

Contents

Foreword	vii
Preface.....	ix
Introduction	1
The Wedding Timeline	4
Notes to Bride, Parents, and Groom	14
The Master List	27
Master Wedding Contacts List	28
Key Checklists	33
1. I Am My Beloved's & He Is Mine (Engagement).....	41
2. For He Shall Supply All Your Needs (The Wedding Budget)	53
3. This Is the Day (Setting a Date)	69
4. A Place Prepared (Finding a Location for Your Wedding)	87
5. Day Dreaming (Setting the Style and Tone for Your Wedding)	103
6. The Friends of the Bridegroom Rejoice (Your Wedding Party).....	115
7. Called to the Feast (Invitations)	133
8. Arrayed in Fine Linen (Wedding Apparel).....	145
9. That You May Remember (Wedding Photography).....	161
10. Set Me as a Seal (The Ceremony).....	179
11. The Wedding Feast (The Reception)	215
12. Come to My Garden (Flowers and Décor)	243
13. The Bride Has Made Herself Ready (The Week of Your Wedding)	269
14. Help! (Choosing People to Coordinate Your Wedding).....	303
15. He Has Made Everything Beautiful in Its Time (Wedding Themes from Scripture)	315
16. They Shall Become One (After the Wedding).....	331

Foreword

My husband has officiated at more weddings than we have kept track of, but I believe last time his secretary counted, and throwing in the ones since then, it was closing in on a hundred. I've attended most of those weddings, as well as many of the rehearsals and rehearsal dinners. I've even played the part of "go girl" many times. (That's what we call the person who stands at the door and tells the bridesmaids, "Go!") So I guess you could say, I've seen it all when it comes to Christian weddings.

I've also seen a great need for something like this wonderful Christian Wedding Planner that Amy Hayes has so carefully assembled. Our modern secular culture has imitated the form of a Christian wedding service but has lost its perspective on what a wedding is really for. The Christian paradigm is simple and straightforward: a wedding is a beautiful and joyful celebration of the covenant of marriage, and the whole event is designed to glorify God and celebrate His goodness to us creatures.

The Christian bride has a tremendous advantage because she knows her wedding is a doorway and the house is the marriage. Her priorities are different; she's not trying to create a spectacle, but adorn a gracious ceremony. But she still needs a boat-load of help to pull this thing off, and help has arrived!

This wedding planner walks the bride through all the preparations and keeps her focused on the important things, like staying in fellowship with her groom and her parents. It's full of suggestions and ideas, with a strict time-line to keep the bride on task. I know I will recommend this helpful guide to all those planning weddings, and I think we'll keep one in the church office for check out.

Amy Hayes has been a wedding coordinator long enough to know that a bride needs to feel relaxed on the big day, and the only way that can happen is if she knows everything is ready. I remember a wedding where the bride was so exhausted from last-minute preparations that we thought she was going to collapse. This book will help get the bride down the aisle beautifully and calmly. I often tell the bride to fasten her eyes on her groom as she makes the long trek down the aisle on her father's arm. And I remind her of a line from an old hymn: "The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face."

NANCY WILSON

Preface

My husband and I have just one daughter amongst four sons. The older Grace gets the more we both anticipate and dread the day of her wedding. We anticipate a day of joy and delight. We dread coming home afterwards to a house empty of her presence brightening up our day-to-day. As she becomes more and more of a beautiful and accomplished young woman, my husband likes to jokingly threaten to lock her in her room and refuse to let her out to marry until she's at least thirty! For my part, I've decided she's just required to drop by and see me at least once a day. ☺ In truth, though, we know these are just sentimental parental daydreams we will joyfully give up long before her thirtieth birthday. The goal is to raise children who will go out and conquer the world for Christ. That means we not only have to *let*, but *encourage* them to “go out,” even when we're talking about our only daughter.

We spend the first eighteen to twenty-something years with our children, loving, training and preparing them for what God has planned for the rest of their lives. On the one hand, a child's wedding day is a somewhat bittersweet experience for the parents because he or she is leaving your family to form another. On the other hand, it is also a celebration of the culmination of all the work of parenting. From watching friends joyfully give away their daughters in marriage, I can see there is a soul-satisfying kind of joy in witnessing a daughter join the one man God has planned for her from eternity past.

I pray for and look forward to that kind of peace and satisfaction on Grace's wedding day. It is for her that I have written this planner. I wish for her wedding to be a joyful celebration and rejoicing experience from the day she meets Mr. Right to when she returns from her honeymoon.

Being a planner and thinker by nature, I have often considered how I can help make this wish a reality when the time comes. My concern is how to give her all the help she needs from me without making her feel she has to do things “my way.” So often, in my experience, the mother of the bride is the key hinge on which way the wedding day joy of the bride and groom swings. I determined early on in my parenting life that I want to be especially careful to be an extra joy to Grace and whomever she marries, not an extra burden. I've always told her that I care most about *who* she marries, not *how* she does her wedding.

As I was contemplating this a few years ago, I decided I would make a notebook. In it, I would collect all my tips and tools for wedding planning, gathered over many years of coordinating, planning, and organizing weddings for friends and family. With this, she can be free to plan her wedding any way she wants. I will have helped her without becoming just one more person on her list of people-to-keep-happy-with-my-wedding. Most brides have this list. I don't want to be on Grace's.

At some point in the midst of helping with an increasing number of weddings at our church, I started to realize that if I was going to go to all the work of making a comprehensive wedding planner for my Grace, why not do it in a form that would be useable by others? I decided to discuss my ideas with Pam Forster at Doorposts, and the end of that conversation is what you are now holding in your hands.

I hope for this planner to be a blessing not only to my daughter, but also to many mothers and daughters setting out on the joyous path of planning a wedding. Commit to giving one another joy over the next weeks and months and to glorifying God with your happiest day. Only in this way will you truly have the perfect wedding.

AMY HAYES