

Marriage and Family Life

Issues relating to Christian beliefs about the family, marriage, and sexual relationships.

Marriage and Quasi-Marriage relationships

- Marriage – the legal union of one man and one woman
- Cohabitation – a couple who live together without being married
- Christianity teaches that marriage is preferable to cohabitation, and that a relationship should be based on love and fidelity.
- Pre-marital sex and adultery are generally seen as wrong.

The Marriage Service

- Exchanging vows
- Exchanging rings
- Seeking God's blessing
- Asking God to be present throughout the marriage
- Religious services usually take place in church
- Civil weddings take place in a place registered for marriages.
- Roman Catholic priests are required to remain celibate

The Religious Significance of Marriage

- It is a sacrament
- It mirrors the relationship between God/Christ and the church
- Some churches will not marry non-Christians

Marriage is for:

- Companionship
- Sexual relationship
- Having children – if desirable and possible

Divorce

- In principle, Christianity discourages divorce
- Strict Roman Catholics permit annulment only
- Some churches do not permit divorcees to marry again in church
- Divorce is legally granted on the grounds of irretrievable breakdown, separation or desertion.
- An increasing number of Christians recognise that divorce may be the best thing for some couples

The Family

- Nuclear Family
- Extended Family
- Single Parent Family
- Re-constituted Family

Relationships within the family

- Obedience and responsibility
- Support and protection
- Children and parents
- Adult children and parents

Homosexuality

- A sexual orientation towards people of the same sex
- Civil Partnerships Act 2005
- Equal rights for homosexual couples
- Many Christians object to homosexual behaviour on the grounds that it is condemned in the Bible
- Others claim that it is natural, not sinful
- Many homosexual men and women want to be fully accepted into the church and have been very hurt by opposition to them.