

## **Premarital Counseling at Green Acres Baptist Church**

If a Green Acres Baptist Church minister will be officiating your ceremony, please contact him and he will advise you concerning the premarital counseling requirements. If your officiating minister is not from Green Acres Baptist Church, please contact the Marriage & Family Ministry office at 903-533-1817.

### **We Believe...**

We believe marriage is a sacred union by God.

We believe it should not be entered into lightly and that much thought and consideration should be taken.

We believe both partners should be believers in our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Bible clearly states that both partners are to be "equally yoked" (2 Corinthians 6:14)

We believe divorce not only impacts our Church body, but it affects the body of Christ as a whole. It also has the ability to affect the future generation of families that follow.

We believe we are responsible to do all we possibly can to ensure that couples who wish to marry at Green Acres Baptist Church are adequately prepared for this commitment.

Therefore, we require all couples that intend to marry at Green Acres to receive marriage counseling. This can be done in one of four ways. (see Accepted Counseling Methods below)

### **Accepted Counseling Methods**

1. Join and actively participate in the Nearly/Newlywed Class taught at 9:30 on Sunday mornings. This will be a four-month commitment that is taught 2 times per year. (Spring/Fall) This is the best and most exciting way to begin the lifetime journey of knowing and understanding your partner. You must attend 80% of the classes in order to qualify for being married here at Green Acres.
2. Meet individually with one of our ministers for no less than 5 hours of counseling. Besides the Prepare and Enrich evaluation, for first time marriages, this will include working through the Saving Your Marriage Before It Begins book by Dr. Les and Leslie Parrott. These will be one-hour sessions. Please contact the Marriage & Family Ministry Office by email or phone 903-525-1109 to schedule these appointments. The individual counseling must begin at least three months prior to the wedding date. This method is popular with second and blended family marriages.
3. Have counseling done with the required amount of hours by another minister or professional marriage counselor. If you desire a minister or counselor outside of Green Acres to do your premarital counseling they must send a letter verifying those intentions. A letter from the minister or counselor should be also sent upon completion of the counseling. It should be addressed to the Marriage & Family Ministry, Green Acres Baptist Church, 1607 Troup Hwy., Tyler, TX 75701.

### **Prepare and Enrich Evaluation**

All couples will be required to take the Prepare and Enrich Marriage Evaluation. For couples who have children, the Prepare MC Inventory will be given. The cost of this evaluation is \$30. When you are ready to proceed, please contact the GraceWorks office at 903-533-1817, and our administrative assistant will inform you on how to take the online profiles. Scoring the profiles usually take about two weeks. Once you have filled out the online profiles, contact the GraceWorks office to set up your appointments. There is a fee for those who are not members of Green Acres Baptist Church. After evaluating the test scores, one of our counselors will meet with you concerning the results. This evaluation is NOT a pass or fail test. It is designed to give you additional insight and understanding into yourself and the person you are marrying. It also provides specific assignments designed to help strengthen your relationship and prepare you for a successful marriage.

### **Couples Living Together**

Green Acres will not accept applications from couples who are living together or who plan to live together prior to their wedding. Living together prior to marriage disregards God's plan for a healthy committed marital relationship and increases the likelihood of future marital problems that leads to divorce. If a couple has been living together, they should find separate residences before submitting their application and maintain separate residences until after the wedding ceremony. Refusal to adhere to this standard will make all reservations of Green Acres Baptist Church space and service null and void. Any minister will be happy to counsel couples concerning this policy.

### **Outside Ministers Performing or Assisting in the Service**

Only ordained, evangelical ministers will be permitted to perform a wedding ceremony at Green Acres Baptist. If you wish to have another minister (regardless of denomination) to assist or officiate at the wedding, the invitation should come from the minister officiating here at Green Acres. This is a proper procedure in all churches. Please discuss this with your minister before any invitation is given to any other members of the clergy.

### **A Special Note**

All other extenuating circumstances that would preclude you from getting counseling before the marriage must be stated in writing and agreed upon by the Pastors of Green Acres Baptist Church.