

Marriage: God's plan

You and the church Willem Vandenberg

THE LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. – Genesis 2:18, 21-22, 24.

To see a bride walk down the aisle to the groom who is patiently waiting there for her, and to hear them exchange their vows of loving commitment and then to be pronounced 'husband and wife' brings tears to the eyes – tears of joyful emotion.

The key to a fulfilling marriage is for it to be 'as God designed it' – which is how? As in those words from Scripture quoted at the start of this article, marriage is for one man and one woman committed to each other for life. Any other arrangement is a distortion of the real thing.

The husband and the wife are to love each other, where love is not a feeling but a commitment. Feelings come and feelings go, but a commitment endures.

Marriage was given so that husband and wife will form a team, supporting each other, helping each other, enjoying each other's company and a fulfilling sexual relationship.

Marriage is also the best environment for producing and bringing up children – God designed us that way: male and female, with distinct physical differences enabling us to reproduce. Husband and wife, with their differences in nature, character and emotions, as well as their physical differences, complement each other.

Sadly, the institution of marriage has come under sustained attack in recent years from those who maintain that the current laws discriminate against them.

It is not discrimination but differentiation – there is a difference.

Our society tolerates many differences. Christians are to love their neighbour, also those of different persuasions, and to pray for them. We pray that they, too, will come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

But when it comes to marriage, anything other than the union of a man and a woman is not marriage. To redefine marriage would be to undermine marriage, and would bring harm to our society, because marriage is one of the foundational structures of society.

Our Prime Minister has declared support for the current definition of marriage. She should be encouraged to hold firmly to that view. It is our prayer that any proposals to modify the Marriage Act will be rejected.

Let us take care to maintain the institution of marriage as God designed it – the joyful union of a man and a woman for life.

Willem Vandenberg, Horsham Presbyterian Church, writes on behalf of Horsham Christian Ministers Association.