

Readings, Poems & Prayers

The following are a collection of readings, poems and prayers that can be brought into your wedding ceremony. They are one way of adding a certain flavor to your ceremony to help shape it into the wedding of your dreams. For example, if you wanted to bring in a little religious flavor, you could choose a Bible reading. Or maybe you love poetry and want to express your feelings about your marriage through a beautiful poem. Or perhaps a certain reading distills the perfect essence of marriage and you would like to share it to inspire your loved ones. Please note that one way of honoring a loved one or a friend is to invite them to participate in the ceremony by sharing a reading, poem or prayer. This adds drama, warmth, connection and joy to your ceremony. You could also share the reading, poem or prayer yourself, either to your partner, or together. Of course, you can always have one of our celebrants enthusiastically present your favorite passage as you take in its rich joy and meaning on your miraculous day.

Bible Readings

First Corinthians, Chapter 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor, and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

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. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

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

Modern Version Of Paul to the Corinthians

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

Psalm 1

Blessed are the man and the woman who have grown beyond themselves and have seen through their separations. They delight in the way things are and keep their hearts open, day and night. They are like trees planted near flowing rivers, which bear fruit when they are ready. Their leaves will not fall or wither. Everything they do will succeed.

Ruth said:

Intreat me not to leave thee,
Or to return from following after thee:
For whither thou goest, I will go,
And where thou lodgest, I will lodge.
Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God.

Where thou diest, will I die,
And there will I be buried.

The Lord do so to me, and more also,
If ought but death part thee and me.
(Ruth 1: 16-17)

Reading from the book of Genesis

The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate."

So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beast and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it.

The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for the man was found for him.

So the Lord God made the man fall into deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh.

The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man.

The man exclaimed: "This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman, for this was taken from man"

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife and they become one body.
The word of the Lord.

Other Inspirational Readings

The Key To Love

The key to love is understanding.

The ability to comprehend not only the spoken word,
but those unspoken gestures,
the little things that say so much by themselves.

The key to love is forgiveness...

to accept each others faults and pardon mistakes,
without forgetting, but with remembering
what you learn from them.

The key to love is sharing...

Facing your good fortunes as well as the bad, together;
both conquering problems, forever searching for ways
to intensify your happiness.

The key to love is giving...

without thought of return,
but with the hope of just a simple smile,
and by giving in but never giving up.

The key to love is respect...

realising that you are two separate people, with different ideas; that you don't
belong to each other,
that you belong with each other, and share a mutual bond.

The key to love is inside us all...

It takes time and patience to unlock all the ingredients that will take you to its
threshold;

it is the continual learning process that demands a lot of work... but the
rewards are more than worth the effort...

and that is the key to love.

On Friendship

by Roy Croft (also called 'Love'; also called 'To my Friend')

I love you, not for what you are, but what I am, when I am with you.

I love you not only for what you have made of yourself, but what you are
making of me.

I love you for the part of me that you bring out.

I love you for putting your hand into my heaped up heart and passing over all
the frivolous and weak things that you cannot help seeing there, and for
drawing out into the light all the beautiful and radiant things that no one else
has looked quite far enough to find...

I love you because you have done more than any creed could have done to
make me good, and more than any fate could have done to make me happy.
You have done it without a touch, without a word, without a sign. You have
done it by being yourself. Perhaps that is what being a friend means after all.

Apache Marriage Blessing

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be the shelter for each other.
Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be the warmth for the other.
Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before. Go now to your dwelling place to enter into the days of your life together. And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

Treat yourselves and each other with respect, and remind yourselves often of what brought you together. Give the highest priority to the tenderness, gentleness and kindness that your connection deserves. When frustration, difficulty and fear assail your relationship - as they threaten all relationships at one time or another - remember to focus on what is right between you, not only the part which seems wrong. In this way, you can ride out the storms when clouds hide the face of the sun in your lives - remembering that even if you lose sight of it for a moment, the sun is still there. And if each of you takes responsibility for the quality of your life together, it will be marked by abundance and delight.

What is Love?

by Susan Polis Schutz

Love is the strongest feeling known
an all -encompassing passion
an extreme strength
an overwhelming excitement.
Love is trying not to hurt the other person
trying not to change the other person
trying not to dominate the other person
trying not to deceive the other person
Love is understanding each other
listening to each other
supporting each other
having fun with each other.
Love is not an excuse to stop growing
not an excuse to stop making yourself better
not an excuse to lessen one's goals
not an excuse to take the other person for granted
Love is being completely honest with each other
finding dreams to share
working towards common goals
sharing responsibilities equally.
Love is the reason for life

From This Day Forward

From this day forward, let us laugh together, and plan together,
let us find our favorite places, and go together...
Let us enjoy the sunshine, and the rain,
being alone together, and in crowds together...
From this day forward, together,
Let us love!

