

The Role of Officiant/Presider and the Offering of a Stipend

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Large or small, traditional or unconventional, spiritual, religious, or secular - you deserve a wedding ceremony that will always be remembered. Since I offer a ministry as an officiant, I recognize that you are inviting me into an intimate life-moment.

It is important to me that you to see me in my role as presider at your wedding as one you know you can trust to assist not only in composing your ceremony and in leading you through this special moment of life, as you proclaim your love publicly before all your family and friends, but also in offering you way to prepare for marriage. That trust relationship is a role I accept as sacred in serving as officiant. You are seeking someone you know will assist you to make the public nature of your proclamation of love not only unique to you, but also a beautiful moment!

Conversation Before Any Consideration of Stipend

In this ministry, in our first conversation, couples have the opportunity to see what a unique approach is offered to them to create a wedding ceremony that is their own, rather than a "canned" service. And only after that first discussion, do couples consider what gift is appropriate. Whatever they offer has always been well within their wedding budget, and most assuredly considerably less than the services demanded by vendors. And when one considers that the services of the presider/officiant are essential to having a wedding--unlike all the services offered by vendors--whatever is offered might be called a "bargain."

Incidentally, as your presider, it is my responsibility to complete the marriage license you obtain from the Town in which your wedding take place and return it to be officially certified by the legal authority, making the wedding legally recognized. Most municipalities indicate on their websites that there is a four-week turn-around time for registering and returning to you the certified marriage registration of your marriage. Following your wedding, you may obtain that from the office of the Town/City Clerk of the municipality in which your wedding took place.

First, the Initial Meeting with No Obligation

Once we have arranged to meet at a mutually convenient venue, our conversation gives both you and me the opportunity to feel comfortable with one another. Meeting with bride and groom also helps me understand how I can better assist them in making your wedding ceremony everything you want it to be.

You can be assured that meeting together puts neither you nor me under any obligation to accept each another for the special relationship implied in the role of you as the marrying couple and me as your presider.

Then the Agreement and Stipend Consideration

We enter into an agreement only after meeting and reviewing together what kind of wedding

For those wanting to know what to offer as stipend, it may help to know that most couples have offered between \$400 and \$800 for the intensive collaboration offered in the process of their wedding ceremony composition. In this way couples show their appreciation and the level of confidence they've had in my work. If I could offer these services gratis, that would be my desire. However, the stipend offering allows me to dedicate time and effort to a couple, accept serving as officiant at only a limited number of ceremonies each year and cover costs of resources. This also enables me to offer couples the special values of the services listed above and gives them full access to me.

To set a date I am asking for \$100.00 deposit so as to secure the time on my schedule.

I am also available for out-of-state weddings. Travel and expense fees will be negotiated.

No One Turned Away Because of Budget Limitations

Any true ministry is meant to be accessible to all who seek it. I would never want two people who love one another to conclude they could not to have me as presider because they couldn't "afford" it. In some cases, couples, because of a limited budget, have chosen to forego some of the listed services. Nor have I ever had a couple take advantage of my role of service.

It's important to me that both bride and groom feel completely comfortable with me as the person whom they are choosing to lead them through this very special moment in your lives!

Thank you for considering me as your officiant.

Padre Michael Smith