



Rev. Ann Fuller

Wedding Receptions

Although I am primarily involved in the ceremony, I do get questions about the reception from time to time. I am happy to answer any questions you may have and offer my opinions, but that is exactly what they are--my opinions.

Like the ceremony, the reception is rife with traditions if a few less superstitions. Some of the more familiar traditions are the introduction of the wedding party, toasts, cutting of the cake, and the tossing of the bouquet and garter.

Less formal celebrations may not have any of these. More elaborate receptions may have more. Whatever you include in your reception, I highly recommend doing these types of things as close to the start of your festivities as possible. This enables more guests to be present when you do them. Let's face it. Not everyone is able to or wants to stay to the very end. Your guests want to be there for you on your special day, but some just may not have the ability to remain at your reception for the entire time. For example, older guests and guests with young children may not be able to go the distance at an evening reception that includes partying until the wee hours.

There is absolutely no reason why you cannot do everything up front and leave the mingling, dancing and general partying for the remainder of the celebration. As soon as your pictures are taken, have your DJ introduce the wedding party to begin the festivities. Any meal blessings should immediately follow the introduction of the bridal party and come before dancing and toasts.

As odd as it sounds, first dances and toasts can easily be done while your guests are eating. A good DJ or volunteer Master of Ceremonies can get everyone's attention. Your guests will appreciate not having to wait to eat and will enjoy having something to watch and participate in while they are dining.

Cut the cake as soon as the first dances and toasts are over, even if some of your guests are still eating. Once the guests have finished eating and the tables cleared, consider tossing the bouquet and the garter even if you have several hours of festivities left. If you wait too long, many of your guests will have left. It is much more fun when you have more participants and spectators.

When it comes to a wedding reception guests definitely appreciate "front loading" and "doubling up." While it may sound as if you are rushing things, it will not feel like it as your reception unfolds. There is a definite advantage to the bride and groom. Once these traditions have been completed they can relax and enjoy themselves as well.



Ron Ann Fuller

Reception Traditions

- Introduction of the Wedding Party
- Meal Blessing / Blessing of the Festivities
- Toasts (It's not just the Best Man anymore!)
- Bride and Groom's First Dance
- Bride's Dance with her Father
- Groom's Dance with his Mother
- Cake Cutting
- Bouquet Toss
- Garter Toss

Toasts: I have seen plenty a Maid of Honor deliver a toast as well as the Best Man. Parents have risen to speak and quite often the bride and/or groom may wish to say a few words. Being the shy violet I am, I rose to speak and thanked our parents for their positive examples of marriage at my own wedding reception.

Dances: I think it is lovely to have an in-law dance and bring out the bride's mother and the groom's father to dance with the bride and groom. Additionally, I think step-parents who are held in high regard should be honored as well. There is no reason why you can't have a special dance with whomever you wish. Use sensitivity and common sense when scheduling these dances if you have blended families