Let Us Walk Together

Let us walk together yet not as one, but such that our shadows are separate and distinct, such that our souls are unbound and free. Let us share our time, yet do not give all your time, nor take all of mine for in order to develop to the fullest, to be free, we must have solitude and individuality.
Let me wander in solitude, when I need to be alone, yet be near, when I need you. Let us share our love. Give freely of your love, but do not smother me, my soul must breathe a free air. Take my love, but do not demand it, for love given of obligation, is stale and without life. Let us share our lives.
Share my life, but do not try to shape it. Let me share your life, but do not let it revolve around me. Let us share ourselves. Accept me as I am, do not attempt to change me to fit your dreams. Respect me for what I am, not for what I was or one day may be. Share yourself with me, but do not allow me to limit your freedom or bind your soul. Let us share our minds, thoughts, goals, values and dreams. Let us develop these within ourselves without restriction or loss of freedom
Thus our two free souls, may wander together as they develop in freedom.
As we share our lives, as we walk through life together, know my love is yours, but not my soul for it must be free.

Navajo Prayer

When you were children, you talked like children, But now that you've grown, you should be done with childish things and put them away. When you were children, you looked into a mirror that gave only a blurred reflection of reality. But with love and maturity, you shouldn't be afraid to look into that mirror and see each other face to face. Be swift like the wind in loving each other. Be brave like the sea in loving each other. Be gentle like the breeze in loving each other. Be patient like the sun who waits and watches the four changes of the earth in loving each other. Be wise like the roaring of the thunder clouds and lightning in loving each other. Be shining like the morning dawn in loving each other. Be proud like the tree who stands without bending in loving each other. Be brilliant like the rainbow colors in loving each other. Now, forever, forever, there will be no more loneliness because your worlds are joined together with the world. Forever, forever.

Anne Morrow Lindburgh:

"When you love someone you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. The only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity, in freedom, in the sense that dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what was in nostalgia, nor forward to what might be in dread or anticipation, but living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. One must accept the security of the winged life, of ebb and flow, of intermittency."

Blessings For A Marriage

~ James Dillet Freeman ~

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding. May you always need one another - not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you to know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete; the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it. So let it be with you and you.

May you need one another, but not out of weakness.

May you want one another, but not out of lack.

May you entice one another, but not compel one another.

May you embrace one another, but not out encircle one another.

May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the little graces.

May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!" and take no notice of small faults.

If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back.

May you enter into the mystery, which is the awareness of one another's presence - no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are side-by-side, and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or even distant cities. May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy.

May you have love, and may you find it loving one another.

Excerpt from The Bridge Across Forever

(Richard Bach)

A soul mate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we're pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we're safe in our own paradise. Our soul mate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we're two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we've found the right person. Our soul mate is the one who makes life come to life.

Marriage Joins Two People In The Circle Of Its Love

Edmund O'Neill

Marriage is a commitment to life, the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other relationship can equal. It is a physical and an emotional joining that is promised for a lifetime.

Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. And there may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child.

Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller, memories are fresher, commitment is stronger, even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly.

Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing a love that is deeper than life. When two people pledge their love and care for each other in marriage, they create a spirit unique unto themselves, which binds them, closer than any spoken or written words.

Marriage is a promise, a potential made in the hearts of two people who love each other and takes a lifetime to fulfill.

On Love~

By Thomas Kempis ~

Love is a mighty power,
a great and complete good.
Love alone lightens every burden, and makes rough places smooth.
It bears every hardship as though it were nothing, and renders
all bitterness sweet and acceptable.

Nothing is sweeter than love,
Nothing stronger,
Nothing higher,
Nothing wider,
Nothing more pleasant,
Nothing fuller or better in heaven or earth; for love is born of God.

Love flies, runs and leaps for joy.
It is free and unrestrained.
Love knows no limits, but ardently transcends all bounds.
Love feels no burden, takes no account of toil,
attempts things beyond its strength.

Love sees nothing as impossible,
for it feels able to achieve all things.
It is strange and effective,
while those who lack love faint and fail.

Love is not fickle and sentimental,
nor is it intent on vanities.
Like a living flame and a burning torch,
it surges upward and surely surmounts every obstacle.

