

Your Wedding Day



So you've decided to get married! Congratulations!!

Here are a few thoughts to help you plan the Big Day ... and the single most important piece of advice is to **keep it simple**.

Above all, your wedding day is about **you**, and committing your future life together into God's love, care, protection and prosperity.

Please remember that the most extravagant weddings do not always lead to the most successful marriages! Indeed, the financial and other pressures of a Great Big Wedding can often strain relationships from Day One.

The wedding has to be right for **you**, and for the people that **you** actually want to share it with you – not necessarily obscure distant relatives you haven't seen since your pre-school days; nor indeed every work colleague, including the ones you don't really like!

Now ... you **don't** have to be a church member to be married, not even in church! Nor does Ale & Teviot insist on "preparation classes". However, the church does recommend that you take some time to have a look at online articles on how to enjoy your marriage. For example, you could have a look at these: [***http://www.joycemeyer.org/Articles/EAArchive.aspx?tag=Relationships***](http://www.joycemeyer.org/Articles/EAArchive.aspx?tag=Relationships)

This will help you to think through the nuts and bolts of married life. Above all, it's down to **your** commitment to make it work, and this involves you both learning to listen, to forgive, and to be thoughtful and unselfish. Dead easy!! Aye, RIGHT!! But very worth the effort!!

Having said all that, here are a few practical suggestions to help you have a great day without undue stress and strain.

First, consider **where** you're going to have it. And remember that, if you're going for an outdoor venue, in Scotland we cannot guarantee dry weather, even in summer! Is there cover? Seats? Toilets?

Old-fashioned as it may seem, a church wedding at least ensures you have a roof over your head in all weathers, plenty of seats, and a “comfort station”. All our buildings are disability-compliant.

Second, consider **when** you’re going to have it. Weddings do **not** need to take place on Saturday afternoons! In fact, you will find that reception venues, photographers etc are usually more readily – and less expensively – available on, say, Fridays.

Many ministers take Saturday as their usual day off. That said, please be prepared, if you want a Saturday, to be flexible with regard to both the date and the time of the ceremony.

On the subject of receptions, some couples have found that a meal for immediate family and friends, followed by a ceilidh in the village hall for a wider circle, is every bit as good – and involves much less financial commitment – than feeding the proverbial 5,000 in a hotel!

Oh, and one more thing about receptions. Always schedule the speeches **BEFORE** the meal, so that the speakers can enjoy their food without worrying about standing up to speak afterwards.

As to the **content** of the wedding service itself, the minister will be happy to have your ideas about hymns – choose ones **you** like, not necessarily ones you think people will “know” – and readings. The minister will discuss with you what vows you take – two possible sets are attached.

However, any wedding the minister conducts, whether in church or in the middle of a field, will have an explicitly Christian content, with Scripture readings and prayers. For these reasons, the minister insists on knowing in advance what readings and vows you have chosen.

Likewise, if a friend or family member is taking part in the service, please ensure that they “run past” the minister what they intend to say. This is simply to ensure the integrity and smooth flow of the service.

Well in advance of the wedding, you will meet up with the minister for a talk through your ideas and any questions you might have.

Now for a few specific, practical points.

1. Apart from your two selves, the most important item to bring to the service is the Marriage Schedule from the local Registrar. You will both need to complete a number of forms and produce Birth Certificates, etc.
2. To make sure you get the Schedule, you contact the local Registrar for the place where the wedding is to be held, at least 6 weeks in advance of your wedding. For example, if the wedding is in Ancrum or Lilliesleaf Kirks, this means Hawick; for Crailing, it's Kelso.
3. The Registrar will ask you for the name and designation of the person conducting the service. Just to be clear, if it's the Ale & Teviot minister, you should write ... Rev , minister, Ale & Teviot United Church of Scotland

... NOT, please, minister of Ancrum Parish Church, Crailing Parish Church, or Lilliesleaf Parish Church, as these – legally – no longer exist.

However, it is still perfectly OK to refer to Ancrum Church, Crailing Church, or Lilliesleaf Church, as the place where the wedding is to take place. Sorry if this is a bit confusing, but the less scope we allow for any technical hitches, the better!!!

4. The Schedule **MUST** be presented to the minister before the wedding can take place. This is a legal requirement! We can cope if the wedding rings are forgotten – ring-pulls off a can of coke would do in an emergency – but ... **NO CERTIFICATE means NO WEDDING!!!**
5. Please agree with the minister not only the date and the place but also the **TIME** of the wedding **BEFORE** making your arrangements!

