# CIVIL PARTNERSHIP READINGS

1. Order of Ceremony Example

*(2 – 21 Selection of readings & poems to be read by family, friends or officiating Registrar)*

1. A Dance
2. If We Wanted To
3. Love
4. Oh, The Comfort
5. From The I Ching
6. Love’s Testing
7. Give Lavishly! Live Abundantly!
8. May The Sun Bring You New Energy By Day
9. Dove Poem
10. Extract From Les Miserables
11. Love Is…….
12. True Love
13. Captain Corelli’s Mandolin
14. The More You Give, The More You Get
15. Love is Giving
16. The Magic of Love
17. We Are Not Mean’t…..
18. To Love
19. The Bridge Across Forever
20. Where There Is Love

*(22 – 27 Selection of personal readings to be read by each partner)*

22. Always

23. These I Can Promise

24. I’ll Love You Forever

25. If I Can Make You Cry

26. Today

27. I Promise

28. Love

29. Ceremony Of Hands

30. Promises

31. Exchange Of Rings/Gifts

**(1)**

**Order of Ceremony Example**

Civil Partnership Ceremony

*(Names)*

Order of Ceremony

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**Welcome and Introduction by Authorised Registrar**

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Reading *(Optional)*

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**The Legal Requirements of Civil Partnership**

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Reading and/or Ceremony of Hands *(Optional)*

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Promises of Commitment

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Exchange of Rings/Gifts

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Reading *(Optional)*

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Conclusion of Ceremony

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**Signing of Civil Partnership Schedule**

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Closing Words

*Format of ceremony can be adapted to suit your own special requirements*

**Selection of**

**Civil Partnership Readings**

**Which could be included in your ceremony**

*(Read by family, friends or the Officiating Registrar***)**

**(2)**

**A DANCE**

A good relationship is something like a dance – built on the same rules.

Partners in a dance do not need to hold on tightly, because they move in the same patterns, confident in each other.

To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern and freeze the movement – to check if not to stop the beauty of it’s unfolding.

There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand.

Only the barest touch in passing is sufficient to carry the deepest wealth of meaning.

Now arm-in-arm, now face to face, now back-to back- it doesn’t matter which. As dancers, they know they are partners responding to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together and being invisibly nourished by it.

The joy of such a dance is not only the joy of creation; it is also the joy of living in, and for, the moment.

The joy of knowing that lightness of touch and life itself are inter-twined.

*(Colin Wicker)*

**(3)**

**IF WE WANTED TO**

If we wanted to

Our love is strengthened by knowing that each of us could survive on our own

If we wanted to-

But realising that more than anything –

We choose to be together

*(Anon)*

**(4)**

**LOVE**

It is a short word, but it contains all: it means the body, the soul, the life, the entire being.

We feel it as we feel the warmth of the blood, we breathe it as we breathe the air, we carry it in ourselves as we carry out thoughts. Nothing more exists for us. It is not a word: it is an inexpressible state indicated by four letters.

*(Guy De Maupassant (1850 -1893))*

**(5)**

**OH, THE COMFORT**

Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort, of feeling safe with a person: having neither to weigh thoughts nor measure words, but pour them all out, just as they are, chaff and grain together.

Knowing that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping and then – with the breath of kindness- blow the rest away.

*(Anonymous)*

**(6)**

**FROM THE I CHING**

When two people are at one in their inmost hearts, they shatter even the strength of iron or bronze. And when two people understand each other in their inmost hearts, their words are sweet and strong like the fragrance of orchids.

**(7)**

**LOVE’S TESTING**

Life is precious and isn’t always filled with the best or the worst;

It is not all roses or all thorns.

There are ups and downs, good days and bad –

And then there are some days

Which are the nadir, the pits, the all-time lows.

It is at those times when your love for each other will be tested.

It is at those times when you must become true partners and friends.

It is at those times that you must show patience and kindness.

When your love is tested, show respect for each other.

Be the most important person in each other’s life.

Love and care for each other when you are strong, be each other’s strength in weakness.

**(8)**

**GIVE LAVISHLY! LIVE ABUNDANTLY!**

# The more you give, the more you get

The more you laugh, the less you fret

The more you do unselfishly

The more you live abundantly

The more of everything you share

The more you’ll always have to spare

The more you love, the more you’ll find

That life is good and friends are kind

For only what we give away

Enriches us from day to day

*(Helen Steiner Rice)*

**(9)**

**MAY THE SUN BRING YOU NEW ENERGY BY DAY**

May the sun bring you new energy by day.

May the moon softly restore you by night.

May the rain wash away your worries

And the breeze blow new strength into your being.

All the days of your life may you walk gently through the world, and know its beauty.

Now you will feel no rain.

For each of you will be shelter for the other.

