



HOW TO CONDUCT

SPECIAL SERVICES

WEDDINGS / DEDICATIONS / FUNERALS



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How to Conduct **Special Services** Weddings / Dedications / Funerals

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Special Services

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HOW TO CONDUCT SPECIAL SERVICES





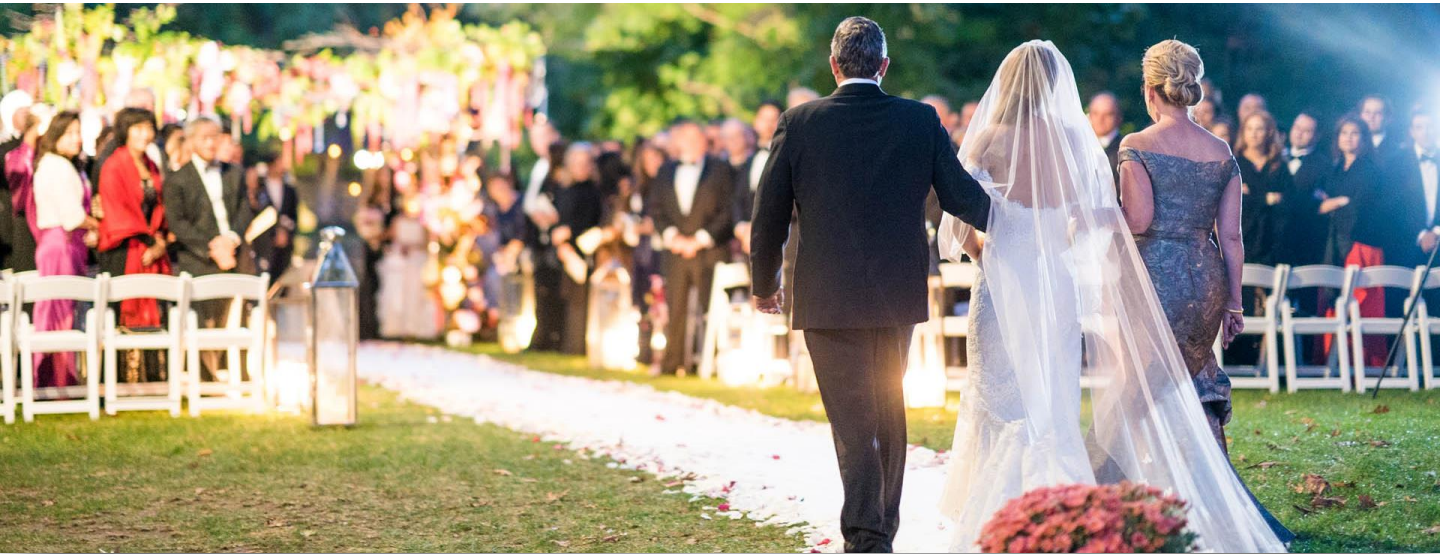
WEDDING CEREMONY



WEDDING CEREMONY



As beautiful as a marriage between two people who loves one another can be, it also can be a sticky situation. Over and above dealing with a nervous bride, a bossy mother or mother-in-law, people being fashionably late, and a number of things that can go wrong if all this is not planned well; the law might also be a hindrance to the minister.



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The Initial Stages When a Couple Ask You To Marry Them

The most important thing you as a minister must do when a couple ask you to marry them, is get them into Pre-Marital Counseling. We have a comprehensive pre-marital counseling book available in our Holy Sacrament eBook; you can download it [HERE](#)

Pre-Marital Counseling is a must; even when couples really love one another and things that they are meant to be. The pre-marital counseling will test their readiness and forms a vital part of their life together. Of course, a couple would be free to start planning their wedding while under pre-marital counseling; and this is where you as a minister have an important role to play.

We will take a look at the initial stages of planning the wedding with the couple in the following segments:

Some Important Questions to Ask:

- When do they want to get married [date & time]?
- How many people would they like to invite [to church & reception]?
- Is there any hostility among the 2 families [what & why]?
- Do they have a wedding planner [who & what will they be doing]?
- Where will the reception be held?
- Are they planning on having a honeymoon?
- Will there be any family members involved in the planning [who & what will they be doing]?

Remember: In most countries a minister must hold a marriage license in order to marry couples, however, in some countries a Chaplain Minister must be present only for signing, you can still do the message.

The Wedding Program and Your Roll

It is important that you become a part of the wedding program and planning; and know your roll in it all. People will always blame the minister for mishaps and problems, so be sure you involve yourself enough, but don't take over everything. Find your place and stick to it. Below is an outline of things we will discuss in this segment:

Your own Wedding Canon

Determine what you are comfortable with first.

In order to give the best service to the couple, you must be comfortable with what you going to be doing

Hold a meeting at least two months in advance if possible

Agenda:

- Share the outline and content of what you are comfortable doing first.
- Ask if there are any changes that they can perceive.

Get the Details

Fact Questions:

- How many people are standing up?
- Do parents all get along? Will they sit together?
- What type of feel does the couple want? Traditional, contemporary?
- What time and why?
- What about family volunteers doing a reading or other part in the ceremony?
- What about a solo?
- What about Musicians verses canned music?
- What about video tape or photos?
- What are the exact pronunciations of the names?
- Are their any health issues that effect the ceremony for anyone?

Pastoral Care Issues

Grief Issues that may have to be addressed:

Expectation issues

Any other questions

Message Issues

Favorite Verse

Message Length (10 Minutes)

Look for an Angle

Let's look a bit closer at each point

Hold a meeting at least two months in advance if possible

It is never wise to rush into things; you must take charge of this issue as you are to counsel the couple and ultimately you will be bringing the couple in front of the Lord to be joined together.

What must be on your Agenda:

- *Share the outline and content of what you are comfortable doing first.*

It's vitally important that you let the couple know what you are comfortable in doing before they ask something you are not comfortable with. Be the first to speak on this.

- *Ask if there are any changes that they can perceive.*

Sometimes there will be other people getting involved in the detail planning; and at times you might encounter headstrong folks who want to change many things. Be prepared for such things so that you may deal with it wisely.

