our Marriage Policy.

It is the desire of South River Baptist Church that your marriage be all that God intends for you. Since God designed the marriage relationship, He knows best how to build a marriage that will last a lifetime.

As we read in His Word, we are able to discern basic principles which must be understood and applied if we hope to experience joy and fulfillment in marriage. Ignoring these principles will result in frustration and possible failure in the marriage relationship.

Because we are committed to building healthy marriages that can go the distance, we want to present the following guidelines. Our purpose is not to condemn or reject anyone, but to comply with God's principles for marriage. We value the permanence of marriage. It is our desire that your marriage models the biblical relationship between Jesus Christ and His bride, the Church; a covenant relationship characterized by joy, intimacy and permanence.

1. ***We recommend a minimum of six (6) months or marital preparation.*** This allows plenty of time for the program required for all couples who desire to be married by one of the church Pastors or who wish to use the church facilities for their ceremony, reception and/or other related events.
2. ***A minimum of a one-year dating/courting relationship is recommended before marriage.*** Even though some people have the skills and maturity to build a committed relationship sooner than others, there really are no shortcuts to building intimacy, trust and communication.
3. ***Remarriage following the death of a spouse should occur after one (1) year from the spouse's death.***
4. ***Church Pastors will not marry couples and church facilities cannot be used if the couple is "unequally yoked" spiritually.*** Both people must have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and be committed to establishing a Christian home.

5. ***The couple must remain celibate (i.e., refrain from sexual activity and contact) from this time forward and not live together at any time between now and the wedding.*** The Pastor will not perform the ceremony if the couple is currently living together. This is in accordance with Scripture and is a protection for you against divorce, as research has found that couples who live together have a higher divorce rate than those who do not.

6. ***In accordance with Biblical teaching and all governing documents (including the Constitution & Bylaws) of South River Baptist Church of Statesville, NC, marriages performed at South River Baptist Church will only be between one (1) man and one (1) woman.*** This church recognizes marriage as exclusively the legal union of (1) one man and one (1) woman in which such union is a lifetime commitment (*Genesis 2:18-24, Matthew 19: 3-9, Mark 10: 6-8, 1 Corinthians 7:2*).

In conclusion, these guidelines have been created based upon the Church's belief in God's plan for marriage, and are meant to encourage, protect, and strengthen the couple's commitment to Christ.