

Why Go to Weddings?

QUESTION: *I go to the church for a wedding because I'd be embarrassed to only show up at the reception. Why go to weddings? No offense, but aren't they kind of boring?*

ANSWER

When, I read the question from this person, I thought to myself: "Gee, it must have been a thrill having such a party pooper dusting off a pew at the wedding." But, all kidding aside, when you get an invitation to a wedding, do you groan at the thought of having to sit through a boring ceremony before feeling entitled to go to the reception where all the fun is? Well, if that is what you secretly think, thanks for being honest, and now let us look at why it is important for you to go to the wedding.

1. **WHAT IS MARRIAGE?** Why do people marry? If it is simply because they are lonely, or want to put 2 incomes together for a better life, then they are two individuals living at the same address, but not really married.

- Marriage is defined, whether you think in terms of theology, philosophy, sociology, or law, as the consent that a couple makes to one another on their wedding day, the "I DO" that is the heart of the ceremony.
- This consent, this marital vow, is not a boring, stagnant legal contract carved in stone that reduces their freedom by locking them into a relationship.
- No. Instead, it is a living, breathing commitment to ongoing growth with one another. As I said above, it is a protective bubble surrounding the couple, keeping interference out and intimacy in, thereby giving their relationship enough power to help each other grow to become more fully who they are meant to be, no matter what life may have in store for them.

2. **WHY HAVE A WEDDING?** The reason that you should come to the wedding ceremony is to experience a double gift: one for the couple and one for you.

a. **A Gift for Them:** As life has more than a few bumps built into it, you are there to offer your support to your friends whenever they might hit a rough time in their marriage. Just as they are committed to each other, you are committed to them, not out of duty, but out of love. They will receive a number of gifts on their wedding day, but the main one that will not rust or fade, or end up at the back of a closet collecting dust, is your love.

b. **A Gift for You:** But wait, there is also a gift for you! The reason that marriage is a *sacrament* is that marriage is a *sign* of how much God loves you. We cannot see God, and hence, we need sacraments or signs to help us see in the material world what we cannot see in the spiritual one.

- If you ever wondered whether God loved you, take a long hard look at the couple being married. While they are nervous, they also are very much in love. You can see it in how they talk about and look at each other.

- God loves you as deeply as that. If you were to stand at the Pearly Gates today and worry if you would gain entry into heaven, and then discovered that your spouse was on the other side and could decide whether or not you get in, you would probably relax instantly, as you know he or she would immediately admit you. Why? Because they love you.
- Well, God loves you that much and more. So, when your cynical self leaves the church, and when doubt inevitably creeps into your soul as to whether God really cares, remember the love you saw between your friends at their wedding. Relish the gift they gave you: knowing that God loves you very, very much!