Get the Details

Fact Questions:

- *How many people are standing up?*

During the ceremony you will have people standing, like the bride's

maids and best man. During rehearsals it will be good to get these people used of the positions they will be standing in; and even mark the floor for each one. You will be surprised at how people will go and stand out of line on the wedding day with all the excitement going on.

- *Do parents all get along? Will they sit together?*

The last thing you want is a scene at the wedding, especially when there might be divorced parents sitting next to each other.

- *What type of feel does the couple want?
Traditional or contemporary? Or anything else...*

This can effect your message, so be sure to fit in.

- *What time and why?*

Time plays an important factor in a wedding ceremony, and since many folks do it one time, it is also most people's first time – they set times and do not consider the duration of the rest of the day's programs.

- *What about family volunteers doing a reading or any other part in the ceremony?*

You must check with those who will be doing other items during the ceremony that they stick to the time and in line; this can also effect your message and the entire ceremony.

- *What about a solo?*

Most of the time a good solo voice is far better than a group performing a number or pre-recorded playbacks.

- *What about Musicians verses canned music?*

Live musicians can quickly fall into place and correct mistakes of others, while canned or pre-recordings can't.

- *What about video tape or photos?*

Photographers are not always willing to meet for rehearsals, but it is important to know what they going to be doing, as they can sometimes get in the way of the flow of things.

- *What are the exact pronunciations of the names?*

Make sure you know how to pronounce the couple's full names.

- *Are there any health issues that effect the ceremony for anyone?*

You need to make the necessary arrangements if there is...

Pastoral Care Issues

- *Grief Issues that may have to be addressed*

In some cases there might be various grief issues; someone might not be happy that the couple is getting married, sometimes it can be a jealous brother, sister, or some other family member or even friend. It can be a mother or father. It is your responsibility to know about this and address the issues.

- *Expectation issues*

Every family has their dark hidden secrets; and the last thing that you want is the couple's wedding to be ruined because of deep and hidden issues. Help the couple through this and see how you can assist in addressing these things before the actual ceremony date.

- *Any other questions*

We simply giving you a guide to use here, but do ask the couple to think carefully on everything and tell you about it, or to ask questions about things they not clear about.

Message Issues

- *Favorite Verse*

The couple have a favorite verse they would like to be shared. You can also incorporate this into you message to them.

- *Message Length (10 Minutes)*

A good recommended time for your message is 10 minutes [maximum 15 minutes]. In some cases you will have couples ask that the minister doesn't share a message, but the message is vitally important; but you have to keep in short and meaningful. A lengthy message will not be remembered, because at this time the couple is to excited about being joined together for a life journey.

- *Look for an Angle*

Ask as much questions as you need to in order to find a perfect short and meaningful message or topic for the ceremony.

The Importance of a Rehearsal

The importance of rehearsals can't be over stressed. Rehearsals can iron out most to all the problems that can occur during the actual day of the wedding ceremony. We will take a look at some valuable points to consider when you do rehearsals and then discuss them in some more detail.

Things to Talk About Before the Rehearsal

- Who is in Charge?
- Are there parents or relatives or friends who may try to take control in a way that is undesirable?
- What is the game plan?

Things to Talk About Before the Rehearsal

Things to Talk about when meeting with the Bride and Groom:

TIME:

- Time to gather
- Time to start
- Time to end

Preparing

Wedding Coordinator

Who is in charge? Clarify this.

Suggestions

- Develop Volunteers
- Meet with the Wedding Helpers

Getting to the Wedding Place

- Meet the Staff and Be Very Respectful
- Get familiar with the sound system situations
- Talk to the Photographers and Videographers and clarify expectations

Gather the Bride and Groom

- Go over with them in 2 minutes what is going to happen at the rehearsal.
- Let them know that they are going to introduce everyone before you get started.
- Answer any questions

Gather Everyone

- Welcome
- Prayer
- Introductions
- Expectations

The Actual Rehearsal

- Place everyone in Position
- Put tape down where everyone is going to stand
- Ask the Bride to approve the Position One placements
- Have the Wedding party now go to the back and line up

1. Seating of the Grandparents
2. Seating of the Parents except the Father of the Bride
3. Mother's practice lighting the unity candle
Have the wedding party go to the back and line up
4. The Groom and the Pastor walk into place
5. The Groomsmen and the Bridesmaids processional into position one
6. The Flower Girl(s) and Ring Bearer Practice (talk about the white carpet here)
Have the Wedding party now go to the back and line up
7. The Music Starts: The Bride's Mother usually stands and turns around to signal everyone else.
8. Bride starts walking with her father
9. The Bride and her father processional even with the mothers

The Ceremony

- Giving of the Bride
- Position Two: The Bridesmaids and Groomsmen go to their position two or stay where they are at)
- invocation and purpose of marriage
- declaration of intent
- EXCHANGE OF vows
- EXCHANGE OF rings
- Lighting of the Unity Candle
- SCRIPTURE READING
- MESSAGE -
- DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE
- PRESENTATION OF GROOM & BRIDE
- RECESSIONAL

Let's take a closer look at each point

Things to Talk About Before the Rehearsal

- *Who is in Charge?*

Whoever has been selected to be in charge is your next best friend. Liaise as much as possible with this person to ensure all goes as plan.

- *Are there parents or relatives or friends who may try to take control in a way that is undesirable?*

You find folks like this in almost every family; but as a minister you can't allow this, because this can cause unnecessary arguments and can become ugly. Keep the order and also keep the peace.

- *What is the game plan?*

You must have a game plan which you have pre-discussed with the bride. Remember, there might be many who wants to say how things should go, but at the end, the bride is the boss and you are working for the bride here on her day.

Things to Talk About Before the Rehearsal

Things to Talk about when meeting with the Bride and Groom:

TIME:

- *Time to gather*
- Time to start
- Time to end

It will be important to ensure that everyone is on time on the actual rehearsal and ceremony day. Set a time in good advance of the start of rehearsals and ceremony to ensure everyone is ready and waiting for the bride to arrive and enter. The bride should never arrive and then have to wait for someone who is late and not in position.

