

Millennials still value marriage with almost three quarters of those who are unmarried (72%) intending to tie the knot, according to new research by the Church of England.

While official figures recently showed a decline in the marriage rate, a study commissioned by the Church of England's Life Events team suggests that 18-to-35-year-olds still dream of having their big day.

More than 1,000 unmarried young people were asked about factors that would influence their wedding plans for the research.

Among those who were single, almost six in 10 (59%) said that they would like to marry at some point. Just over one in 10 (12%) of respondents said they were engaged and planning their upcoming nuptials.

Significantly, the survey also suggests that millennials attach a special importance to church weddings, with more young people preferring to marry in a church or chapel (47%) than a register office/town hall (34%).

Those who would consider a church wedding were asked why it appealed to them from a list of options. Almost a third said that it felt like a 'proper' wedding (31%). Marrying before God or receiving a blessing, was also in the top 10 (the seventh most chosen option). Millennials were also strongly drawn to 'traditional/conventional' wedding venues (72%).

The research shows that for those considering marriage, almost one in six (17%) said that faith or religion had influenced their wedding ideas.

The survey also shows that of those hoping to marry, just under half (43%) had thought about their wedding day by the time they reached 16.

Women were more likely to have envisioned their wedding by that age (54%) than men (32%).

The Rev Dr Sandra Millar, The Church of England's Head of Life Events said: "It's encouraging to see that young people are still thinking and planning for a wedding.

"Research suggests marriage is seen as the 'crown' on a long-term relationship, and despite the fact that many may be delaying or choosing not to marry at all, the idea of a special, beautiful wedding day is still one of life's big dreams.

"For many a church wedding is still part of fulfilling that dream, in churches throughout England."

9Dot-Research originally sampled 1,085 unmarried people between the ages of 18 and 35 on 14th and 15th November 2017. 7% of the original sample stated they 'had no intention of ever being married' and were excluded leaving 1,012.