

APPENDIX 14

MARRIAGE MATTERS AGREEMENT of LINN COUNTY

AFFIRMATIONS: Recognizing that pastors perform ninety percent of Iowa marriages and that there exists a divorce rate of nearly fifty- percent in my state, I affirm the following:

1. That God has established the sanctity and companionship of marriage for a man and woman and intends the bond of marriage to last a lifetime. Genesis 2:20-25, Ephesians 5:22-33, Matthew 19:6, Mal: 2:13-16.

2. That as a minister of the Gospel, called of God, it is part of my calling to foster lasting marriages that flourish through the power of God.

3. That it is the responsibility of pastors to set expectations intended to promote the quality of marriage.

4. That it is my hope and prayer to see the divorce rate in my community greatly reduced, as well as the pain that it causes to families.

AGREEMENTS: Because of my affirmations, I agree that for couples whom I marry I will:

1. Expect at least a four-month period from the initial premarital appointment until the wedding date and encourage a courtship of at least one year.

2. Expect at least six premarital counseling sessions (or equivalent) and the use of at least one premarital inventory dedicated to issues of marriage.

3. Schedule two post-marital counseling sessions in the year following the wedding with either a pastor, mentor couple, or professional counselor.

ADDITIONALLY: I further agree that I will:

1. Encourage all singles, regardless of age, to practice sexual abstinence and to not live together before marriage.

2. Offer relationship building programs and referrals for teens, singles, and married couples.
3. Recruit mature married couples with strong healthy marriages to be trained to serve as mentors and role models for couples who are seriously dating, engaged, newlyweds, or those who are experiencing difficulties.
4. Encourage married couples to attend enrichment retreats and programs throughout their married life.
5. Cooperate with other congregations and organizations to share resources and to create a climate in which all marriages are helped to succeed.

I encourage leaders of other faith communities to use this agreement in their own context to strengthen marriages.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Church: _____

Position: _____