

Marriage

The Marriage Vows

“Said I’ll always be your friend. Took an oath, I’m-a stick it out to the end”
Rihanna, “Umbrella”

Why take vows in church?

A vow (solemn promise) is said in church, before witnesses and in the sight of God. A church is a consecrated space, so you are making promises before God. This is often the part of the service which is the most moving as people say words which they will stand by for many years to come.

“Because you are married and have taken vows, this is a serious certificate to own”. Gloria, married 54 years

It is worth considering, though, what do the vows mean?

- **...to have and to hold, from this day forward**
This day is the first day of your new married life together. The journey you will take together starts right here, *from this day forward*.
- **...for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health**
No one knows when they start out what ‘for worse’ means for their marriage, but you are promising that you will stick together in good times and in bad.
- **...to love and to cherish, till death us do part**
Your marriage is for life, and legally ends when one of you passes away.
- **...all that I am I give to you, and all that I have I share with you**
Marriage is about sharing all we have – material, physical, emotional, spiritual – with someone else.

“Even though you say those words in the service, you don’t realise how important they are”. Jenny, married 10 years

For discussion:

Look at the [marriage vows](#) as they appear in the Church of England marriage service.

What do these vows mean to you?

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