

Sample 'Traditional' Wedding Photography Timetable Planner

(Every wedding will be uniquely different, but these are just some ideas to consider)

Some photographers insist that the bride & groom MUST see each other several hours prior to the wedding to make it easier on the photographer to get all the posed pictures they want... we don't believe it has to be that way! IN FACT everyone is usually a little anxious and nervous prior to the wedding and too often that anxiousness ends up showing in the photographs!

Take your engagement or bridal portraits at least 6 weeks before your wedding date.

Determine how you want to display photos at your reception and organize and order what you need well in advance.

A couple hours before the ceremony the photographer meets at bride's home/salon/church for 'getting-ready' photos. When the photographer arrives the bride is usually putting the finishing touches on her hair and makeup and ready for the photos of putting on the dress. The bridesmaids are usually completely ready at this time. NOTE: Anyone to be 'formally' photographed prior to the ceremony should be completely dressed, made-up and ready for photos 1½ hours prior to the ceremony starting time.

If you want 'formal' family pictures we usually start 1½ - 2 hrs. before the ceremony and create pictures of the bride with parents/grandparents and bridesmaids. (Either before groom arrives or while he is in hiding)

50 minutes to 1 hour before the ceremony (if time permits) photos are taken at the ceremony location of the groom with parents/grandparents and groomsmen. (While the bride is in hiding) These can be 'formal' posed groups or just casual.

30-45 minutes before the ceremony starts the bridal party is in hiding (except the ushers) casual photojournalistic photos are taken of the bride in her chambers and the groom in waiting and the guests arriving.

Directly after the ceremony the bride & groom go into a pre-determined hiding place while the church or ceremony location is emptied. The photography assistant sets up the formal group shots while the photographer gets some 'relaxed' pictures of the bride & groom with the bridal party and their closest friends.

Sometimes there is an additional event right after the ceremony i.e.: getting into the limo, rice-throwing, military rifle salute, Scottish bag-piper, horse & buggy ride, etc. My only word of caution is don't let the couple get stuck into an impromptu 'receiving line' immediately after the ceremony as it will ultimately delay the reception and if there is too much time spent 'meeting & greeting' at the church some people will never make it to the reception.

10-15 minutes after the ceremony, once the attendees have cleared out, the bridal party and designated immediate family members meet at the front of the church (ceremony location) for the private group photo session.

Bridal coordinator insures invited family members remain for photos. (No flash photography allowed by the attendees)

First picture is of the bride, groom and officiator. Then family groups per the pre-determined list (click here to download the [photography planning form](#) -- which all attendees should be given a copy of) -oldest and youngest first. (No group larger than 20-25 people.)

Bridal coordinator and photographer's assistant gathers group #2 on the side while Mike is working with group #1, then they gather group #3 while Mike is photographing group #2, etc. until all groups are done.

After the family group photo is finished the participants are sent out of the room and on to the reception.

Complete pre-approved and organized listing of photos should take between 20-30 minutes max. A good plan and pre-organization will insure that we don't keep you guests waiting.

Final photo is of the complete bridal party, once their photo is taken they leave the room and either go to the reception or wait outside the room for the bride and groom.

Optional 10 minutes of photos of just the bride and groom alone in the church and if time allows, outside the church. (At this time there is only the cameraman, his assistant, the bride and groom and the photo coordinator and/or building coordinator in the room, this insures the least amount of disturbance)

45 minutes to 1 hour after the ceremony the wedding party goes to the reception. Guests have been arriving at the reception and enjoying drinks and hors d'oeuvres while waiting on the bridal party.

Some weddings have several hours between the ceremony and the reception and often we go to a park or the couples favorite scenic spot, (after the family group photos) for some intimate couple scenic shots.

Once the bridal party is ready and the photographer is in place the MC announces the wedding party as they enter the reception area.

The MC coordinates timing of reception events and insures the photographer is informed and prepared for each event i.e.: first dance, father/daughter - mother/son- dance, toast, cake smashing, bouquet toss and garter toss.

Most of the reception photos are taken with little or no photographer input so you can enjoy your time with family and friends.

Once the reception is well under way if the bride and groom want a break sometimes we go for a 10-20 minute walk on the grounds (this is a good time for you to take a breath of air) sometimes we bring the whole bridal party and take fun un-posed group shots (30 minutes before sunset if possible click on this link to figure out when sunset will be on your wedding date).

If you want a major group shot (30-300 people) it must be pre-planned and we usually setup at a pre-determined site at the reception location (large staircase, balcony or from atop my 16' ladder) and have the MC announce when to gather the mob for the shot. Once again, with pre-planning and setup we can do this quickly and with the coordination by the MC so as to keep it with the flow of the party.

Sometimes at the reception we set up a photography area off to the side so extended family (aunts, uncles, in-laws) can have their formal photograph taken as a family or with the bride and groom. These photos are usually taken after the bride and groom have eaten and while the guests are still eating. These photos are for those we didn't have time to capture after the ceremony. Some couples don't want these as formal shots and just spontaneously gather small groups during the reception for a candid informal group shot.

We usually try to do the 'exit' photo before too many people have left the reception. Depending on the length of the reception and the number of hours you have the photographer contracted for, sometimes it is done 1-1.5 hours before the band concludes.

The MC announces the time and location of the exit (usually 5-10 minutes before the photographer's contracted time ends) and everyone prepares their bubbles, birdseeds, butterflies, flower peddles, etc. for the grand exit. The couple takes direction from the photographer to insure the best photos and then drives around the building and returns to party with the diehards!