

Prayers are a big part of what makes a church wedding unique. It's not just the vicar who prays – everyone gets involved.

The bride and groom standing in front of the altar holding hands

In the church we believe that God is alive, loves us and answers our prayers. So prayer is our greatest gift to the couple, and it can be yours too.

Before the wedding

Prayers are said in church a few weeks before the big day when the couple's banns are read out. This happens in three separate church services during the three months before the wedding date. It may also happen in more than one church, but always in the parish where the couple presently live, as well as in the church where they're getting married. If you live locally to any of those churches, going with the couple to their banns readings and joining in with the prayers is a lovely way to show your support.

On the day

If you're going to a wedding, you will pray with the vicar and everyone else as part of the service. You might even have been asked to lead the prayers, or say a special prayer for the couple. The vicar will be happy to guide you on this.

Keep praying

Long after the wedding day, prayer is a gift you can keep on giving. You can pray for the bride and groom in the good times, for example if they move to a new home, start new jobs or their family grows with the arrival of a baby. You can pray on their anniversaries. And they will need your prayers during the tough times which inevitably arise in any lifetime.

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Here are just a few examples of simple prayers you might like to use at different times:

A prayer for those just engaged

Loving God, We thank you for the journey on which you have led [bride's name] and [groom's name] to bring them together. On this happy engagement day, as they celebrate their love, and begin to plan their wedding day, we pray that you will give them wisdom and joy, surround them with good friends and wise advice, and help them to know more of your great love for them. In Jesus's name, Amen

The night before the wedding

Loving God, give [bride's name] peace this night and be close to [groom's name] who will become her husband tomorrow; surround all those we love with your love, especially [name of someone who may need special prayer on this day]. Bless all those who will play a part, whether at the church or at the reception, and help everyone to work together so this is truly a day of love and joy. In Jesus's name, Amen

A prayer for the first anniversary

Father God, thank you for always keeping [bride's name] and [groom's name] in your care. As they celebrate their first wedding anniversary, we pray it will be a time of joy and happiness. Surround them with your loving protection, so that their love for each other, and for you, may grow stronger, year after year. Amen

Also in this section

Lots of wedding guests sitting in pews

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What to expect as a guest

A man in a suit reading from the lectern at the front of a church

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Doing a reading

Five bridesmaids sitting in a pew

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Being a bridesmaid

Groomsmen and a best man laughing with the groom outside the church

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Being a "best man"

The groom greets the ushers outside church

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Being an usher

A bridesmaid signing the official paperwork at a wedding

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Being a witness

Children dressed for a wedding holding hands

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Welcoming children

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