It is also important that you start on time so that you can finish on time; because any delays at the church can cause chaos for the rest of the day's program.

Preparing

Wedding Coordinator

Who is in charge? Clarify this.

There might not be any outsourced wedding coordinator, so getting the right people involved can be a challenge, especially getting volunteers together. This is where you need to prayerfully make suggestions

- *Develop Volunteers*
- *Meet with the Wedding Helpers*

People normally look at ministers as people who know what they are doing, but also not everyone likes to be told what to do. You can have too many people running around shouting orders; therefore it is part of your job to ensure there's structure and order among volunteers.

Getting to the Wedding Place

- Meet the Staff and Be Very Respectful
- Get familiar with the sound system situations
- Talk to the Photographers and Videographers and clarify expectations

Remember once again; you are working for the bride; and on the big day you will be her eyes and ears, ensuring everything goes according to plan. It would be a wise thing to set up a checklist for yourself, because you might just overlook a very important aspect which can ruin the ceremony or cause a great hindrance.

Gather the Bride and Groom

- *Go over with them in 2 minutes what is going to happen at the rehearsal.*
- *Let them know that they are going to introduce everyone before you get started.*
- *Answer any questions*

Again, it is of vital importance at this time, just before the rehearsal, that you ensure that both the bride and groom be well informed. You don't want to surprise them and having them wanting to change things at the last minute.

Gather Everyone

- *Welcome*
- *Prayer*
- *Introductions*
- *Expectations*

You will be meeting most of these people for the first time; and because two families are to be joined by marriage, most of them will meet one another also for the first time. Everyone should meet and greet one another, understand one another's roles, and be comfortable and at ease to avoid possible issues.

The Actual Rehearsal

- *Place everyone in Position One First*
- *Put tape down where everyone is going to stand*
- *Ask the Bride to approve the Position One placements*
- *Have the Wedding party now go to the back and line up*

We mentioned this earlier on; it is important to tape down positions of all standing parties; and keep the tape in place for the ceremony.

Once the standing positions has been confirmed and taped, you will move on to the seating of special quest. You don't want to leave this for the ceremony day, because confusion might get the better of the situation and cause unnecessary delays.

1. Seating of the Grandparents
2. Seating of the Parents except the Father of the Bride
3. Mother's practice lighting the unity candle
[this is done during some ceremonies as representation of love and unity].
Have the wedding party go to the back and line up
4. The Groom and the Pastor walk into place
[At this point you are the groom's comforter]
5. The Groomsmen and the Bridesmaids processional into position one [on taped positions]
6. The Flower Girl(s) and Ring Bearer Practice (talk about the white carpet here)
Some will make use of a royal carpet [red carpet]
Have the Wedding party now go to the back and line up
7. The Music Starts: The Bride's Mother usually stands and turns around to signal everyone else.
8. Bride starts walking with her father
9. The Bride and her father processional and in some case even with the mothers

This is the rehearsal time; so make sure everyone practice and prefects it, because the wedding day should be flawless.

You most probably will have the clown of the class present as well; be sure to identify him/her and address inappropriate behaviors.

The Wedding Message

Now comes the most important part of what you are asked to do – the Wedding Message. Be very prayerful and listen to the voice of the Spirit as He will guide you in composing a perfect message. We will look at the guideline and then go into detail afterwards:

Meditation or Sermon

- Different Expectations
- Walk of Life and Marriage Message
- Length 5-15 minutes

Interviewing The Couple

- Special wedding verses
- Give some wedding verses ideas

Such as Genesis 2:24, Ecclesiastes 4:12, Luke 6:38, I Corinthians 13, Ephesians 5, etc.

Find the Angle

- How does a thought or theme in the passage relate to or encourage the couple?

[See sample message:](#)

The couple picked the passage, 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Some Wisdom

- No bashing marriage
- No making it hopeless
- Don't embarrass the couple
- Don't call too much attention to yourself
- Don't be superior or preachy
- Smile, but don't go overboard

Let's take a closer look

Meditation or Sermon

- Different Expectations
- Walk of Life and Marriage Message
- Length 5-15 minutes

In the segment we will take a look at a [sample wedding](#) message, but for now; let's focus on getting in the information you need from your couple to compose their personal message.

Use the answers you got from the couple during your personal sessions with them; and use these answers constructively in composing your message.

Tips:

Remember, you are ministering to the couple, not to the congregation. It is the wedding of the couple before you, not every member who's attending the ceremony.

Use some humor, but don't get personal or negative. Your message is to instill beauty, love, and unity.

Make eye contact with the right people as you address each portion of the ceremony.

Memorize your short message; do not stand and read your message to the couple. Create warmth in their hearts for one another and for God as you minister to them.

Interviewing The Couple

- Special wedding verses
- Give some wedding verses ideas

Such as Genesis 2:24, Ecclesiastes 4:12, Luke 6:38, I Corinthians 13, Ephesians 5, etc.

Find out from the couple if they have any verses in mind they want you to use; and also give some ideas as you should be more well versed as your members. Your input can be a big deal for them.

Find the Angle

- How does a thought or theme in the passage relate to or encourage the couple?

During your interview with the couple, you should pick their brains and find out what's their vision, aims, and goals in life; then use this to research verses that you can use in your message that either relate to them or that can encourage them.

[See sample message:](#)

Also an example of a passage a couple might pick, or one you can suggest if it seem to fit: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Some Wisdom

- No bashing marriage
- No making it hopeless
- Don't embarrass the couple
- Don't call too much attention to yourself
- Don't be superior or preachy
- Smile, but don't go overboard

Lastly: Remember that this wedding is about the bride and groom; don't use your own marriage or someone else's marriage as an example; make good use of scripture which gives us a perfect picture – hope, beauty, and love; which the marriage is meant to be.

