

**Prayers and Blessing
for X & Y
following their civil marriage**

Date

Location

Welcome and introduction

Brothers and sisters, we meet here in the presence of God to celebrate and affirm the commitment of X and Y to each other. May they, through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, commit themselves today to each other; promising to live together in love, faithfulness, trust and forgiveness. While they make this solemn covenant, we remember that our Saviour Jesus Christ shows us the path of courage and selfless love and we ask God's blessing on their lives. We join in rejoicing with them and offer them support with our love and prayers. Let us hold them in our hearts as we commit their lives to the love and grace of God.

Loving and gracious God, who made us in your image and sent your son Jesus Christ to welcome us home; protect us in love and empower us for service. Through the power of the Holy Spirit may X and Y become living signs of his love and may we uphold them in the promises that each will make this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Declaration of intent

X and Y is it your intention to enter into a solemn covenant with each other in love and trust?

It is.

Do you promise to be loyal to one another, remaining strong against all which may test your partnership?

We do

Will you give yourselves to each other wholeheartedly and without reservation?

We will

Will you, under God, recognise one another's freedom to grow as individuals, and give one another time and space to do so?

We will

Will you give each other the opportunity for your love to grow and deepen as a couple?

We will.

Do you offer your lives together for God's blessing?

We do.

The minister addresses the congregation

Will you, the family and friends of X and Y, do all in your power to support and strengthen them in the days ahead?

We will.

The Collect

God our Father, from the beginning you have blessed creation with abundant life. Pour out your blessings upon X and Y, that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship, in holiness and commitment to each other. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Reading

Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, v. 10-13; Chapter 8, v. 6-7

My beloved speaks and says to me:

‘Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away;

for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle-dove
is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one,
and come away.’

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
a raging flame.

Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.

If one offered for love
all the wealth of one’s house,
it would be utterly scorned.

The Promises

The union of two persons in heart, body and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy, for the help and comfort given to one another in prosperity and adversity; and that their love may be a blessing to all whom they encounter. This solemn covenant is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly but reverently, deliberately and with the commitment to seek God's will for their lives.

All: We rejoice with you; we are glad to share with you in the celebration of your blessing, to witness your vows, to pray with you and to wish you joy in your life together. For our part, we ask you to make your public declaration.

This blessing is a symbol of the commitment between X and Y to create a lifelong partnership based on love. I invite you to turn to each other and pledge your vows.

Repeat together:

I will cherish our friendship

And love you today, tomorrow and forever. I will trust you and honour you. I will love you faithfully through the best and the worst, through the difficult and the easy. Come what may I will always be there. As I have given you my hand to hold, so I give you my life to keep.

The blessing of the rings

Heavenly Father, source of everlasting love, revealed to us in Jesus Christ and poured into our hearts through your Holy Spirit; that love which many waters cannot quench, neither the floods drown; that love which is patient and kind, enduring all things without end; by your blessing, let these rings be to X and Y symbols to remind them of the covenant made on their wedding day, through your grace in the love of your Son and in the power of your Spirit. **Amen.**

Blessing and anointing

Faithful God,
We give you thanks for X and Y,
for the love they have for each other
that has led them to promise their faithfulness
to each other before you and this community.
Give them the strength and courage to keep the promises
they have made to each other and to you
and may their life together give them the strength
to more fully embrace themselves
that they might more fully love each other
and the world around them through Jesus Christ,
the One who teaches us how to love
and your Spirit of Hope who gives us the courage to risk
for the sake of love. **Amen.**

Prayer of Anointing.

X and Y, I anoint you in the name of God
who gives you life. Receive Christ's forgiveness,
his healing and his love.
May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
grant you the riches of his grace,
his wholeness and his peace. **Amen.**

The Prayers concluding with the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Lighting of the candle

X and Y,

you have bound your lives together in loving commitment. You have come from separate backgrounds, with your own unique personalities, strengths, and needs. The two candles represent your separate lives. Together you light the centre candle, as a sign of unity and commitment.

Our hope is that you will show human love at its fullest, and that your relationship will equip you both to bring love and compassion to each other and the world.

The two side candles representing the two individuals are lit first, and the centre candle representing the marriage is lit. The side candles are not extinguished because both individuals retain their personal identities.

The lighting of a candle for other people is a simple and ancient form of unspoken prayer. After the service is over – if you would like to light a candle for X and Y or for anyone else you care for, you will be most welcome to do so.

The dismissal

The Lord bless and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace
all the days of your life.
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be
among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**