

**HAVING A VALENTINE BANQUET**

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*Song of Songs 2:4 He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*

*1 Peter 4:3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:*

Introduction

* People will have their banquets, their celebrations.
* We see from the Scriptures that there are banquets held that can be wholesome and good, and there can be banquets held that are sinful and filled with wickedness.
* Marriage (i.e. the sacred vows taken between a man and woman unto God and unto society) should be celebrated.
* It is with this in mind we today look at having a banquet for the people of our church.
* It should be noted that we have quite a few banquets here at our church:
  + Ladies banquet
  + Youth awards banquet
  + Valentine banquet
* Since I am the one who leads in the Valentine Banquet for the married couples of our church,  
  it will be that one we focus on here.

1. Story of the Valentine Banquet
   1. Sweetheart Couples Class
   2. Bro. Wells became pastor
   3. Now church-wide
2. The pastor
   1. The pastor is the bishop, the overseer of the local church.
   2. He is the one who will stand before God and give account for what goes on here.
   3. My job is to work so that his oversight is easy to accomplish.
   4. This means all we do is done with the sincere effort of doing things as he wants.
3. Three key words
   1. All we do must fall within the boundaries of these three words
   2. Romantic

Note: buffets are NOT romantic

* 1. Affordable
  2. Godly

1. List of banquet themes
   1. 2007 – Fireworks
   2. 2008 – Romantic Harmonies
   3. 2009 – Tropical Paradise
   4. 2010 – A Knight to Remember
   5. 2011 – An Evening in Venice
   6. 2012 – A Fairy Tale Romance
   7. 2013 – Under the Texas Sky
   8. 2014 – Sweetest of Memories
   9. 2015 – Under the Sea
   10. 2016 – Romance in Paris
   11. 2017 – You Mean the World to Me
   12. 2018 – An All American Romance
   13. 2019 – To be announced
2. Food costs
   1. $4 per plate
      1. This can vary depending on the menu
      2. It should be noted that we feed the workers at no costs to them
   2. Mindset of food coordinator
      1. Diligent: it takes much work to make this happen
      2. Firm: refuses to go over budget
      3. Watchful: keeps an eye out for sales
   3. Food coordinator needs a four-week notice
      1. Especially if new to this position
      2. This allows plenty of time to find good sales
      3. If the food coordinator is coming up with recipes, then he/she will most likely need more time.
      4. In other words, to pull off a quality banquet, foresight is key.
   4. God does provide by giving good sales

A good place to look is….

* + 1. Restaurant supply stores
    2. Aldi’s & other discount grocers
    3. Warehouse grocers such as Sam’s Club & Costco

1. Food and related items
   1. Meal will consist of three courses
      1. Appetizers: typically a salad already at their seats
      2. Main meal
         1. Most anything requiring an eating utensil will work
         2. Example: chicken (white meat, boneless), baked potato, vegetable, & rolls
      3. Dessert
         1. Example: cupcake and ice cream
         2. For those with sugar issues, if we are made aware of it ahead of time, we have an alternative
      4. Match
         1. The food does match the theme
         2. If doing an Italian theme, have spaghetti
      5. The choosing of foods should be something the majority will enjoy
         1. Some like fish, some do not
         2. Although we sincerely consider all people, there is no practical way to accommodate every nuance of people’s taste and dietary desires.
         3. In other words, just because someone is following the latest pop diet, we cannot go out and get that one and only meat he/she can eat.
   2. Utensils
      1. We use plastic that looks like metal
      2. Named *Reflections*, and they are sold at Sam’s as well as Amazon
   3. Drinks
      1. Water
      2. Ice tea
      3. Lemonade
      4. Coffee is also available
   4. Workers
      1. Food coordinator: handles all food purchases and cooking
      2. Kitchen assistant
         1. Assist the food coordinator
         2. Hands-on leader of servers
      3. Servers
         1. Also known as waiters and waitresses
         2. Ratio: 1 server for every 8 individuals
2. Seating
   1. Round tables work best
      1. More romantic
      2. Can get more in a tighter space
   2. Chairs
      1. We used to use metal folding chairs with seat covers
      2. For those with physical challenges, we provided padded chairs
         1. This is handled at the time of ticket purchase
         2. This is not necessarily in one section, but scattered throughout the place
      3. The Lord has blessed us now with comfortable chairs

As you continue to serve God’s people, the Lord will often bless you with better means to serve them.