What Is Love~

Author Unknown ~

Sooner or later we begin to understand that love is more than verses on valentines and romance in the movies. We begin to know that love is here and now, real and true, the most important thing in our lives. For love is the creator of our favorite memories and the foundation of our fondest dreams. Love is a promise that is always kept, a fortune that can never be spent, a seed that can flourish in even the most unlikely of places. And this radiance that never fades, this mysterious and magical joy, is the greatest treasure of all - one known only by those who love.

True Love

Author Unknown

True love is a sacred flame
That burns eternally,
And none can dim its special glow
Or change its destiny.
True love speaks in tender tones
And hears with gentle ear,
True love gives with open heart
And true love conquers fear.
True love makes no harsh demands
It neither rules nor binds,
And true love holds with gentle hands
The hearts that it entwines.

Art of Marriage by William Peterson

The little things are the big things.
It is never being too old to hold hands.
It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day.

It is never going to sleep angry.
It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with
the honeymoon,
it should continue through all the years.

It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives.
It is standing together facing the world.
It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family.
It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in
the spirit of joy.

It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful
ways.
It is not expecting the husband to wear a halo or the wife to have wings of an
angel.
It is not looking for perfection in each other.

It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humor.
It is having the capacity to forgive and forget.
It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow.

It is finding room for the things of the spirit.
It is a common search for the good and the beautiful.
It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal,
dependence is mutual and the obligation is reciprocal.
It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

Celtic Wedding Blessing

May your mornings bring joy and your evenings bring peace.
May your troubles grow few as your blessings increase.
Be no worse than the happiest day of your past.
May your hands be forever clasped in friendship
And your hearts joined forever in love.
Your lives are very special,
God has touched you in many ways.
May his blessings rest upon you
And fill all your coming days.

These I Can Promise **Author Unknown**

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine;
I cannot promise riches, wealth, or gold;
I cannot promise you an easy pathway
That leads away from change or growing old.

But I can promise all my heart's devotion;
A smile to chase away your tears of sorrow;
A love that's ever true and ever growing;
A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

This Day I Married My Best Friend **Author Unknown**

This day I married my best friend
...the one I laugh with as we share life's wondrous zest,
as we find new enjoyments and experience all that's best.
...the one I live for because the world seems brighter
as our happy times are better and our burdens feel much lighter.
...the one I love with every fiber of my soul.
We used to feel vaguely incomplete, now together we are whole.

A Good Wedding Cake

Author Unknown

4 lb. of love.

1 lb. butter of youth.

1/2 lb. of good looks.

1 lb. sweet temper.

1 lb. of blindness for faults.

1 lb. of self forgetfulness.

1 lb. of pounded wit.

1 lb. of good humour.

2 tablespoons of sweet argument.

1 pint of rippling laughter.

1 wine glass of common sense.

1 oz. modesty.

Put the love, good looks and sweet temper into a well furnished house. Beat the butter of youth to a cream, and mix well together with the blindness of faults. Stir the pounded wit and good humour into the sweet argument, then add the rippling laughter and common sense. Work the whole together until everything is well mixed, and bake gently for ever.

Why Marriage? by Mari Nichols

Because to the depths of me, I long to love one person,
With all my heart, my soul, my mind, my body...

Because I need a forever friend to trust with the intimacies of me,
Who won't hold them against me,
Who loves me when I'm unlikable,
Who sees the small child in me, and
Who looks for the divine potential of me...

Because I need to cuddle in the warmth of the night
With someone who thanks God for me,
With someone I feel blessed to hold...

Because marriage means opportunity
To grow in love in friendship...

Because marriage is a discipline
To be added to a list of achievements...

Because marriages do not fail, people fail
When they enter into marriage
Expecting another to make them whole...

Because, knowing this,
I promise myself to take full responsibility
For my spiritual, mental and physical wholeness

I create me, I take half of the responsibility for my marriage
Together we create our marriage...

Because of this understanding
The possibilities are limitless.

Prayers

The Lords' Prayer (Option 1)

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallow be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

Prayer (Option 2)

Let us Pray: Dear God, thank you for this joyous day. Thank you for Your Light that has entered _____ life. Thank you for all the miracles and blessings. Please bless this union. Help Dianne and Byron find the perfect place in this world for their love to flourish. Let the radiant light of their love shine on all those around them. May all their future creations be blessed. God, bless them with the inner gifts of trust, compassion, forgiveness and truth that they may live and grow together in love and peace. Amen.

Prayer (Option 3)

Father of mankind, whose nature is love, look with favor upon this woman and this man who desire to make their vows before you. We are grateful for the providence that has led to this union. Grant this to be more than an outward union, but also the blending of hearts and spirits and purposes. Bless each with the inward qualities of integrity, trust, cooperation and forgiveness, that they may live together in love and peace. Amen.