

Wedding Etiquette

The tradition and conventions of wedding etiquette will not suit everyone but it is important to be aware of them. This explanation of who does what in the preparations and ceremony aims to enable you to make an informed decision on the best way to run your wedding day.

The Bride

The bride traditionally selects the type of service. She oversees all the preparations, which include choosing the wedding date and the church, who her attendants will be, her own dress and accessories, as well as those of the bridesmaids. She will choose the flowers, help with the guest list and seating arrangements, and attend to the many small details which will contribute to her perfect day.

The Groom

The groom has to arrange transport for himself, the bride and wedding party, as well as hiring the church and booking the honeymoon. However, this will be done with direction from his future wife. The groom chooses his best man and ushers, of which it is traditional to have three, and is conventionally given responsibility for little else! However, in reality, the bride and groom discuss most aspects of the day as it is, after all, 'their' wedding. At the reception, the groom will reply to the father of the bride's speech, thanking the bride's parents and guests, and proposing a toast to the bridesmaids.

The Best Man

Traditionally, the best man is responsible for his own dress and that of the groom. He sees that transport to the church for them both is arranged, and also organises the 'Stage Night', preferably several days or even weeks in advance, if he is to successfully fulfil his duty of escorting the groom to the church in time. On the day, the best man has to ensure that the whole day runs smoothly, primarily ensuring safe keeping of the rings. After the ceremony, he is responsible for the transportation of all the guests to the reception. The best man will speak at the reception, replying to the groom's toast to the bridesmaids, and will read out a few cards from guests unable to attend. His final responsibility of the day is to ensure that the bride and groom leave the reception in good time, and that their transport is arranged.

The Chief Bridesmaid

The chief bridesmaid is chosen by the bride to assist her during her preparations. On the day itself, it is her job to make sure that all the other attendants are in their places. She will arrange the bride's dress and veil when she arrives, ready for her entry into the church. During the service, she holds the bride's bouquet. The chief bridesmaid also signs the register, along with the best man. She is then escorted by the best man, and will be on hand all day to assist the bride.

The Ushers

The ushers greet the guests and they arrive at the church. They will distribute the service sheets and show people to their seats. If it is raining they will help escort the guests and bridal party from their cars to the church under umbrellas.

The Father of the Bride

Much of the father of the bride's responsibility lies with the financial aspect of the event, as traditionally, he pays for the bulk of the costs. Nowadays though, it is likely that the bride and groom will meet some of the expenses themselves and also a possibility that the groom's family will make some contribution. On the day, the bride will be accompanied to the church by her father, who will escort her up the aisle and give her away during the ceremony. The bride's father will sit next to the bride on the top table during the wedding breakfast, and will make the first speech, in which he proposes a toast to the bride and groom.

The Bride's Mother

The bride's mother will help her daughter with the wedding arrangements and may have a major role in the decisions taken, especially if she is contributing financially. She will compile the guest list, in consultation with the groom and his parents. She may organise the sending out of invitations, and the display of the wedding gifts. The bride's mother will not only stand proudly watching her daughter on this special day, but is there to oversee all the arrangements, as well as to stand in line to greet the guests, along with her husband.

The Grooms Parents

There is no specific traditional role for the groom's parents, but it is important that they do not feel neglected. Today, it is not unusual for the groom's parents to make a considerable contribution to organisation and payment. It is only good manners on the part of the bride, to ask their advice and approval and ensure they are included as much as possible in the preparations.