* + 1. Due to the size and challenge of the banquet, we do not assign seating
  1. Head table
     1. For the Preacher and his wife
     2. Banquet coordinators
     3. In the past, guests to be honored or a couple whom Preacher requests

1. Ticket sales
   1. They begin four Sundays prior to the banquet

The Sunday after New Year’s Day

* 1. Pricing
     1. All prices are per couple
     2. Senior Saints: $20
     3. Early bird price: $25
     4. Regular price: $30
  2. Comments on pricing
     1. I do recommend early bird pricing, for it encourages people to purchase their tickets early in the proceedings.
     2. There will always be some who wait to the last minute to buy their tickets, but early-bird pricing does encourage a few to purchase their own.
     3. I also recommend trying and having a way to take payment by card; many do not carry cash or even a checkbook.
  3. The banquet is priced to pay for itself, but not by much
     1. We make no profit
     2. There are years we have had to spend our own money
  4. Breakdown: for every $25, here is the breakdown
     1. $10 for decorations
     2. $10 for food & place settings
     3. Balance is for miscellaneous items
        1. Nursery workers
        2. Pictures
        3. Other needs

1. Schedule
   1. For attendees
      1. 4:30 Start of pre-meal activities
      2. 5:00 Enter the dining area and commence meal
      3. 6:15 Intermission
      4. 6:30 Entertainment
      5. 7:00 Time of reflection
      6. 8:00 Dismissal
      7. Note: the hard times are the first two and the last one; all others are somewhat soft
   2. Servers
      1. 3:30 Early set up crew begins
      2. 4:00 Banquet coordinators review and update servers
      3. 4:30 Banquet coordinators meet and fellowship with attendees as servers are setting the tables
   3. The room becomes off limits from Tuesday on so that the workers can have plenty of time
2. Pre-meal activities
   1. Pictures of each couple with a nice background are taken
      1. This is included in the ticket price
      2. Our media department handles the picture taking, but a disc of all pictures taken is given to my wife so she can use *Winkflash* to develop
   2. Used to have the pictures in a separate area from the banquet. Following is how we did that:
      1. At five minutes prior to the start, I'd go over any procedural things, then dismiss in groups
      2. Head table is dismissed
      3. Those needing special seating
      4. Senior saints
      5. Half of those left
      6. Rest of group
   3. Due to the size of the event, we now do the pictures in the banquet area
   4. The advantage of this is they have more time to….
      1. Mill around
      2. Fellowship
      3. Take their own pictures
3. Entertainment
   1. Christian film
      1. One of the easier ones to do
      2. It is a good starting point
   2. Long skits

Much practice

* 1. Renewal of vows
     1. Had a form with basic information on it
     2. Preacher officiated it
     3. Two purposes:
        1. Allowed a marital reset
        2. Chance to draw closer to the Preacher
  2. Best marriage proposal
     1. Had three men stand before the group and tell the story of how they asked the lady to marry them
     2. We also opened the floor to any man there to tell his story
     3. There was a prize for the one who had the best one
     4. We let the crowd vote by clapping
  3. Testimonies of how they proposed to their wives
  4. Special music
     1. We have always had some music
     2. One year, we had special songs as THE center of this time
     3. The music used MUST be vetted
        1. There is much that sounds good,  
           but is not
        2. There is much that can bring back some very bad memories

1. Staffing
   1. All positions are filled.by people with whom two people are comfortable:
      1. Banquet coordinator
      2. Preacher
   2. Kitchen leader
   3. Servers
   4. P.A. man
   5. Doormen
   6. Photographer
2. Advertising
   1. Announcements
   2. Church bulletin
   3. Pastoral push
      1. This is the most potent push
      2. Just like at home, when Dad says something it has more potency than when others speak; it is the same when the preacher says it.
   4. Pictures from previous year's banquet
   5. Word-of-mouth

By making a good impression, others will talk it up

* 1. Skits in the evening services: the Love Ranger

1. Miscellaneous
   1. Have a fire plan
   2. Only for those legally married or engaged with a specific date set
   3. Let it grow
      1. My wife will tell you that our early ones were not as good as the later ones

Our first one had cutouts taped to the wall; now we typically build some scenery

* + 1. It's ok to be new, young, and starting out
  1. Have a means of recording observations
     1. Ideas will come
     2. Mistakes will be noticed
        1. No shirt comes out of the laundry without need of ironing;
        2. No special event comes out of your heart without wrinkles
  2. Hold people accountable
     1. Don't be mean, but do be firm
     2. If a person cannot rise to a standard, be slow to lower the standard
  3. Good sources of decorations ideas and props are as follows:
     1. Sindigz.com
     2. Oriental Trading
     3. Amazon (depending on what you are looking for)

Look for online coupons, which are often available.

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