

Church - The Bride of Christ



IN - helping a sense of belonging...

Opening Question:

Think about a Marriage Ceremony you have been to, what effort had been put in by the bride / groom - maybe share some photos!. What happened at the Ceremony? What did you think about the event?

UP - hearing from God and growing...

Biblical background - when Paul wrote about marriages, he had in mind the Jewish customs & ceremonies. On your own take a few minutes to read *Gen 24* or *Gen 29:14-30* as examples of ancient marriage. There were 3 elements

1. Entering the COVENANT - betrothed = contractually & legally married. (not the same as engagement)
2. Physical UNITY - once requirements of contract met - husband goes to his wife's family home & marriage consummated. Husband takes bride to the celebration
3. Wedding CELEBRATION - at the new home.

Just as today there were clearly defined roles that the groom & bride play: The groom - invited the bride, paid the bridal price, prepared a home. The bride - remained faithful and pure for the betrothal period.

From the Ephesians passage what role does Christ play? What role does the church play?

Why do you think the marriage imagery is used to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church?

What strikes you, what questions does it raise?

OUT - impacting others...

At weddings a lot of the attention is on the bride! One of the brides key responses to the love of the husband is beauty and purity.

We are invited to live lives that are beautiful, attractive to others, and express purity. Are you facing challenges where living beautifully and with purity is a real struggle? **Take time to pray for one another that in these areas we will live radiant lives.**

BIBLE READING:

Ephesians 5:25-32 (NIV)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body. ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about Christ and the church.