Wedding Ceremony / Sample 1

Introduction:

In this segment, we simply give an example of a wedding ceremony message. During your pre-marital counseling sessions, you will be able to get to know the couple a bit better. Make sure during that time you ask them questions which will be useful to you in preparing your special wedding message.

Ceremony:

- PRELUDE
 - SEATING OF PARENTS/GRANDPARENTS
 - LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE
 - PROCESSIONAL (BRIDESMAIDES AND GROOMSMEN COME INTO POSITION ONE. MANY TIMES THE WHITE CARPET IS ROLLED OUT PREPARING FOR THE BRIDE. THEN THE FOLLOW GIRL AND RING BEARER PROCESS INTO PLACE)
 - BRIDAL PROCESSIONAL
 - DECLARATION OF PURPOSE
- Giving of the Bride (Bride and Groom follow the minister to position Two:
- The Bridesmaides and Groomsmen go to their position two or stay where they are at)
-
- Invocation and purpose of marriage
 - Declaration of intent
 - EXCHANGE OF vows
 - EXCHANGE OF rings
 - Lighting of the Unity Candle
 - SCRIPTURE READING
- MESSAGE -
- DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE
 - PRESENTATION OF GROOM & BRIDE
 - RECESSIONAL

Declaration of Purpose

We have come together before the face of God to join _____
and _____ in marriage.

We seek to honor the will of God for marriage, the concern of the Christian Church for its well-being, and the interest of the state in the orderly development of society.

Giving of the Bride

Who gives this woman to this man? Answer:

“Her mother and I” or “We do” or “I do”

Invocation

God, our Father, we praise you for making and redeeming us to live together in love. We thank you for the love and trust which bring _____
and _____ to this their marriage day. Favor them with the honor of your presence at their wedding. Unite them by your Spirit so that together they may reflect the love of Christ for his church. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Institution and Meaning of Marriage

In marriage, as instituted by God, a man and a woman covenant to live together in a lifelong, exclusive partnership of love and fidelity. (Genesis 2:18; Matt. 19:5-6) The apostle Paul sees the union of husband and wife as a symbol of the union between Christ and his church (Eph. 5:31-32). If marriage is to be pleasing in the sight of God, those who enter into this covenant of life must share a common commitment to the Lord of life.

In putting His blessing on a marriage, God intended that it would provide:
—a context within which husband and wife can help and comfort each other and find companionship;

—a setting within which we may give loving and tender expression to the desires God gave us;

—a secure environment within which children may be born and taught to know and serve the Lord; and

—a structure that enriches society and contributes to its orderly function.

When these purposes are prayerfully pursued in union with Christ, the kingdom of God is advanced and the blessedness of husband and wife assured. In Ephesians 5 the apostle Paul admonishes all Christians to develop a mutual respect and love when he says, “Submit to one another out

of reverence for Christ.” When he applies this to the marriage relationship, he instructs the wife to be subject to her husband as the church is subject to Christ, its head. He also instructs the husband to pattern his love for his wife after the example of Christ’s love for his body, the church. Paul says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord,” and “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” In marriage this requires that the husband and wife serve each other by providing the love, nurture and faith which will enrich their lives together and build a Christ-centered home.

Our sinful and selfish tendency to break down what God has built threatens marriage with tensions, agony, and even with broken bonds. People who marry in the Lord, however, may trust that he will lead them and graciously provide for their needs when they follow the biblical pattern for love. “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not selfseeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does no delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” (Taken From CRC Psalter Hymnal)

Declaration of Intent:

Now that you have heard the will of God for marriage do you promise to abide by it?

Exchange of Vows

In the presence of God and before these people I now invite you to exchange your vows.

Groom/Man: I take you, _____ to be my wife and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful husband, as long as our lives shall last. I will love you and give myself up for you. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop the gifts that God has given you.

Bride/woman: I take you, _____ to be my husband and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful wife, as long as our lives shall last. I will love you and give myself up for you. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop the gifts that God has given you.

Rings:

Rings are a symbol of your covenant in Christ Groom: I give you this ring as a symbol of our Covenant in Christ Bride: I give you this ring as a symbol of our Covenant in Christ. Lighting of the Unity candle or Sand Ceremony (Many times a song is sung when this happens)

Message

Declaration of Marriage

As a minister of the church of Christ and by the authority which the state has vested in me, I know pronounce you, _____ husband and wife, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matt. 19:6)

• RECESSIONAL

My Wedding Ceremony / Sample 2

Declaration of Purpose

Today is a very special day as we have come together in the presence of God; the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to join _____ and _____ in marriage.

We seek to honor the will of God for marriage, the concern of the Christian Church for its wellbeing, and the interest of the state in the orderly development of society.

Giving of the Bride

Who gives this woman to this man? Answer: “Her mother and I” or “We do” or “I do”

Before we proceed; Can you, ___[groom]___ declare that your life belongs to Jesus Christ; and that you are born again in the name of Jesus? ___ Can you, ___[bride]___ declare that your life belongs to Jesus Christ; and that you are born again in the name of Jesus? ___ - Amen!

Invocation – [let us all stand as we pray]

Dear Lord God, we praise you for making and redeeming us to live together

in love. We thank you for the love and trust which bring _____ and _____ to this day of their marriage. Favor them with the honor of your presence at their wedding. Unite them by your Spirit so that together they may reflect the love of Christ for his church; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. [you may be seated].

My Wedding Message:

The Bible tells us everything that we need to know about love and marriage; and the Holy Spirit guides us along in a special kind of unity, which reflects the biblical revelation of the unity God is seeking in His church, with Christ as the head. Genesis 2 and verse 24 says, Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. It is in like manner when you give your life to Jesus Christ, that the Holy Spirit comes into you and fills your every fiber of your being, becoming one with you; so too a man joins his wife in marriage and becomes one in flesh. Adam said in Genesis 2 verse 23: This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man – he acknowledge that they are one. Now ___[groom]___, you have found your bone; and are about to be united in marriage; so tonight on your honey-moon you can be sure to check if she is your bone - lol.

