

Timeline

This timeline is specifically designed for a 4-6 month long engagement. Engagements less than six months require a significant amount of organization and contracting for services to be done as soon as possible after the date has been set. Many vendors such as caterers and photographers, particularly the popular or good ones, are booked a year in advance. Consider a wedding scheduled on an atypical day such as a Friday evening or a Sunday afternoon to get a greater variety of vendors to choose from. Also, dress shop as soon as possible since many dresses require weeks or even months when ordered and to have time for alterations.

Please note that this timeline is only a suggestion.

5 to 6 months before your wedding

- Read church wedding policies
- Wedding date and time reserved
- Arrange and confirm with officiating pastor his ability to perform wedding
- Set dates and times for pre-marital counseling
- Select and reserve your ceremony site
- Select and reserve your reception site
- Envision the theme and atmosphere of your wedding: Formal or casual? Day or evening?
- Determine your preliminary budget. Be prepared for the reality that most people exceed their estimated wedding budget by 25%
- Decide who's paying for the wedding, or who's going to contribute.
- Immediately start wedding gown shopping
- Start your guest list
- Hire a wedding consultant, if you're using one
- Choose bridesmaids, groomsmen, and ushers
- Shop for bridesmaids dresses. If you need to order them, do this soon
- Choose men's attire and reserve tuxedos if necessary
- Meet and then contract with florist
- Meet and then contract with caterer
- Meet and then contract with photographer/videographer
- Book your musicians and/or DJ for both ceremony and reception
- Select your wedding cake designer, and order your wedding cake
- Arrange with Sound Technician to attend and work sound board
- Arrange for a tasting with your caterer
- Reserve blocks of hotel rooms for out of town guests and wedding party
- Parents meet parents. Traditionally the groom's parents make the first move to introduce themselves and extend the invitation to meet. However, if they do not do this, parents of bride need not stand on ceremony waiting but can make the first move.
- Announce your engagement— either in the newspaper, on a wedding website with an

email sent out to all your friends, or in the most traditional way, with mailed engagement announcements

2 to 4 months before your wedding

- Finalize guest list
- Send save-the-date announcements or call out of town guests to let them know the final date, time, and location of the wedding.
- Meet with florist and choose arrangements, corsages, boutonnieres, bouquets
- Plan your honeymoon
- If you're making your own favors, start doing so now.
- If you're purchasing favors, do so now
- Meet with wedding cake designers or bakers and arrange for a tasting
- Order groom's cake
- Start planning your rehearsal dinner. Give the host(s) your guest list
- If your caterer isn't doing it for you, reserve any rental equipment you'll need, including dishes, tables, chairs, linens, tents
- Register for gifts
- Meet with musicians to select music for ceremony (prelude, processional, worship, recessional, postlude)

6 weeks to 2 months before your wedding

- Mail your invitations 6 weeks prior to wedding date
- Arrange transportation
- Purchase your wedding rings
- Buy gifts for your wedding party, parents, and each other
- If you're changing into "going away outfits" before you leave the reception, purchase those now
- Choose a greeter/guest book attendants
- Arrange who will hand out programs, readers
- Apply for your marriage license (good for 60 days)

4 to 6 weeks before your wedding

- Give a list of "important shots" to your wedding photographer
- Discuss your menu with your caterer
- Meet with your officiant to discuss the order of ceremony service
- Write your vows
- Attend any wedding showers
- Think about your hair and makeup – If you're doing your own, try out hairstyles, purchase any extra makeup, think about having a "makeover party" with your girlfriends.
- Book your hairstylist and/or makeup artist, if you're using them. Meet with each of them to experiment with styles and colors
- Schedule your wedding rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- If your state requires it, make blood test appointments

- ___ Plan bridesmaids' luncheon
- ___ Choose ceremony readings
- ___ Buy guest registration book, cake knife, champagne toasting glasses
- ___ Arrange childcare for ceremony (for out of town guests only)

4 weeks to 1 week before your wedding

- ___ Have your final gown fitting at least 2 weeks before wedding. It's helpful to have a bridesmaid with you to learn how to bustle your train and fasten any tricky buttons (and help you go to the bathroom, if you've got a big dress!)
- ___ Check with your bridesmaids and groomsmen to make sure they've gotten their attire
- ___ Decide on reception order of events (toasts, dancing, cakecutting, food service, introductions, etc)
- ___ Have final meeting with officiating pastor to go over specifics of the wedding day
- ___ Meet with DJ to finalize music selections for reception; if he/she is also the Master of Ceremonies, give him/her the reception order as well as list of names of wedding party and the order they are to be introduced
- ___ If DJ is not the MC, select a confident, articulate person to do this job and give the appropriate information on reception events
- ___ Contact your vendors (caterer, officiant, cake baker, photographer, videographer, florist, musicians, transportation, hotels) to confirm date, arrival and delivery times.
- ___ Give coordinator all copies of vendor contracts
- ___ Write and print your wedding program at least one week prior to wedding.
- ___ Create welcome baskets for out-of-town guests; arrange for someone to deliver to hotels the day before the wedding
- ___ Send change-of-address information to post office
- ___ Write thank you notes as you receive gifts
- ___ Host bridesmaids luncheon
- ___ Create and finalize "responsibility cards" ([what are these things?](#)) for all members of the wedding party, family members, all significant volunteers. These cards detail what each person's responsibilities are the day of the wedding such as lighting candles, which car they are riding in to ceremony/reception, time and location of rehearsal and dinner, any after reception "jobs" such as retrieving the groom's tuxedo and returning it to store, removing the bride's wedding gown, putting gifts in a specific car. Give these cards no later than 1 week before the wedding and be sure to give a master copy to your coordinator so she can answer any questions if someone forgets their card, etc.

One week ahead (Whee! It's almost here!)

- ___ Finalize reception guest seating chart , and write place cards
- ___ Give your final head count to your caterer
- ___ Try on your wedding shoes, and wear them on carpeted surfaces around the house
- ___ Arrange for a plant waterer/pet sitter/babysitter while you are on your honeymoon
- ___ Pick up wedding gown from seamstress
- ___ Make sure you have panty hose (2 pairs) and all necessary foundation garments for

wedding

- Attend your bachelor/bachelorette parties, if you're having them
- Send your travel plans and contact information to a family member and your house sitter (in case of emergency)
- Last minute confirmation of details with all vendors
- Send attendants and family notification of rehearsal time and location
- Pack for honeymoon
- Arrange for someone to purchase communion elements and bring to ceremony. Same person should be responsible for chalice and serving plate, both bringing it and removing it after the ceremony
- Bride submits [name change form](#) to Social Security Administration
- If the bride is changing her surname to her husband's, complete all change of name documentation on bills, utilities, credit cards, driver's license
- Pay all appropriate building use fees for church to church office

The day before your wedding

- Do something to relax and enjoy the company of your out-of-town friends
- Confirm transportation
- Have a manicure and pedicure
- Rehearse ceremony
- Print out readings and give to readers at rehearsal
- Pay all appropriate honorariums to officiant, sound technician, coordinator and any others at rehearsal
- Attend rehearsal dinner
- Give your wedding party gifts at dinner
- Make sure you have the marriage license and give it the pastor

Day of Wedding

- In the midst of the excitement, be sure to eat
- Have fun! Everything has been planned and now is the time to relax and let people do their jobs.

After the Honeymoon

- Promptly write any and all thank you notes for wedding gifts and services people gave to make your wedding day special