This is especially true for Saturday weddings. Please be prepared to be flexible to avoid possible disappointment.

6. As there is no church organist, you may have to find your own, if that is what you require. We do have digital hymnals that play through the PA system. This could be used if suitable for your needs. If the service is not in church, or if you want any additional musicians such as a piper to play you into church, that's entirely up to you.
7. Whoever is providing the music, it's a good idea to contact them well in advance to make sure they are free on the Big Day, and to discuss your musical requirements – typically two hymns, a march “in” and a march “out”, although you are free to vary this to suit yourself.
8. You are free to make your own arrangements regarding flowers, but if the service is to be in church, contact Ale & Teviot to arrange access to the church building for flower arranging and decoration.
9. Videos and photographs are allowed, provided the camera operators are discreet and have a due sense of the occasion. It's YOUR day, not theirs. But ... NO flash during the service please.
10. At church, we ask that you do not use confetti inside or outside; please think of the church cleaner and how confetti can be cleaned off pebble pathways!! At other venues, you should check with the proprietor if confetti is allowed.
11. In church weddings, the signing of the register will take place at the communion table, after which the taking of photographs would normally be permitted.
12. It's usually a good idea to have a rehearsal the day before the wedding. This lets you “walk through” it all and helps to prevent panic on the Big Day when the nerves are jangling

anyway. The best man, along with as many of the bridesmaids as possible and the chief usher should come with you to the rehearsal. Parents also like to be asked. This is as good a time as any to bring the Marriage Schedule [see above].

13. The minister does not usually attend the reception, and does not expect to be invited. You have more than enough people to try to fit in without bursting the bank!
14. When printing orders of service, it is suggested that you print **ONLY** the words of the hymns. Most printers have a stock order of service that bears absolutely no resemblance to what the minister does!!
15. If you want to record the service on CD / DVD, remember that you are responsible for any copyright implications. Please speak to the minister about this in plenty of time.
16. Now the question no-one likes to ask ... fees for weddings. Whilst we are glad to welcome you to enjoy our sanctuaries for your big day, we do have to take into account the expenses incurred by the church – electricity, cleaning, heating etc – and respectfully ask you to reimburse these.

We suggest a donation to Ale & Teviot United Church of **£150**. If you wish to invite any other musicians – pipers, etc. – to take part, you would be responsible for paying them separately.

You are free, of course, to ask for your wedding to take place somewhere other than in one of our churches, subject to the approval of the local Registrar. For weddings held outwith the church buildings, we suggest a donation of **£100**.

If, however, the wedding is to be held outwith the Jedburgh / Hawick / Kelso / Selkirk areas, it would be more appropriate for you to find out who the local parish minister is for that venue and invite that minister to conduct the ceremony.

Please bring your donation to the rehearsal. Thank you!

17. Last but by no means least ... **ENJOY YOUR WEDDING!**

VOWS : SET 1

[*Romeo* will repeat after me]

I, *Romeo*, take you, *Juliet*

To be my wife.

To have and to hold

From this day forward

For better, for worse

For richer, for poorer

In sickness and in health

To love and to cherish

For as long as we both shall live

According to God's holy law

And this is my solemn vow.

[*Juliet* will repeat after me]

I, *Juliet*, take you, *Romeo*

To be my husband.

To have and to hold

From this day forward

For better, for worse

For richer, for poorer

In sickness and in health

To love and to cherish ...

For as long as we both shall live.

According to God's holy law ...

And this is my solemn vow.

VOWS : SET 2

[*Romeo* will repeat after me]

I take you, *Juliet*, to be my wife,
believing this to be God's will and purpose.
I will love you, comfort you,
honour you and keep you.
I will love you and cherish you
in every circumstance of life.
With God's help, I shall be faithful and loyal to you,
building our life together in God's strength,
so long as we both shall live.
And so I give you my promise.

[*Juliet* will repeat after me]

I take you, *Romeo*, to be my husband,
believing this to be God's will and purpose.
I will love you, comfort you,
honour and obey you.
I will love you and cherish you
in every circumstance of life.
With God's help, I shall be faithful and loyal to you,
building our life together in God's strength,
so long as we both shall live.
And so I give you my promise.