As the two of you are standing here in the presence of the Lord today, before all these witnesses, and before me; you must understand that coming into unity with one another comes with the blessing of God's presence. Never forget that God is with you'll every step of the way.

Ecclesiastes 4 and verse 12 says: And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. As you'll are about to be married in the Name of Jesus Christ, allow yourselves to be entwined by the Holy Spirit; forming a Christ centered tri-angle build around love – being, _____, the husband; _____, the wife; and Christ, the head. Just as a threefold cord is the strongest cord you will get, so is the tri-angle the strongest shape you will get; and with this, your rings which you will put on one another in a moment, forms a symbol of endless love which endures forever. This is the God-recipe for a fruitful, lasting marriage, enveloped in a Christ-centered tri-angle of love. However, the ring is more than a symbol of endless love; it represents not only your love for one another, but you'lls life-long commitment to one another.

Will you have challenges in your marriage – Yes.

Will you'll argue in your marriage – Yes.

Will other people cause problems in you'll marriage – Yes, if you'll allow it.

Will your wife do some things you don't agree to; and will your husband do things which you don't agree to – Yes, no one is perfect.

But in all these things, be of good cheer, for Jesus has overcome the world. Therefore, look daily at one another through the eyes of the Lord who looks beyond mistakes and flaws, looking unto perfection.

So what advice can I give the two of you today? First, remember that marriage is a blessing; for it is the Lord who caused you'll to have affection for one another. Understand what biblical love is; study 1 Corinthians 13 well – and I will remind you'll to do so – lol. The best advice I can give you'll is found in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 18: That in all things, give thanks unto the Lord. Give thanks daily; in good times and in bad times. Giving thanks unto the Lord is what will draw the two of you closer and closer, no matter what you'll face in life. From this day forward, ___[husband]___; and ___[wife]___, you'll will be joined together in the sight of God in marriage; and in communion with one another.

The bride and groom will now partake in communion as a symbol of the covenant they are about to make with one another. [let us all stand]

1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus – Take the bread, break it, give thanks and give to one another to eat... Take the cup, give thanks and drink. [you may be seated]

Institution and Meaning of Marriage

In marriage, as instituted by God, a man and a woman covenant to live together in a lifelong, exclusive partnership of love and fidelity. (Genesis 2:18 [And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him]; Matt. 19:5-6) The apostle Paul sees the union of husband and wife as a symbol of the union between Christ and his church (Eph. 5:31-32). If marriage is to be pleasing in the sight of the Lord, those who enter into this covenant of life must share a common commitment to the Lord of life.

In putting His blessing on a marriage, the Lord intended that it would provide:

- a context within which husband and wife can help and comfort each other and find companionship;
- a setting within which we may give loving and tender expression to the desires God gave us;
- a secure environment within which children may be born and taught to know and serve the Lord; and
- a structure that enriches society and contributes to its orderly function.

When these purposes are prayerfully pursued in union with Christ, the kingdom of God is advanced and the blessedness of husband and wife assured. In Ephesians 5 the apostle Paul admonishes all Christians to develop a mutual respect and love when he says, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” When he applies this to the marriage relationship, he instructs the wife to be subject to her husband as the church is subject to Christ, its head. He also instructs the husband to pattern his love for his wife after the example of Christ’s love for his body, the church. Paul says, “Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord,” and “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” In marriage this requires that the husband and wife serve each other by providing the love, nurture and faith which will enrich their lives together and build a Christ-centered home.

Our sinful and selfish tendency to break down what God has built threatens marriage with tensions, agony, and even with broken bonds. People who marry in the Lord, however, may trust that he will lead them and graciously provide for their needs when they follow the biblical pattern for love. “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” (Taken From CRC Psalter Hymnal)

Declaration of Intent:

Now that you have heard the will of God for marriage do you promise to abide by it?

Exchange of Vows

In the presence of our Father God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit; and before these people I now invite you to exchange your vows. Groom, you may share your vows...

Groom/Man: I take you, _____ to be my wife and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful husband, as long as our lives shall last. I will love you and give myself up for you. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop the gifts that God has given you. Bride, you may share your vows...

Bride/woman: I take you, _____ to be my husband and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful wife, as long as our lives shall last. I will love you and give myself up for you. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop the gifts that God has given you.

Rings:

Rings are a symbol of your covenant in Christ Groom, repeat after me: I give you this ring as a symbol of our Covenant in Christ Bride, repeat after me: I give you this ring as a symbol of our Covenant in Christ. Pray over rings on couple's fingers Lighting of the Unity candle [this represents the day the bride and groom was born - Many times a song is sung when this happens

Declaration of Marriage [marriage officer]

As a minister of the church of Christ Jesus and by the authority which the state has vested in me, I know pronounce you, _____ and _____ husband and wife, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. - Amen. You may kiss your bride now.

“Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” (Matt. 19:6)

Pray over the newlywed husband and wife

RECESSIONAL



BABY DEDICATIONS



BABY DEDICATIONS



Although we prefer to dedicate children of married couples, we must understand that if a single person or unmarried couple seeks for their child/ren to be dedicated, we should do so without judgment or condemnation. This is not to say that we need to compromise our beliefs, but keep in mind that the child/ren are innocent, therefore it is right in the sight of God to dedicate all children in our midst.



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Giving of Name/s & the Importance of Spiritual Guidance

Most of the time, when parents / guardians comes to a minister for baby dedication, they have already chosen a name. People choose name for various reasons; sometimes they simply naming their child after a parent or grandparent, other times they name the child after a famous person or simply because they like how the name sounds. Christians also like to name their children after names found in the Bible; and although they choose these names in good faith, they are not always suitable.

Words carry power, in it life and death; but names has the ability alter a person's character and ultimately a destiny. Look at the Bible as a good example in how God changed the names of some – Abram became Abraham, _____ became Peter, Saul became Paul; just to mention a few.