Now you will feel no cold,

For each of you will be warmth to the other.

Now there will be no loneliness

For each of you will be companion to the other

Now you are two persons

But there are three lives before you:

His/Her life, his/her life, and your life together.

May beauty surround you both in the journey ahead and through all the years.

May happiness be your companion

To the place where the river meets the sun

And may your days together

Be good and long upon this earth.

**(10)**

**DOVE POEM**

Two doves meeting in the sky

Two loves hand in hand, eye to eye

Two parts of a loving whole

Two hearts and a single soul

Two stars shining big and bright

Two fires bringing warmth and light

Two songs played in perfect tune

Two flowers growing into bloom

Two doves gliding in the air

Two loves free without a care

## Two parts of a loving whole

Two hearts and a single soul

Two hands in a lovers’ grasp

Two gems in a golden clasp

Two verses sung in perfect rhyme

# Two pulses beat in perfect time

Two doves chirping sweet new songs

Two loves lasting all life long

Two parts of a loving whole

Two hearts and a single soul

Two dreams found before too late

Two lives together bound by fate

Two people cling to one another

Two people in love with each other

Two doves – can you see them soar?

Two loves – who could ask for more?

Two parts of a loving whole

Two hearts and a single soul

*(Anon)*

**(11)**

**EXTRACT FROM LES MISERABLES**

You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving.

The great acts of love are done by those who are habitually performing small acts of kindness.

We pardon to the extent that we love.

Love is knowing that even when you are alone, you will never be lonely again.

And great happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved.

Loved for ourselves

And even loved in spite of ourselves.

*(Victor Hugo 1802 – 1885)*

**(12)**

**LOVE IS…..**

More beautiful than roses, much deeper than the seas,

Stronger than a hurricane, but timid like a breeze.

Real as in a picture, but yet it can’t be seen,

More beautiful then anything, as vivid as a dream.

Precious as rare jewels, a bond between two hearts,

A symphony of feelings, when time is spent apart.

Finding common ground, on issues not agreed,

Giving into arguments, tending all your needs

Being there for always, is all I want to do,

Holding on forever, because our love is true

*(Andrea Hill)*

**(13)**

**TRUE LOVE**

## True love is a sacred flame

That burns eternally

And none can dim its special glow

Or change its destiny

True love speaks in gentle tones

And hears with gentle ear,

True love gives with open heart

And true love conquers fear.

True love makes no harsh demands

It neither rules nor binds,

And true love holds, with gentle hands

The heart that it entwines

**(14)**

**CAPTAIN CORELLI’S MANDOLIN**

Love is a temporary madness,  
it erupts like volcanoes and then subsides.   
And when it subsides you have to make a decision.   
You have to work out whether your roots have so entwined together   
that it is inconceivable that you should ever part.   
Because this is what love is.  
Love is not breathlessness,   
it is not excitement,   
it is not the promulgation of eternal passion.  
That is just being "in love" which any fool can do.  
Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away,   
and this is both an art and a fortunate accident.   
Those that truly love have roots that grow towards each other underground,   
and when all the pretty blossoms have fallen from their branches,   
they find that they are one tree and not two.

*(Louis de Bernieres)*

**(15)**

**THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU GET**

The more you laugh, the less you fret

The more you do unselfishly

The more you live abundantly

The more of everything you share

The more you’ll always have to spare

The more you love, the more you’ll find

That life is good and friends are kind

For only what we give away

Enriches us from day to day

**(16)**

**LOVE IS GIVING**

Love is giving, not taking

mending, not breaking,

trusting, believing,

never deceiving,

patiently bearing

and faithfully sharing

each joy, every sorrow,

today and tomorrow

Love is kind, understanding

but never demanding

Love is constant, prevailing,

its strength never failing.

A promise once spoken

for all time unbroken,

Love’s time is for ever.

*(Anon)*

**(17)**

**THE MAGIC OF LOVE**

#### Love is like magic

And it always will be,

For love still remains

Life’s sweet mystery!

Love works in ways

That are wondrous and strange

And there’s nothing in life

That love cannot change!

Love can transform

The most commonplace

Into beauty and splendour

And sweetness and grace!

Love is unselfish,

Understanding and kind,

For it sees with its heart

And not with its mind!

Love is the answer

That everyone seeks…

Love is the language

That every heart speaks…

Love can’t be bought

It is priceless and free,

Love like pure magic

Is a sweet mystery!

*(Helen Steiner Rice)*

**(18)**

**WE ARE NOT MEAN’T….**

##### We are not meant to go through life alone.

We need a partner who will

forever remain by our side -

someone to lean on at times,

remembering, as well,

that we will be leaned on, too;

someone to share our joy

and hold us in our sorrow

Understand that there will be difficult times

and doubt may cloud your lives

It is then that you must

trust each other the most

and believe that love will sustain you.

