

Life partners

Deena Williams Newman

June is a big month for weddings. But did you know that December is too?

Perhaps someone you know is getting married during the holiday season. She and her fiancé will receive many gifts, but you may want to do something special. One good way to honor your friend is with a Bible presentation ceremony.

After you make the decision to have a ceremony, you have three other decisions to make.

- **When and where will the ceremony be?** Some hold ceremonies at their church during a worship service. Others have the ceremony at the end of a church-related meeting. Still others opt for a more informal ceremony in a home or even outdoors. Choose the time and location which best meets your needs and the needs and schedule of the bride-to-be.
- **Who will attend?** Often the groom-to-be is left out of many pre-wedding activities so you may want to invite him as well as husbands and date of friends. Relatives and friends of the couple are other possibilities for your guest list.
- **What about the Bible?** Look for an easy-to-understand translation which a non-Christian would understand. *Good News Bible*, Today's English Version is good for casual reading. You can order one from the American Bible Society (1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023).

Here is a Bible presentation ceremony for you to consider using.

Leader: We are here today to show our love for (bride) and (groom). We come to honor them at this special time in their lives and to assure them of our prayers as they begin their life together.

Friend 1: You have many decisions to make as you marry. You will have to decide where to go to church, whether or not to have children, where to live, what careers to pursue, and even where to spend Christmas each year. Let me remind you that God can guide you as you make these many decisions at this important time in your life. We pray that you will always turn to God for leadership.

Friend 2: Let us now read about a couple in the Bible. I will be reading Acts 18:24-26. (*Read these verses.*) Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers. The apostle Paul was a tentmaker also, and he lived and worked with them in Corinth. Later Aquila and Priscilla moved to Ephesus. It was in Ephesus that Aquila and Priscilla met Apollos and led him to the Lord. A church met in their house.

Friend 3: Let us encourage you to use this example of Aquila and Priscilla as a model for your new life together. May you, like this first-century couple, work together in having a Christian home and in winning people to Christ. We don't know what God has in store for the two of you. But we do know that God wants you both to serve Him. In the hustle and bustle of married life, don't forget that you are Christians and God has called you both to serve Him. Be careful not to get so wrapped up in each other or in your careers, children, church activities, or hobbies that you forget those around you who are lonely, sick, depressed, grieving, hungry, or unsaved. You as a couple working together can reach some people you could not possibly have reached alone.

Leader: We now want to present you with this Bible. We imagine that between the two of you, you have several Bibles already. So we want to encourage you not to keep this Bible but to give it away to the first non-Christian who visits you after you marry. We hope that this action will be just a small first step in your life together as a ministering, witnessing couple. We will be praying that you both will be strong and fervent witnesses for Christ.

All: (*Participate in a time of conversational prayer for the couple with one assigned person opening it and another person closing it.*)