

# **CEREMONY “READINGS” SUGGESTIONS**

## **Reading No. 1**

### **1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:8**

Set your mind on the higher gifts. Now I am going to put before you the best way of all. Though I command languages both human and angelic -- if I speak without love, I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. And though I have the power of prophecy, to penetrate all mysteries and knowledge, and though I have all faith necessary to move mountains -- if I am without love, I am nothing. Though I should give away to the poor all that I possess, and even give up my body to be burned -- if I am without love, it will do me no good whatever. Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, and it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love never comes to an end.

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## **Reading No. 2**

### **Paul's Letter to the Romans 12:9-18**

Let love be without any pretense. Avoid what is evil; stick to what is good. In sincere love, let your feelings of deep affection for one another come to expression and regard others as more important than yourself. In the service of the Lord, work not halfheartedly but with conscientiousness and an eager spirit. Be joyful in hope, persevere in hardship; keep praying regularly; share with any of God's holy people who are in need; look for opportunities to be hospitable.

Bless your persecutors; never curse them, bless them. Rejoice with others when they rejoice, and be sad with those in sorrow. Give the same consideration to all others alike. Pay no regard to social standing, but meet humble people on their own terms. Do not congratulate yourself on your own wisdom. Never pay back evil with evil, but bear in mind the ideals that all regard with respect. As much as possible, and to the utmost of your ability, be at peace with everyone.

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## **Reading No. 3**

### **John 15: 9-12**

I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this that my own joy may be in *you* and that your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you.

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## **READING No. 4**

### **From *The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran**

You shall be together forevermore. You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days. You shall be together even in the silent memory of God. Let there be spaces in your togetherness, and let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another, but make not a *bond* love; let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls. Fill each other's cup, but drink not from one cup. Give one another of your bread, but eat not from the same loaf. Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone, even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music. Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For

only the hand of Life can contain your hearts. And stand together, yet not too near together: for the pillars of the Temple stand apart, and the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.

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**Reading No. 5**

**CARL SANDBURG**

I love you for what you are, but I love you yet more for what you are going to be. I love you not so much for your realities as for your ideals. I pray for your desires that they may be great, rather than for your satisfactions, which may be so hazardously little. A satisfied flower is one whose petals are about to fall. The most beautiful rose is one hardly more than a bud wherein the pangs and ecstasies of desires are working for larger and finer growth. Not always shall you be what you are now. You are going forward toward something great. I am on the way with you and therefore I love you.

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**Reading No. 6**

**AUTHOR UNKNOWN**

Love me because I try to touch life within the framework of uncertainty.  
Love in me the shadows of my indecision as I strive to gain knowledge.  
Love in me the silence of my hurts and the noise of my confusions.  
Love me for the feeling of my heart not the fears of my mind.  
Love me in my search for the truth though I may stumble upon fallacy.  
Love me as I pursue my dreams sometimes retarded by illusions.  
Love me as I grow to know myself even during the times of stagnation.  
Love me because I seek God's harmony not man's discord.  
Love me for my body that I wish to share with affection, wrapping you in warmth.  
Love me because we are different as we are the same.  
Love me that our time together will be spent in growing, kindling the world with understanding.  
Love me not with expectations but with hope.  
I will love you the same.

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**Reading No. 7**

**The Apache Wedding Blessing**

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be shelter to the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of you will be warmth to the other. Now there is no loneliness for you, now there is no more loneliness. Now there is no more loneliness, now you are two persons. But there is one life before you. Go, now, to your dwelling place to enter into the place of your togetherness. And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

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**Reading No. 8**

**Dance Me To The End Of Love**

Dance me to your beauty, with a burning violin, Dance me through the panic, till I'm gathered safely in, Lift me like an olive branch, and be my homeward dove, Dance me to the end of love. Let me see your beauty, when the witnesses are gone, Let me feel you moving, like they do in Babylon, Show me slowly what I only know the limits of, Dance me to the end of love. Dance me to the wedding now, dance me on and on, Dance me very tenderly, and dance me very long, We're both of us beneath our love, we're both of us above, Dance me to the end of love. Dance me to the children, who are asking to be born, Dance me through the curtains that our kisses have outworn, Raise a tent of shelter now, though every thread is torn, Dance me to the end of love. Dance me to your beauty, with a burning violin, Dance me through the panic, till I'm gathered safely in, Touch me with your naked hand, touch me with your glove, and Dance me to the end of love.

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**Reading No. 9**

**Sonnet XLIII, from "Sonnetts from the Portuguese"**

**by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.**

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach, when feeling out of sight. For the ends of being and ideal grace. I love thee to the level of everyday's most quiet need, by sun and candle-light. I love thee freely, as men strive for right; I love thee purely, as they turn from praise. I love thee with the passion put to use in my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith. I love thee with a love I seemed to lose with my lost saints; I love thee with the breath, smiles, and tears, of all my life! and, if God choose, I shall but love thee better after death.

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**Reading No. 10**

***FROM THE GIFT OF THE SEA***

**By Anne Morrow Lindbergh**

When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity -- in freedom in the sense that dancers are free barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern. The only real security is not in owning or possessing, not in demanding or expecting, not in hoping, even. Security in a relationship lies neither in looking back to what it was in nostalgia, nor forward to what it might be in dread or anticipation but in living in the present relationship and accepting it as it is now. Relationships must be like islands; one must accept them for what they are here and now, within their limits . . . islands, surrounded and interrupted by the sea, and continually visited and abandoned by the tides.