Do not give up easily;

fight for what is most precious –

your partnership.

Help it survive

by nurturing it every single day.

Never hesitate to say “I love you”

or to be the first one to say “I’m sorry”.

Give a lot,

overlook even more,

and always expect as much in return.

#### Never look back

or lose yourself,

but celebrate the special privilege

of being a couple.

Never lose sight

of what brought you together

in the first place:

your special love for each other.

Cherish that always.

You have our best wishes

As you take this giant step forward.

We wish you nothing but happiness

As you enter into this wonderful new partnership.

**(19)**

**TO LOVE**

To love is to enter a whole New World, a world of togetherness, a world of sharing….All that is dearest and deepest within your hearts.

To love is to remember and keep alive forever all those unique qualities that drew you to one another in the beginning…. Those first halting phrases…..That wonderful feeling of oneness when your eyes first met.

To love is to constantly search for new ways to bring each other happiness, to make the most of every moment you share together, and marvel at how your feelings for one another keep rising to new dimensions.

To love is to create an oasis of tranquillity for one another and a quiet place, apart from others where you need not pretend…..where you can be yourselves……And to know within your hearts you will be accepted by one another.

To love is to greet each day with anticipation. Always eager for another opportunity to share new adventures… And to gather new memories together.

To love is to follow the rainbow through the rain, to be able to laugh at yourselves and be willing to say……..”I was wrong, I’m sorry”. To forgive, and more importantly, to forget, and to always believe and trust one another.

To love is to watch with wonder all the miracles of the world, to find beauty in the simple things in life, and to find, within yourselves, a deeper appreciation and a new awareness of how wonderful it is to be alive………To be happy……….To be together.

To love is coming together from the pathways of your past and then moving forward…..Hand in hand, along the uncharted roads of your future, ready to risk, to dream, and to dare……Always believing that all things are possible with commitment and love.

**(20)**

**EXCERPT FROM**

**THE BRIDGE ACROSS FOREVER**

A soul mate is someone who has locks that fit our keys, and keys to fit our locks. When we feel safe enough to open the locks, our truest selves step out and we can be completely and honestly who we are; we can be loved for who we are and not for who we’re pretending to be. Each unveils the best part of the other. No matter what else goes wrong around us, with that one person we’re safe in our own paradise. Our soul mate is someone who shares our deepest longings, our sense of direction. When we’re two balloons, and together our direction is up, chances are we’ve found the right person. Our soul mate is the one who makes life come to life.

*(Richard Bach)*

**(21)**

**WHERE THERE IS LOVE**

Where there is love the heart is light

Where there is love the day is bright

Where there is love there is a song

To help when things are going wrong…

Where there is love there is a smile

To make all things seem more worthwhile,

Where there is love there’s quiet peace,

A tranquil place where turmoil’s cease

Love changes darkness into light

And makes the heart take “wingless flight”.

*(Helen Steiner Rice)*

**Selection of**

**Personal Readings**

*(It is intended that these readings be read by the couple entering into the partnership)*

**(22)**

**ALWAYS**

#### I vow to you, my heart complete

My every breath, for you I’ll take,

Every thought I’ll have, will be of you,

I’ll love you forever, with a love that’s true

I’ll give to you my days, my nights,

My laughter, my smiles, my love, my life,

I’ll give to you all my dreams,

I’ll give myself and all that means

I vow to you to always care,

To always be one who shares everything

For everyday,

For now, for then and for always.

*(Dan Metz)*

**(23)**

**THESE I CAN PROMISE**

I cannot promise you a life of sunshine

I cannot promise riches, wealth, or gold;

I cannot promise you an easy pathway

That leads away from change or growing old

But I can promise all my heart’s devotion;

A smile to chase away your tears and sorrow;

A love that’s ever true and ever growing;

A hand to hold in yours through each tomorrow.

*(Anon)*

**(24)**

**I’LL LOVE YOU FOREVER**

I’ll always love you

For you’ll always be

The most wonderful thing

That has happened to me

Without you beside me

My day would not start

There’d be no air to breathe

And no beat to my heart

You’re my reason for living

My present, my past

Only you have the power

To make my dreams last

**(25)**

**IF I CAN MAKE YOU CRY**

If I can fill your eyes with pleasure

Just be holding you

In the early hours of morning

When the day that lies aheads not quite begun.

If I can make you smile

If I can move you close

To laughter with a word or two

When your day’s been filled with strangers

And the castles that you build all tumble down.

Oh well, that’s enough for me

That’s all the hero I need to be

I smile to think of you and me

You and I

And how our pleasures make you cry.

