

WHAT MARRIAGE MEANS TO THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Marriage is a life-long union in which a man and a woman are called to give themselves in body, mind and spirit and to respond that from their union will grow a deepening knowledge and love of each other.

Jesus Christ said of marriage, “From the beginning of creation God made them male and female. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one.’ So they are no longer two but one.”

Marriage is the symbol of God’s unending love for his people and the union between Christ and his Church. So Saint Paul teaches that the husband must love his wife as Christ loved the Church and that the wife must give due honour to her husband.

Marriage should be honoured by all, and is not to be entered into lightly or carelessly but with reverent and serious respect for the purposes for which it was instituted by God.

The deepening love of each other should be felt in the joys and sorrows of life, in prosperity and adversity, they share their companionship, faithfulness and strength.

The desire to marry is a sign that each partner has been ‘touched’ by another in an extra special way. They have opened their hearts to one another and finally found the courage in their love to want to offer and receive total commitment for life.

Following the words of Jesus himself, the Church teaches very strongly that marriage is for life. The reasons for this are both practical and spiritual. The practical reason is that we all need security in our love. Spiritually, we need to learn to love faithfully and unselfishly. We are actually learning to love as God loves.

In marriage a new family is established in accordance with God’s purpose, so that children may be born and nurtured in secure and loving care, for their well-being and instruction and for the good order of society, to the glory of God.

Information taken from the Prayer Book for Australia and This is Our Faith, edited by Jeffrey John.