

Top tips for wedding photography

A survey for the Weddings Project showed 94% of newly weds believed the church worked well with the photographer on their wedding day. A warm welcome for the professionals instructed by the couple makes the couple feel more welcome too.

Happy memories, tailor made

Photography isn't what it used to be! Traditional, staged formal group shots are out, and informal images, reflecting real emotions are in. A good photographer will know how to capture the life and soul of the day and with your guidance, doesn't need to get in the way to do so.

Make contact

Being in touch with the photographer before the wedding can pay dividends on the day. The rehearsal may be the ideal time. If there's a popular vantage point or beautiful backdrop, point it out. Professionals want to plan ahead, and practical information about the church and the service will be gratefully received.

Be honest

You rightly want the service to be beautiful, orderly, accessible and meaningful. If you have any reservations or concerns about the photography plans, a good photographer will respect these.

“A vicar once told me he'd rather not have photos during the vows, because it sometimes caused him to lose concentration. I found his request so honest and genuine that I was more than happy to comply. We agreed to allow photographs only during the times he wasn't speaking.” Richard Shephard, Photographer

Lights, camera...

Your church may be fairly dark inside. In low light - without flash - a photographer has to resort to slow shutter speeds-risking blur. She will want to take more pictures to compensate. If you want to cheer up any photographer instantly, try offering to turn up the lights!

Brief the guests

Newcomers are often unsure whether they are welcome to laugh at your jokes, clap when the couple are married, or cheer as they walk down the aisle. When you welcome the guests, put them at their ease: it's their church too! Let them know any special arrangements about photos. Then they can relax and enjoy the service.

Provide Kodak moments

If you restrict photography during the ceremony, why not recreate the moment later? Stand the couple at the front facing each other, and invite the guests out of their pews to take their own shots. Inviting the grooms to 'kiss the bride....again' will make for guaranteed smiles from both sides of the lens.

Join in

Be ready to have your photograph taken with the bride and her father, or the bride and groom afterwards. It's a commonly requested photograph anyway, and the couple will want to remember you as a special part of their day.

Ask for copies

Asking the photographer for a small print of their favourite image of the weddings in church is a great and genuine compliment. Why not build up a montage of the couples you've married? A growing display - by your phone or in the church - will sustain happy memories and prayerful thoughts.

Never say goodbye

Your friendship with the bride and groom and openness to reflecting personal touches in the service will mean you will live long in their memory. Keep in touch with them: they're more likely to keep enjoying church after their wedding day if you do.

- With thanks to photographer Richard Shephard www.richardshephard.co.uk