

NEW HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
QUEENSBURY, NY

**Marriage Preparation Process**

(approx. 6-9 months)

I. Early Preparation: (approx. 3 months)

**Before meeting with a pastor for pre-marital counseling, the couple has participated in at least one marriage/family Growth Group together. (If one is currently not offered, the Growth Group does not have to be marriage-related.)\***

II. The Review Session: (1 session)

After the couple has been in a group together, reviews New Hope's marriage information, and decides to enter into that process of preparation, the pastor and couple meet and get to know one another and determine if there are any difficulties or issues that would be substantial obstacles in achieving a successful, God-honoring marriage. The couple then has the opportunity to decide whether to commit to New Hope's marriage preparation process. If they do, the remaining discussion sessions will be scheduled.

III. The Discussion Sessions: (approx. 6 sessions – 1/month)

A pastor helps the couple prepare for building a successful Christian home. The couple must do 2 chapters per month in the workbook "Before You Say I Do".

IV. The Final Planning Session: (1 session)

The objective of this session is to finalize the marriage ceremony and the details of the wedding itself. These details will be discussed throughout this process but finalized at this last session.

\*The reason for step 1, being a part of a Growth Group together: We believe that you need to establish a broad-base of support for your lives, especially in God's family, in order to prepare fully for marriage. Also, this gives the couple the opportunity to experience life with others and be interacting with God's family together before marriage.

## Wedding overview

The goal of every couple considering marriage must be to have a successful and permanent union as well as a meaningful and happy home. God gave the first bride away, performed the first wedding ceremony, and sanctified (made holy & special) the first home. Since He is the Founder, the Designer, the Builder, and the Keeper of the marriage relationship, any marriage that is outside His plan and purpose for marriage will not satisfactorily achieve its goal. *In fact, it is the belief of this church that it is impossible to have a successful and happy home apart from God or His will, as revealed in the Bible.*

Couples who seek a pastor to marry them and for a church to be involved should do so because they desire a Christian wedding. In doing so, they are expressing that they want their marriage and the ceremony to be an expression of worship that recognizes God as the Foundation, Builder, and Sustainer of their marriage. Accordingly, this church only performs those weddings in which the marriages securely rest upon Biblical principles and recognize God's rightful place in the home. If these principles are not applicable, the church could not be a part of the marriage ceremony. If this should be the case, the couple should understand that while marriage is divinely ordained, conducting wedding ceremonies are not a mandatory part of the church's or the pastor's divine call. Therefore, when we participate, we do so as a decision for which we are responsible before God. We will exercise care to neither refuse what we believe God permits nor permit what we believe God refuses.

Considering this, the church/pastor will be pleased to perform marriages that are built upon Biblical principles and which are believed to have every reason to succeed. In order to assist couples in understanding these principles, the church requests that they both agree to attend a series of marriage preparation sessions.

*Every effort will be made to cover all that is necessary to prepare the couple for their marriage during these sessions, but if necessary, additional sessions may be scheduled.*

*When the sessions are satisfactorily completed, the church believes that it will have exercised due care in assisting the couples in beginning a wonderful, loving relationship which will be blessed by God as they seek to obey His will and to fulfill His purposes for their lives.*

## Preliminary considerations

Important areas to consider before moving forward with New Hope for your marriage preparation:

*1). When one of the parties is not a Christian.*

-II Cor. 6:14-18 (“Do not be bound together with unbelievers.”)

-I Cor. 7:39 (“...Only in the Lord” is marriage to take place.)

- a). If one party is not a Christian but desires to become one, that should be settled prior to considering marriage further.
- b). The pastor would be pleased to assist in this most important and eternal matter. Only after this decision is given priority should the couple should then prayerfully consider moving forward with marriage.

*2). When either party has been previously married and their partner is still living and unmarried.*

-I Cor. 7:10-11, 39; Matt. 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12; Mark 16:18;  
Rom. 7:2-3; Deut. 24:1-4

- a). In general, God desires reconciliation of marriages, and New Hope would not want to be a part of closing the door on that happening.
- b). Extreme cases of unfaithfulness (adultery or desertion) may be considered on a case by case basis.
- c). This, of course, does not apply to widows or widowers who are considering remarriage (I Cor. 7:39) or where the former spouse has remarried (Deut. 24:1-4). In those cases, clearly, there is freedom to remarry.

*3). When there is not unity in the area of church life.*

- a). A divided church life is not conducive to a strong Christian home (Mark 3:25). A couple is not “one” when they are not united in their church life (Gen. 2:24).

\*Under most circumstances, New Hope will only perform weddings which involve at least one member of New Hope. If the couple already has a church home somewhere else, it would seem that the couple would want their own pastor(s) to lead in this special time. If they do not already have a church family, the couple needs to decide upon one before they enter marriage in order to build their lives together on the strongest possible

foundation. If the couple believes that New Hope may be the place that they feel led to make their church home, a pastor would be glad to speak with them about this. However, this area should be considered before continuing on with marriage preparation.

*4). The couple should be willing to commit to refrain from a sexual relationship from this point until the wedding day.*

*5). If the couple has been living together before the marriage, the parties should be willing to live separately until their wedding night.*

a). The church understands that this can bring about challenges for the couple, especially if they have already been living together. However, this provides a great opportunity to make that right and show the Lord and others that you now want to honor Him with your home moving forward.

