



Welcome to Soul Mates, the PreMarriage Process at Soul City Church!

If you are a newly engaged couple, then congratulations! We understand what an important and exciting time this is for you and your families. Our goal is to help you prepare for a lifelong, fulfilling and transforming marriage that both honors God and each other. The Bible clearly teaches that the institution of marriage is a gift to us from the very mind of God (**Genesis 2:24**), and is intended to last a lifetime (**Matthew 19:6**).

The premarriage process at Soul City Church is structured to walk you through a journey of discovery and growth. We want you to experience transformation in your relationship so we have thoughtfully outlined the steps along this journey. The following will give you a greater sense of what is involved in the process and introduce you to some of the principles that Soul City Church believes will help you have a growing marriage. Please know these principles are not a formula that guarantees a healthy marriage. They are simply our way of fulfilling our commitment and desire to provide you with practical and spiritual direction for a decision that will affect the rest of your life.

Research shows that the tools we use will offer you a better chance of success in the relationship that God has planned for you through marriage. Our desire is to help you highlight both areas of strength in your relationship as well as opportunities for growth. In this way, we can guide you through the preparation necessary for a happy, healthy lifetime together. It is also important for you to know that at Soul City, we take marriage very seriously and thus we are not afraid to recommend that a couple postpone their wedding plans in order to work on specific areas of their relationship.

One of the things that we are most passionate about here is that we invite and welcome everyone to our table. Modeling ourselves after what we see Jesus do in Luke 14:23, we want our community to be inclusive to everyone. Regardless of someone's race, ethnicity, past mistakes, sexuality, socioeconomic status or any other marker, we believe that you are welcome in this place and welcome at Jesus' table. Our pre-marriage course and Soul Mates curriculum is designed for heterosexual couples.

Because of the high priority we place on the gift of marriage and family, there are several key principles we ask couples to pursue in order to participate in the Soul Mates Class. Please read each principle carefully.

1. Active Pursuit of a Personal, Transformational Relationship with Jesus

At Soul City Church everyone is accepted, but everyone is expected to grow. We believe that God created us to transform and, through the power of the gospel, God changes every element of our lives from the inside out. We realize that all couples will be at different points along their transformational journey and we will discuss this openly with you. If either you or your fiancé have not made the decision to follow Jesus and allow Him to be the center of your relationship, you are welcome to attend the Soul Mates Class. It is our hope and prayer that you come to know Jesus personally and know the joy that comes from walking with Him, both as individuals, and as a vital part of your new marriage (**Romans 5:8, Romans 10:9-10, John 1:2, John 3:16, John 14:6**).

2. Regular Participation and involvement at Soul City Church

Regular participation and involvement at Soul City Church is an important part of this process. We value community and authentic relations and believe both can have a positive and transformational effect on couples that are engaged and/or married. Regular participation at weekend gatherings and involvement at Soul City Church helps us grow spiritually and answers questions for seekers or skeptics. This will help us know you and you us.

3. Preliminary Meeting with A Soul Mates Team Leader

This initial step allows for open, frank discussion about the premarriage process and an opportunity for private discussion of all the details. It is a chance for us to get to know you more personally in order to set you up for the 8-week Soul Mates Class.

4. Six months in advance of your wedding date

It is recommended and strongly encouraged that you begin the Soul Mates Process at least six months prior to your wedding date. This ensures that if areas are discovered during the mentoring process that you or your fiancé need to further work on, there will be plenty of time to do so apart from the last minute rush of wedding preparations.

5. Participation in all Mentoring & Group Classes

The Soul Mates Class will delve into the foundations and principles of an intimate, God-honoring marriage. The class includes 4 group sessions with other engaged couples and 4 mentoring sessions. Group sessions will be interactive and will cover a variety of topics. Mentoring sessions will be one-on-one with a trained mentor couple, who will help you and your fiancé dig deeper into key aspects of your relationship.

6. Pursuing Purity and Not Living Together Until Your Wedding Day

If this has not been your way of living, we challenge you to practice sexual purity from today forward, through the entire duration of the Soul Mates Class, and up until your wedding day. Sexual purity honors your fiancé and God. One of the many reasons to abstain is that God asks us to (**1 Corinthians 6:12-20, 13:5; Ephesians 5:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 13:4**). Additionally, research shows that both sexual activity and living together prior to marriage significantly decreases your chances of a successful marriage. We also challenge you to live in separate housing for the duration of your engagement. This is the most practical way for you to practice purity prior to your wedding day. Our hope is that you will prayerfully consider accepting these challenges. If needed, we would be happy to explore alternate living arrangements with you.

7. One Year, or More, From a Finalized Divorce

We understand the pain divorce can cause. We also know that the God we serve is about redemption, healing and grace. So, before you consider marrying again we ask that at least one year has passed from your finalized divorce. This will give you time to personally recover, process your loss and pain, and explore God's wisdom and direction for your life.

8. Willingness to Enter Into Relationship with a Mentor Couple

As mentioned earlier, because of the value we place on marriage, we believe this can be an enormous resource to you. We also believe that accountability is necessary if we want to transform as individuals, couples, and followers of Jesus. Your mentor couple will be prayerfully selected for you based on your particular needs and circumstances. This experience can be the highlight of your premarriage process and, if agreed upon, can even extend beyond that period of time.

9. Class fee

There is a fee of \$150.00 per couple to cover the materials for this class, payable at our first class. If finances are an issue, please let us know and we can explore options at your preliminary meeting.

What is the Next Step?

Once you have read all of the information above, the next step is for both you and your fiancé to complete the Confidential Soul Mates Application (find a link to the application at soulcitychurch.com/next-steps/marriage). When both applications have been submitted, a Soul Mates Team Leader will contact you to set up a preliminary meeting. Be assured that all of your personal information will be kept confidential. We are honored to walk with you during this very special time.

Your Wedding

If you would like to be married by a Soul City pastor or rent space at Soul City for your wedding, please visit our website, (soulcitychurch.com/next-steps/marriage), for more information.