Baby dedications becomes the minister's responsibility to research the child's name and have understanding of its meaning. You are to do so prayerfully, seeking the face of God and acquire the calling and ministry the Lord has planned for this child. If the parents / guardians have chosen a name with a negative meaning or that contradicts the calling God has on this child, it becomes your responsibility as a minister to inform the parents – guide them and help them understand God's plan for the child; but don't make name suggestions unless you are asked. On the contrary, you might find that parents will take some sort of offence to your 'gesture', therefore, do whatever you do prayerfully!

If parents are adamant in keeping a child's name after you have given advise, do not reject dedicating the child; by all means, you should and must do so when asked, for you are God's vessel to anoint the child and speak blessing over his/hers life. As long as you do not fail

in giving sound and biblical advise with understanding after prayerfully enquiring from the Lord; you can wash your hands if the parents do not want to reconsider giving the child another name/s.

Let's take a look at a few biblical mentioned names. First we will look at those who had negative names and what they meant; then we will look at the names God have changed together with their meanings.

An example of a Negative Name that Occur in the Bible:

1 Samuel 25:3 - His name was Nabal [meaning "Fool"]. Imagine you gave your child the name Nabal, or something with a similar negative meaning; wouldn't you then also be a fool?

Samples of Names and Meaning of Names God has Changed:

Peter was called Simon – meaning "listen", but Jesus changed his name to Peter meaning stone or rock. Simon also translates in some places as lilly; a losse floating plant pushed by the current of water to go wherever; being unstable –or- also have a related meaning of unfaithful.

- David meaning beloved; no wonder that even after David's sins, God could still say of him; David is a man after God's own heart.
- Abram meaning father, particular of one, was changed by God to Abraham, father of many.

The meaning of names holds a significant value to life and destinies; be sure to research the meaning of names and prayerfully choose a name in line with God's calling on a child's life. If you have already chosen a name and discovered it has a negative meaning or does not line up with prophesy, you may want to consider changing the name/s before the dedication date. Remember that God has changed names of people so that they may walk in the fulfillment of His calling on their lives.

When Do We Do Dedications & When Do We Baptize

There's a wide debate on this subject; but we will take a look at what we do at Gospel Addicts Global Church. If you feel our way is sound, then by all means make use of it; and if not, please discard it.

There's been an age-old debate where some say that even babes should be baptized by being fully submerged in water, in like manner as an adult will be baptized; while others say it is no necessary to do so. Well, we don't baptize babies or children until a child is of an age where they have good understanding of the significance of water baptism.

We dedicate children to the Lord who does not yet have understanding of deeper spiritual truths. In such a case, the parents or guardians by the guidance of the dedicating minister makes an vow with the Lord. They vow to bring the child up in a Christian way of living as they themselves commit themselves to the House of the Lord.

We only baptize children when they of the age to understand the significant meaning of baptism. Please see our Teaching Manual on [Holy Sacraments](#) – Water Baptism classes 1 & 2.

Is there any conditions to refusal of dedications:

Some church may refuse to do children's dedications of single parents, couples who are not married, families outside their church and ministry, or even if families or parents are not born again. I really want to stress this point: It is really not so much about the parents, but its more about the child. However, if any parent sees it important enough for the children to be dedicated, born again or not, then there

Is hope. As Christians, we have been charge not by power, nor by might, but by the Spirit of the Living God, to effect change. Children are innocent!

Yes, children are born from or out of the sinful nature of their parents, but they are not responsible for what their parents do. Under no circumstances do we discriminate against religion, race, or even children whose parents are gay. Don't get me wrong, the Bible clearly says that God made a woman as a help for the man; and that a man must cleave to his wife – but we are not going to reject a child because of the wrongs of their parents.

As a Christian, born of God and His Word, we understand that our words carry power; and irrespective of the parents beliefs or doings, we believe that the words and blessings we can speak over a child's life can have a positive impact in the years that follow – Therefore we can't deny any child the opportunity of such an anointed service to our community. This can serve as an evangelistic outreach; a place to make a new connection and grow a healthy relationship. The birth of a child can be the turning point of an entire family.

Counseling for Dedication of Children

It is a minister's responsibility to counsel the parents who are to dedicate their child/ren. Below is a guideline on this type of counseling:

Dedicating a child acknowledges God's sovereignty not only over the child, but also Mom and Dad. Parents present their child before God and His people asking for grace and wisdom in carrying out their responsibilities. Parents also come praying that their child might one day trust Jesus Christ as Savior for the forgiveness of sin.

Before the actual ceremony, it is crucial that pastors counsel parents about the meaning of dedication. The best passage for discussion is Deuteronomy 6:4-7 [my personal opinion].

First, it commands parents to love God; if they truly wish for their child to one day love and follow God, their lives must be an example. This is a good time to query parents about their own personal relationship with Christ.

Second, Deuteronomy makes clear that the duty of teaching children belongs to parents; Childrens Ministries can provide weekly instruction, but parents must seize the teachable moments that arise throughout life daily. Explain the value of prayer (for example, repetitious prayers like at meal times and before bed.

Urge them to read aloud Bible stories for devotions. Give them practical ideas they can implement into their daily family routines. Sometimes it is custom for parents to choose godparent(s). Often viewed simply as an honorary title, its value however can be greatly enhanced by defining how this role will be carried out.

Many godparents assume responsibility to provide cards and gifts of a Christian nature for the child on birthdays and holidays. Some periodically ask the parents how they are doing in training their child (Proverbs 22:6). Still others have arranged that in the event of the parents' unexpected death, the godparents will take the child into their home (This of course requires legal documentation in our day and age; and the parents must make such arrangement on papered document).

Most importantly for the now and present time; if parents has candidates in mind as godparents, they should be present and also agree on the vows of the dedicating of the child.

Set up a second meeting where you can discuss the dedication and procedures of dedication.

For the day of dedication, meet with the parents in order to explain where they should stand. For the services given below, the following advice is suggested.

With the pastor standing front and center in the sanctuary, the father should stand immediately to the pastor's right, with Mom next to Dad, accompanied by any other children. Godparents and Grandparents should stand to the pastor's left. Have the wife hold the baby as the family comes forward. During the service, the wife will pass the child to the father for the vow of dedication; the father holding the child during this time symbolizes that the husband is the family's spiritual head. Afterwards, the father is then able to pass the baby to the pastor for the prayer of dedication.