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**Reading No. 11**

**On Marriage, By Edmund O'Neill**

Marriage is a commitment to life - to the best that two people can find and bring out in each other. It offers opportunities for sharing and growth that no other human relationship can equal, a joining that is promised for a lifetime. Within the circle of its love, marriage encompasses all of life's most important relationships. A wife and a husband are each other's best friend, confidant, lover, teacher, listener, and critic. There may come times when one partner is heartbroken or ailing, and the love of the other may resemble the tender caring of a parent for a child. Marriage deepens and enriches every facet of life. Happiness is fuller; memories are fresher; commitment is stronger; even anger is felt more strongly, and passes away more quickly. Marriage understands and forgives the mistakes life is unable to avoid. It encourages and nurtures new life, new experiences, and new ways of expressing love through the seasons of life. When two people pledge to love and care for each other in marriage they create a spirit unique to themselves, which binds them closer than any spoken or written words. Marriage is a promise, a potential, made in the hearts of two people who love, which takes a lifetime to fulfill.

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**Reading No. 12**

**Blessing For A Marriage, By James Dillet Freeman**

May your marriage bring you all the exquisite excitements a marriage should bring, and may life grant you also patience, tolerance, and understanding. May you always need one another – not so much to fill your emptiness as to help you to know your fullness. A mountain needs a valley to be complete; the valley does not make the mountain less, but more; and the valley is more a valley because it has a mountain towering over it. So let it be with you and you. May you need one

another, but not out of weakness. May you want one another, but not out of lack. May you entice one another, but not compel one another. May you embrace one another, but not out encircle one another. May you succeed in all important ways with one another, and not fail in the little graces. May you look for things to praise, often say, "I love you!" and take no notice of small faults. If you have quarrels that push you apart, may both of you hope to have good sense enough to take the first step back. May you enter into the mystery, which is the awareness of one another's presence – no more physical than spiritual, warm and near when you are side by side, and warm and near when you are in separate rooms or even distant cities. May you have happiness, and may you find it making one another happy. May you have love, and may you find it loving one another!

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#### **Reading No. 13**

##### **The Art Of A Good Marriage, By Wilferd Arlan Peterson**

Happiness in marriage is not something that just happens. A good marriage must be created. In marriage the little things are the big things. It is never being too old to hold hands. It is remembering to say "I love you" at least once a day. It is never going to sleep angry. It is at no time taking the other for granted; the courtship should not end with the honeymoon, it should continue through all the years. It is having a mutual sense of values and common objectives. It is standing together facing the world. It is forming a circle of love that gathers in the whole family. It is doing things for each other, not in the attitude of duty or sacrifice, but in the spirit of joy. It is speaking words of appreciation and demonstrating gratitude in thoughtful ways. It is not looking for perfection in each other. It is cultivating flexibility, patience, understanding, and a sense of humor. It is having the capacity to forgive and forget. It is giving each other an atmosphere in which each can grow. It is a common search for the good and the beautiful. It is establishing a relationship in which the independence is equal, dependence is mutual, and the obligation is reciprocal. It is not only marrying the right partner, it is being the right partner.

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#### **Reading No. 14**

##### **Thoughts In a Garden, By R. Gerhardt**

This is a special place, a place where people have brought beautiful living plants, here to establish them, to nurture and care for them, that they may forever surround us with the beauty we now see. And into this place where we stand, you have brought something beautiful -- the relationship that is becoming your marriage. Here you are declaring it and pledging it, promising to establish and nurture it. We are aware of the special beauty between the two of you, just as we are aware of the special beauty of this place. We are with you now in this appropriate place to celebrate your relationship as it is and as it is yet to be, and in doing so; we ask only that you remember how your life together will have the same seasons and needs as this garden. There will be growth like spring and loss like fall; there will be giving as the blossoming flower, and rest as the seed beneath the snow. All the seasons will be yours, but remember, too, that gardens are not must happenings. The more wonderful the garden, the more skilled the gardener. So you will have to care deeply for the life that is yours together, and nurture it. You will have to appreciate your differences and cultivate them. You will have to take care of yourself, if for no other reason than out of love for the other. And you will need the support of family and friends to reach full growth. As you caringly chose this place to declare your marriage, so remember its lessons for your life together through the seasons that are yours to share. And may those seasons bring you and yours joy and happiness.

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#### **Reading No. 15**

##### **The Covenant of Marriage**

Marriage has certain qualities of contract, in which two people take on the housekeeping tasks of living, together, to enhance life's joy. However, marriage is more than a contract. Marriage is a

**commitment to take that joy deep, deeper than happiness, deep into the discovery of who you most truly are. It is a commitment to a spiritual journey, to a life of becoming -- in which joy can comprehend despair, running through rivers of pain into joy again. And thus marriage is even deeper than commitment. It is a covenant -- a covenant that says:**

**I love you. I trust you. I will be here for you when you are hurting, and when I am hurting I will not leave. It is a covenant intended not to provide haven from pain or anger and sorrow. Life offers no such haven. Instead, marriage is intended to provide a sanctuary safe enough to risk loving, to risk living and sharing from the center of oneself. This is worth everything.**

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