

What you need to know about premarital counselling at Island ECC

We encourage all engaged couples at Island ECC to give good attention and time to preparing for your marriage well, and to participate in the premarital counselling programme. Our pastors are qualified as premarital counsellors and it is their joy to meet with couples at this exciting and important juncture in their lives.

To apply, at least one of the participants should be a member of Island ECC or have been attending regularly for a minimum six months.

Step 1: Complete the Couples Introduction Form

In preparation for premarital counselling, couples are required to complete an introductory form to provide some basic information about themselves.

Step 2: Confirmation and Payment

Once the introduction/application form has been processed, the couple will be contacted to make arrangements for the premarriage package.

The Premarital Counselling Package includes:

- 'SYMBIS' assessment
- Three individual counselling sessions with one of our pastors
- Saturday morning premarriage group session
- One book for couple use
- Pastoral assistance in wedding planning

The fee for the Premarital Counselling Package is HK\$3,000 per couple, to be paid prior to taking the 'SYMBIS' assessment.

For couples who would like an Island ECC pastor to conduct their rehearsal and to officiate the wedding ceremony, the fee for Premarital Counselling & Wedding Pastor Package is HK\$5,500.

Step 3: Take the 'SYMBIS' Online Assessment

Our pastors use the 'SYMBIS' assessment tool by Drs Les and Leslie Parrott in the US as a base for the pre-marriage counselling sessions. This programme is used by churches around the world and provides excellent materials and feedback for premarital counselling, marriage preparation, marriage counselling and marriage enrichment.

'SYMBIS' is designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their relationship. It is an invaluable resource for the premarital counsellor, and will save many hours of talking.

Once the Introductory Form has been completed, we will arrange for couples to take the 'SYMBIS' assessment online. The test takes about one hour to complete. The results, which will remain confidential, will be held by the premarital counsellor.

Step 4: Commence Premarital Counselling

Couples are assigned to one of our pastors to be their pre-marriage counsellor, and he will contact you to make an appointment for your first session. Generally 2-3 sessions are required and these are available from Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 6.30pm, subject to the pastor's availability.

In addition, we are conducting a Saturday morning group session as part of the programme, where couples will meet together with others (at a private table) to cover some of the material designed for lots of private discussion by the couple.

Note: All our pastors reserve final approval until meeting with the couple to confirm that there are no unexpected reasons why they would not, in good conscience, be able to conduct marriage counselling and/or officiate at the wedding service. This is not anticipated, but it is important to understand that their commitment is in some measure tentative until they have met with the couple.



Premarital Counselling and Ceremony Pastor

If you are planning to request one of Island ECC's pastors to be your ceremony pastor or to use Island ECC facilities for your ceremony, then it is required that you go through Island ECC's premarital counselling programme.

In addition, if the wedding is outside Hong Kong, the costs of international and local travel, and accommodation and meals should all be met for the pastor, and perhaps for his wife.

Island ECC Facilities

Our facilities are available for hire primarily for wedding ceremonies for those who are active participants at Island ECC. The wedding package includes:

- 1/F 4-hour hire on Wedding Day (inclusive of set-up and take down)
- 1/F 1.5-hour hire for Rehearsal
- Utilities on Wedding Day (Electricity, Projector, Sound System)
- 2 Sound Technicians on Wedding Day
- 1 Sound Technician for Rehearsal
- Bride's Room

Providing music/worship team for a wedding is not part of our worship team's responsibilities.

To book the venue please enquire here: venue@islandecc.hk

Marriage Registration

Island ECC is not able to perform the legal registration of a marriage. Please take care of this separately through a marriage registry office, a licensed place of worship or by employing the services of a Civil Celebrant of Marriages. A list of those who we recommend and have worked well with in the past is available upon request. Further information can be found at: <http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/bdmreg/>

Wedding Rehearsal

If an Island ECC pastor is conducting your wedding ceremony, please talk to him in advance to arrange the rehearsal date and time to avoid any scheduling conflict and to ensure the flow of a smooth ceremony.

Order of Service

An order of service provides a programme for wedding guests. We carry some samples of these in the Island ECC office which you are welcome to view. There are no particular requirements for the order of service but this may include the following elements:

- names of the couple
- wedding date
- time
- location
- processional music
- greeting
- hymns / other music
- scripture readings
- message
- prayer
- exchange of vows and rings/pronouncement of marriage
- recessional music
- list of members of the bridal party
- brief comments of appreciation
- list of order for photos
- directions to the reception etc.

There are other optional items which can be included, e.g. unity candle, communion, solos, poetry reading.

Wedding Vows and Rings

A sample of simple wording:

Declaration of Intent

_____/ will you take this woman/man to be your wedded wife/husband, to live together according to the intention of God for your lives together in Christ?

Do you promise to love her/him, honour him/her, care for him/her, staying true to only him/her, as long as you both shall live? [I do]

Exchange of Vows

"I _____, take you _____ to be my wedded wife/husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish until death do us part."

Exchange of Rings

"As this ring has no end, neither does my love for you. With this ring, I thee wed."

Wedding Scriptures

1 Corinthians 13:4-8,13

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Ruth 1:16-17

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ephesians 5:21-32

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Genesis 2:20-25

So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and

mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Colossians 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Wedding Music

A selection of songs used in recent weddings by members at Island ECC:

Prelude

Ave Maria, J.S. Bach / You Raise Me Up / Cello Suite No.1 Prelude, J.S. Bach / Cantata No.208, Sheep May Safely Graze (Panis Angelicus), J.S. Bach / Cantata No.147, Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring, J.S. Bach / Melody in F, Anton Rubinstein / Close to Thee, Silas J. Vail / Near to the Heart of God, Cleland B. McAfee / As the Deer, Martin Nystrom

Processional Songs

Wedding March, from Lohengrin, R. Wagner / How Beautiful, Twila Paris / Canon in D, Johann Pachelbel / Charpentier, Te Deum / Give Thanks, Andrew Mole / Beautiful One / Spring, The Four Seasons, Vivaldi / Sound of Music Wedding March, Rogers and Hammerstein

Recessional

Wedding March, F. Mendelssohn / When You Believe / The Prince of Denmark's March, Clarke / Respighi – Ancient Airs & Dances / Holy is the Lord, Chris Tomlin / Arrival of the Queen of Sheba, Handel / I Say a Little Prayer for You / Your Love is Amazing