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Responsibilities of the wedding party



Whether the wedding you've got in mind is large or small, formal or casual, conventional or original, it's helpful to have a sense of the roles that bridal party members have played through the years.

Maid of Honour— Usually the closest friend of the bride and sometimes a relative. A married, divorced, widowed, or older woman might be called the matron of honour. She assists with the details of the wedding plans, like shopping for the bridal gown, addressing invitations and choosing flowers. She arranges the bridal shower in conjunction with the bride's family, is in charge of coordinating the bridesmaids and organizing fittings, and typically signs the couple's certificate of marriage or wedding licence as a legal witness. At the reception, she should stand immediately after the groom in the receiving line.

Best Man— Commonly the groom's best friend, relative or not, the best man is in charge of instructing the ushers and coordinating the groom's transportation to the ceremony. He usually holds the rings and will also sign the marriage certificate as a legal witness. At the reception, he holds a place of honour, escorting the maid of honour in the receiving line and in all other wedding party activities. He's also the toastmaster, offering the first toast to the couple.

Bridesmaids and Ushers— Typically friends or relatives of the bride, brides-

maids may be asked to co-ordinate special details during the ceremony preparations or at the reception, and assist the bride and the maid of honour. Ushers (sometimes also known as groomsmen) should be prepared for an early arrival at the ceremony to escort female guests to their seats. During the ceremony, they will escort the bridesmaids down the aisle. They may also be asked to co-ordinate the guests' trip from the ceremony to the reception as well as assist the groom and the best man.

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer— The flower girl carries a basket of flower petals to sprinkle down the aisle, or flowers to be passed out to the women seated near the aisle. The ring bearer may either escort the flower girl down the aisle, or follow her, with the rings on a pillow.

Father of the Bride— His most conspicuous duty is giving away the bride. He might also co-ordinate transportation, dancing and toasting. Traditionally, he and the mother of the bride have paid for the wedding and reception but today it is common for expenses to be shared by both families along with the couple themselves.

—Metro Editorial Services



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