

# Early Engagement

Depending upon the couple, the following may be useful at this time:

## Supplemental Handout:

- Accountability Questions for Engaged Couples

## Modules:

1. Communication in Marriage
2. Developing the Spiritual Union in Marriage
3. Sexuality in Christian Marriage – Part I. Depending on the couple, it may be best to give out **Part I** earlier in the engagement and **Part II** in the last weeks of engagement.

## I. ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING COUNSEL.

### A. Caution on length of engagement.

### B. Conduct during engagement period.

1. Engagement is a time to prepare for a marriage... not just a wedding.
2. While it is a special time, special temptations exist.  
*1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."*
3. Exercise a brother/sister relationship. Engagement involves a serious commitment, but you are not married.
4. Be sensitive to the feelings of your single brothers and sisters. Be discreet and continue to fellowship with them.

### C. Control emotions and feelings.

1. No caressing, petting, or passionate kissing.
2. Do nothing in private that you would not do in our presence.  
*1 Thessalonians 5:22, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."*
3. Limit time alone together.
4. Set moderate nighttime hours together.

### D. Wedding plans.

1. Keep plans simple and in accordance with church practices and not offensive to the brethren. (Will it honor God and be respectful of the church?)
2. A beautiful wedding is no guarantee of a beautiful marriage.  
*Proverbs 31:30, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised."*
3. The Word of God should be the beauty of the wedding.

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4. Dresses of bride and her attendants.
  - Should be modest and respectful of local church customs with no sheer or see-through sections.  
*1 Peter 5:5, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (also see 1 Peter 3:3-5)*
  - Necklines should not be low cut – either front or back.
  - Dresses should not have trains.
  - Traditional prayer veils are to be worn.
5. Attire of groom and his attendants.
  - Business-type suits.
  - No tuxedos, cummerbunds, or stripes down the sides of trousers.
  - Shirts should be regular white dress shirts.
  - Ties should be moderate in color.
6. Photography.
  - No pictures taken in church.
  - Don't miss church services for a photography session.
  - Limit number of pictures. Not everything needs to be on film. Caution on pride.
7. Flowers.
  - Not in church.
8. Elder and/or ministers.
  - Elder should contact and invite.
9. Coordinate the wedding date with church and fellowship hall activities.
10. Apply for and obtain a marriage license.
11. Music during reception should be appropriate for a church function.
12. The number of guests you invite should be able to comfortably fit within the church where your wedding is to be held. Do not create a burden for the church.
13. No surprises or deviations from church practices should occur.
14. It would be appreciated if the groom would refrain from escorting mothers into the assembly.

## II. MARRIAGE COUNSEL.

### A. Growing together.

1. Engagement is a time to learn to know, appreciate, and love each other.
2. Become acquainted with in-laws; seek counsel of parents.
3. Discuss plans for the future, and establish goals for your marriage.
4. Compare likes and dislikes; be open, yet compromising and tolerant.
5. Begin to establish roles in the relationship.
6. Be unselfish.
7. Share concerns and problems: spiritual, emotional and physical issues.

### B. Prenuptial agreement, points to consider. (This is specifically for older couples who have been married previously.)

1. Preservation of present assets.
2. Provision for living expenses of a surviving spouse.
3. Major medical and/or nursing home expenses.
4. Wills and trusts.
5. Keep children, if any, informed.

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## III. CONCLUSION.

- A. Any questions or comments?
- B. Agree on any “homework” the couple is to do in between sessions.
- C. Remind the couple to counsel with the elder before any problems become overwhelming.
- D. Set date for next counseling session.
- E. Pray with the couple.

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