*(Paul Williams)*

**(26)**

**TODAY**

Today, I look into the eyes of my best friend

The one with whom I can share anything

My deepest hopes and heart-filled dreams

Inner fears and sheltered insecurities

My most warming joys and overwhelming triumphs

All future journeys that I have left to encounter

This and more I know I can share with you

Today, I take pride in my best friend

With admiration I look upon you and smile

All that you are and all that you do that make me so proud

Every part of you that I have come to adore

And for all those parts I have not yet learned

Today, I give my heart to my best friend

My most prized possession

I give it to you with confidence and trust

Because I know with you it is safe

And this is why

Today I am making this commitment to my best friend

**(27)**

**I PROMISE**

I promise to give you the best of myself and to ask of you no more than you can give

I promise to respect you as your own person and to realise that your interests,

desires and needs are no less important than my own.

I promise to share with you my time and my attention and to bring joy,

strength and imagination to our relationship

I promise to keep myself open to you, to let you see through the window

of my world into my innermost fears and feelings, secrets and dreams

I promise to grow along with you, to be willing to face changes

in order to keep our relationship alive and exciting

I promise to love you in good times and in bad, with all that I have to give

and all I feel inside in the only way I know how

Completely and forever

*(Dorothy R. Colgan)*

**(28)**

**LOVE**

I love you

Not only for what you are

But for what I am when I am with you

I love you

Not only what you have made of yourself

But for what you are making of me

I love you

For the part of me that you bring out

I love you

For putting your hand into my heaped-up heart

And passing over all the foolish, weak things that you can’t help dimly seeing there.

And for drawing out into the light all the beautiful belongings that no one else had looked quite far enough to find.

I love you

Because you are helping me to make for the lumber of my life

Not a tavern, but a temple:

Out of the works of my every day

Not a reproach but a song.

I love you

Because you have done more that any creed could have done

To make me good

And more than any fate could have done to make me happy.

You have done it

Without a touch

Without a word

Without a sign

You have done it by being yourself

Perhaps that is what being a friend means, after all.

*(Roy Croft)*

**(29)**

**Ceremony of Hands**

……………, please face ……………., and hold his/her hands, palms up, so that you may see the gift that they are to you. These are the hands that will love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes: tears of sorrow and tears of joy. These are the hands that will comfort you in illness, and hold you when fear or grief fill you. These are the hands that will give you support and celebrate with you in your accomplishments.

……………, please hold ………….. hands, palms up, where that you may see the gift that they are to you. These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times. They are the hands that will comfort you when you are sick or console you when you are grieving. These are the hands that will love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness. These are the hands that will give you support as he/she encourages you to fulfil your dreams.

Together, as a team, everything you wish for can be realised.

**(30)**

**PROMISES**

Below is a selection of promises which can be incorporated into the ceremony.

(1)

I …………. Promise you ……………………..

that I will grow with you

and value your ideas and expressions

I will always talk with you

and share our happy times and our sad times

I will always honour and respect

the bond we have made today

in the presence of these witnesses or family & friends.

(2)

I promise to be supportive of .......... as an individual

I will cherish him/her throughout our lives together

And I will be faithful to him/her for always.

(3)

I..................pledge myself to.......................

Though our future together is unknown

No matter what our lives hold for us

May our love never fail?

But grow deeper and stronger

As the years pass

(4)

I.................promise you........................

That I will cherish our love

And promise to be faithful

As your partner and your friend

Until my life ends

(5)

I promise to be trusting, tolerant and understanding

To bring happiness and laughter into our partnership

I promise to be your companion in joy and to comfort you in adversity

I vow to be your honest, faithful partner

This is my commitment to you

(6)

I promise to nurture our partnership of lifelong commitment

I will endeavour to enhance your whole person

And look to our future together with joy

(7)

I...........pledge to share my life with .......

I promise to cherish and tenderly care for you

To honour and encourage you.

I will respect you as an individual

And be true to you through good times and bad

This is my commitment to you

(8)

............I choose you above all others

To share my like

I promise to honour this pledge as long as I live

(9)

Personal choice of partners

**(31)**

**EXCHANGE OF GIFTS/RINGS**

At the exchange of rings/gifts you may choose any of the following options. The wording may also be altered to your own personal preference.

(1)

I give you this ring/gift as a symbol of the partnership we have entered into

Wear it from now as my pledge of my lifelong commitment to you

(2)

I give you this ring/gift

as a symbol of the pledge

I have made to you

and as a token of the commitment

we have entered into

(3)

The giving of this ring signifies the promise of a love that is everlasting

(4)

This ring is a sign that my love for you will never end

(5)

This ring is a token of my abiding love

And a sign of the promise I make to you today

(6)

I offer you this ring/gift

As a keepsake of the promises

I have made to you today

(7)

I give you this ring/gift

To remember today

It is a sign of my promise

To love you forever.

Notes

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