*6). The whole atmosphere of the ceremony should be one of worship and praise to God.*

a). Therefore, the music chosen for the rehearsal, ceremony and reception should be appropriate for a Christian wedding.

b). Although there are many different opinions about the topic of alcohol, it is this church's belief that, in order for this marriage ceremony to be a time of worship and to bring honor to God's name, there should be no alcohol involved in the rehearsal, ceremony, or reception.

(If the reception is off-site, the couple may choose to have alcohol at their reception, but this would be highly discouraged by the pastors as this could potentially hurt the testimony of the couple or affect the focus of the wedding as an occasion of worship and Godly celebration.)

-Where any of the above obstacles exist, we encourage the couple to carefully evaluate the difficulties these things would pose to their potential marriage.

-Should the couple desire to continue with their plans to marry where these circumstances exist, a pastor would need to have a conversation with the couple to explore how God might be at work in their particular situation.

-Provided there are none of the above situations which cannot be resolved, nor any other issues which would prove detrimental to a successful Christian wedding and marriage, the counseling sessions would be scheduled.

# Building Use: Wedding Ceremony and Reception Guidelines

New Hope Community Church

*\*The following are wedding and reception specific guidelines.*

*\*Please also be sure to review "General Guidelines" for building use as well.*

Our intention is to honor God above all, so all of this information comes from that perspective. New Hope reserves the right to make adjustments to these Guidelines as necessary to accomplish that goal.

## Wedding Ceremony:

- New Hope would need a full copy of the wedding ceremony including any music that will be used, vows that will be said, and people who will be involved in the ceremony *1 month before the wedding date.*
- Music during any portion of the ceremony would need to be conducive to worship and glorifying to the Lord. It would not necessarily have to be considered "Christian" music if it celebrates life and love in a way that would honor God. (i.e. "From this Moment," etc).
- In order for a minister who is not a part of new hope to perform a wedding ceremony in the building, they must be in agreement with the faith and practice of New Hope Community Church.

## Wedding Reception:

- All music be approved *1 week before the event.* While these songs are not limited to Christian music, we do ask that all music would be appropriate and not a *dishonor* to the Lord.
- Alcohol would not be allowed in the facility or on the property.
- Fun, clean dancing is allowed (i.e. Father/Daughter dance, Bride/Groom dance, typical group song dances [electric slide], etc.), but it would be the responsibility of the ones using the building to make sure the dancing fits those guidelines.

We have read and agree to these parameters if we use New Hope's facility for our wedding and/or reception.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Groom

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Bride

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Building Use General Guidelines

## New Hope Community Church

*\*The following are general for facility usage. Some events (such as weddings) have event specific guidelines that you would need to be aware of and agree to in order to use the facility.*

Our intention is to honor God above all, so all of this information comes from that perspective. New Hope reserves the right to make adjustments to these Guidelines as necessary to accomplish that goal.

### General Building Responsibilities:

1. **New Hope Member.** If one of the responsible parties is a member of New Hope, use of the facilities would just need to be coordinated with the rest of the church calendar.
2. **Non- Member.** If none of the responsible parties are members of New Hope, usage of the facility is evaluated on a quarterly basis. While we do want to be a resource and blessing to the community, our purpose is not for the facility to be used regularly for rental purposes but to be available for ministry.
  - The standard fee for building usage for non-members is \$10 per hour.
  - This is only to cover the costs the church family would incur as a result of building use.
3. **Tables/Chairs.** We *do not* currently have a large supply of folding chairs or tables that can be made available for events.
4. **Media.** In order to use any media equipment for an event (sound, projector, etc), a New Hope media specialist will be required (additional fee: \$50 per day up to 4hrs + \$10/hr for any additional hrs.)
5. **Set up/Clean Up.** Correct set up and clean up is the responsibility of those using the facility (this includes the multi-purpose room, side room, class rooms, youth room bathrooms, and any other spaces used).

#### **ALL SPACES**

- Free of debris
- Garbage cans emptied
- Trash taken to dumpster
- Vacuum (if necessary)

#### **KITCHEN**

- Dishes washed, put away
- Leftover food removed
- Food given for weekend fellowship, label and cover
- Sweep, mop
- DISHWASHER/OVEN/STOVE arrange for use prior to event

#### **CLASSROOMS**

- Tables and chairs set up
- Room straightened
- Vacuum (if necessary)
- Windows locked, blinds down

#### **BATHROOMS**

- Check each stall for cleanliness
- Wipe down sink
- Toilets flushed
- Garbage changed
- No debris on floor
- Sweep, mop (if necessary)

#### **SUPPLIES**

- All supplies can be found in the back storage room.
- Please return all items to the location you found them.

#### **BEFORE YOU LEAVE**

- Check every door in the building to ensure it is closed all the way and locked.
- After locking front doors and **PRIOR** to leaving, the alarm must be activated.

6. **Damages.** Group is responsible for any damages that occur from their use and/or misuse of the facility. *(equipment used for events will be inspected by a New Hope representative before the event/after the event)*
7. **Custodian.** The custodian for New Hope could possibly be available to do the final cleaning. Under normal circumstances, the fee would be \$50. In extreme situations requiring unusual clean-up, an additional fee could be required after the event.
8. The building must be ready for church family use on Saturdays by 3:00pm and would not be available Sundays.

# Building Use Application

New Hope Community Church

Name(s) of Responsible Parties:

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Information of Responsible Party:

Address:

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail:

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Event:

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Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Anticipated #:

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Description of Event & Use of Building:

I/We have read and agree to the "Building Use: General Guidelines" if we use New Hope's facility for our event.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Responsible Party

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Additional Responsible Party