Be sure to recognize everyone who stands before the church, especially siblings. Though this is not their special day, it's important to confirm that they too are important participants. When grandparents stand, you may want to insert the following into the ceremony: "Standing before us are three generations. Seeing this

brings to mind Proverbs 17:6 which tells us that 'Grandchildren are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of children.'

(NAME OF GRANDPARENTS), we know you're very proud of these grandkids. And (NAME OF PARENTS), we trust that the step of faith you're taking today will make (CHILD'S NAME) one day proud of your actions."

Finally, keep in mind that babies are unpredictable. Some may sleep during the dedication, but others might cry, especially while you're holding them! Humor is a delightful way to make light of the situation and dissipate any of your own uneasiness. It is moments such as these that makes baby dedications so special. The sacred and the mundane collide. And through it, we see a glimpse of the glorious Gospel--God being found in the appearance of man.

You might want to hold your second meeting with parents, grandparents, and godparents in the church hall where the actual dedication will be held; for everyone to understand and know their position on the day of dedicating the child/ren.

Please Note: It is not necessary for you to make announcements of dedication date to your congregation, as some might not attend your service on this day for whatever reasons. It is, however, important for the whole congregation to witness such dedications; therefore, notify the necessary folks and simply slot it into the Sunday Service Schedule.

Sample 1 of a Dedication Service

Most of the time folks want their children to be baptized, they don't want an entire sermon, so most dedications only takes a few minutes and can be done just after [or even before] a Sunday Sermon. Keep in mind that small children are restless and you don't want to much distractions as you will have an entire congregation present. Keep you dedication short but super insightful. Below we include a step-by-step guide as an example of a baby/child dedication.

Step-by-Step Guide for Dedications:

As your date has been set, the dedication would be preferred to be done during a Sunday Service. Prior to the dedication, you will give the parents the understanding of the significance of dedicating their child or children as well as the expectations. Many folks thinks that ministers does not value dedications because it seems as a rush segment popped into a scheduled service. As we made mention above, small children and babies get irritable during longer services, so we prefer to take a few minutes out from a Sunday Service to do dedications. If a child then does get irritable, the mother can be dismissed to take care of the child shortly after the child has been dedicated; however, as a minister, complete the set time of dedication and do not rush it because of an irritable or crying child remember, the baby or small child does not understand what's going on with strangers around them, so be patient.

The Dedication:

HAVE PARENTS/CHILDREN COME FORWARD

God sees children as important ... so do these parents.

Ps. 127:3 says: "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward." Some gifts have some strings attached ... some do not. In this case, God's gifts to you DO have some strings attached.

Since God has given you the precious gift of children, He has also given you an awesome responsibility.

God has given you the responsibility to:

- Train up your children in the ways of God.
- Be an example of Christian living both inside and outside the home.
- Provide for, protect, and nurture your children.
- Make them a part of your family, sharing with them your love, your time, and your life.
- Teach them to love the same Jesus that you love ... and to serve, obey and honor Him with all their heart.

As you heard in the message this morning, you are not alone in this responsibility.

[Take Note: Your sermon on a dedication Sunday should reflect on family. Even when you choose to do a dedication before the main sermon segment, do share before calling the parents and child/ren]

God, your Heavenly Father, is always with you to provide you with the strength, encouragement, love, and wisdom you need.

This morning, we are not only dedicating the child, but we are also dedicating the parents. By coming up here this morning, you, as parents, are publicly saying that you want to raise your child in a Christ-honoring home ... and are asking God's blessing on your ministry as Christian parents.

In answering the following questions I'm going to ask you, you are making a vow to GOD. NOT to me ... NOT to your child ... BUT ... to GOD. If you are willing to commit your child to God, and to dedicate yourself to raising them in God's strength, and for His honor and glory ... THEN ... reply by saying "I do" to the following Vows:

- Do you recognize your child as a gift from God, and give God thanks for blessing your life with His gift?
- Do you then dedicate your child to the Lord, Who gave you your child?
- Do you pledge, as Christian parents, that you will bring up your child in a Christian home, looking to God for wisdom, strength, and guidance?
- Do you promise to give your child every possible benefit of home, school and church?
- Do you promise to pray for your child on a daily and regular basis, realizing that it is only with God's hand upon their life that they can be truly blessed?
- Do you ask God's blessings upon the life of your child, to guide, guard, and direct them through all their years?

By answering yes to these questions, you both have made a vow to God in raising a child that can be used mightily in His Kingdom. In the old Jewish tradition, mothers would dedicate their sons to the Temple of God, for the priest to raise the boy and to serve in God's House; but today, although you can still do so, we dedicate the child and parents in the vows and commitment to bring the child up in a Christian home and way of life, as the earthly father is the priest of his home.

[You can research mother's who dedicated their son/s to the House of God and use these examples in your pre-message before calling the parents up with their child]

Dedicating the Child:

As the Spirit leads you with revelation, pray over the child and dedicate the child to the Lord. You will also speak words of blessings and prophecies over the child.

Sample 2 of a Dedication Service

Children are a gift from God. Psalm 127:3 proclaims that "Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him." As believers we are called to recognize that children belong first and foremost to God. God in his goodness gives children as gifts to parents. They not only have the awesome responsibility of caring for this gift, but also the wonderful privilege of enjoying the gift.

Because children belong to God and are given by grace as gifts to parents, it is only proper and appropriate that children be dedicated back to God.

We are told in 1 Samuel 1 that Hannah presented her son Samuel to the Lord. In Luke 2:22 we read that Mary and Joseph brought their baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem in order to present him before the Lord. In the same way, (PARENTS) today bring their (SON/DAUGHTER + CHILD'S NAME), presenting first themselves and then their (SON/DAUGHTER) before the Lord our God.

