



## HOW DO I KNOW HOW LONG I NEED TO HIRE A PHOTOGRAPHER FOR MY WEDDING?

This might be the most popular question I get from couples planning their weddings, particularly for my hourly based packages. How are you to know how long you'll want your photographer? Here's a simple breakdown.

**Ceremony** For those who don't want any getting ready photos, I like to arrive at the ceremony 45 minutes- 1 hour before you'll be walking down the aisle. This gives me ample time to get my equipment set up, make decisions on how and where I'll shoot the ceremony, and chat with the venue coordinator about any rules they have. If you choose to do a First Look and have your portraits taken before the ceremony, I still recommend being at the ceremony site and finished with photos 30 minutes before the ceremony start time. This allows a few minutes of last minute primping and insures you won't be seen by guests that arrive early. Don't forget to add in the time for the full ceremony and receiving line (if you are having one.)

**Bride and Groom Portraits** Plan for about 30-45 minutes of portraits just of the two of you. This holds true whether you choose to do photos before the ceremony or wait until after.

**Wedding Party Portraits** Another 30-45 minutes for group photos with the entire wedding party. This assumes that your portraits will be taking place near your ceremony or reception site, and we won't need to travel anywhere. If you have several locations that you'd like to visit (either via car or on foot), add another 20-30 minutes for each location plus transit time. Many times a lot of the bridal party pics are taken before the wedding....anything that can be taken without the bride I usually do. ☺

**Family Portraits** 30 minutes should be plenty of time to document all of the family portraits. For those with extra large extended families, you might want to add an extra 10 minutes for rounding everyone up.

**Reception** The timing here is a bit more flexible. I suggest that I stay through all of the events of the reception (toasts, first dance, parent dances, cake cutting, bouquet and garter tosses) and then for an additional 30 minutes or so of open dancing. If you are planning a grand exit, you might want to consider having me there until the end of the reception. However, if you have nothing planned after the bouquet and garter tosses, there isn't much need for a professional photographer to stay too late at the reception. (At some point it becomes better to have your friends take the blackmail photos smile emoticon ) If your party ends at midnight, 10:30 or 11pm are probably late enough to get all of the professional photos you'll want.

All that being said, I usually find that 6-8 hours of coverage is optimal to get everything you want from the day without rushing your portraits or reception. Don't forget to include transit time in your estimate, as well as a little bonus time in case things are running a bit late.

When it comes down to it, I always say: " Not too short, not too long, but just right." Your wedding day only happens once. I just want to make sure it's covered properly and effectively. ☺