Accompanying them in making this commitment are (CHILD'S) godparents, (GODPARENT'S NAME). And witnessing this as well are (PARENT'S OTHER CHILDREN). (PARENTS), I call your attention to the commands of God recorded in Holy Scripture.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 tells us: "Hear O Israel: The Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on their children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

Ephesians 6:4 says: "fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath

instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

God's instructions are plain. (PARENTS), love God with every ounce and fiber of your energy and teach (CHILD) to do the same.

As you love God, one another, and (OTHER CHILDREN), you will model before (CHILD) a wonderful love for God that he will want for himself. (PARENTS), by coming forward before God and his people, do you hereby declare your desire to dedicate yourselves and your (SON/DAUGHTER + CHILD'S NAME) to the Lord? If so, please respond by saying "we do." ("We do.")

Having come freely, I ask now that you enter into the following commitment in the presence of God and his people (Wife hands child to husband as a sign of his spiritual headship in the family). So that (CHILD) may walk in the abundant life that Christ offers, do you (PARENTS) vow by God's help and in partnership with the church, to provide (CHILD) a Christian home of love and peace, to raise him in the truth of our Lord's instruction and discipline, and to encourage him to one day trust Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord? ("We do.")

Modeling this kind of love can not be done alone. It requires the help of others. For this reason, (PARENTS) call upon the help of (GODPARENTS). I now direct my questions to you. By coming forward before God and his people, do you hereby declare your desire to help PARENTS fulfill the vow they have just made by becoming (CHILD'S) godparents? If so, please respond by saying "we do." ("We do.")

Would you please stand? Having come freely, I ask now that you make the following commitment to those who stand before you: So that (CHILD) may walk in the abundant life that Christ offers, do you vow by God's help, to be faithful in your calling as members of the body of Christ, to help (PARENTS) be faithful to God, and to help teach and train (CHILD) in the ways of the Lord so that he might one day trust him as Savior and Lord? If you accept this responsibility, please respond by saying "we do."

(Dad hands child to pastor for prayer of dedication)

(Presentation of Certificate and Gift)

(May wish to sing dedication hymn)

Dedicating the Child:

As the Spirit leads you with revelation, pray over the child and dedicate the child to the Lord. You will also speak words of blessings and prophecies over the child. This is not just a spur of the moment prayer; it is a preordained prayer after seeking God's face concerning this child. I'm not saying it should be a prepared prayer; but you must pray before hand so that on the day, you may release revelational words over the child.

Below is a sample of a Dedication Certificate. It is good to present the parents or guardians of a child with such as a reminder of their commitment they have made with the Lord to bring the child up in the Christian way of life.

Also have your hospitality department buy a gift

Certificate of Dedication

We, _____ and _____
dedicate ourselves to the Christian nurturing of
We are faithfully entering into this commitment with the Lord
under the ministry of Gospel Addicts Global Church

Signed,

Parent / Gaurdiant

Parent / Gaurdient

Local Pastor

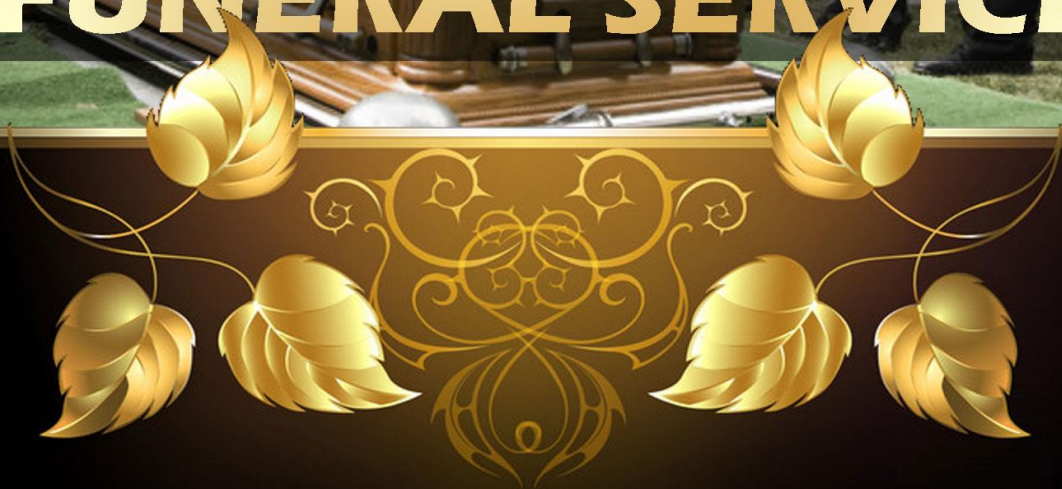


Scan of child's feet

Please note: The space on the certificate seen with baby foot prints are to be an actual scan of the dedicatee's feet.



HOW TO CONDUCT A FUNERAL SERVICE



www.gospeladictsglobal.wordpress.com

FUNERAL SERVICES



Funerals are unexpected and have several areas that needs special attention. Your funeral message can take on various forms pending on the nature of death. We will do our best in easing out some of the most difficult situations a minister can face. We hope that at the end of this guide, you will be more confident in handling a funeral service.



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Have Compassion for All People

This is most probably the worst part of a ministers job, dealing with those who lost a loved one. For years I dreaded that very moment that I will get the news that someone wants me to do a funeral service. First of all, what do you say, what if the deceased were not born again, what if you don't really know the person; these are just some of several question; but the reality will come when you have to face it.

My first word of advise to you would be:

Learn to have compassion for all people!

It doesn't matter who you are dealing with, have compassion on those who lost a loved one. The Bible does tell us to mourn with those who are mourning, cry with them who is crying [].

This is not a time to be stubborn or hardheaded; if by you crying with those who are crying going to give them any comfort, then let the tears run, but don't be false, be full of compassion. Compassion is allowing yourself to feel other's pain and expressing your heart to them.

Tips:

Don't ever tell someone you know how they feel, or that you understand their pain or anger; trust me, you don't – it doesn't matter who you lost, every person have their own feelings which are theirs. No man can truly feel the emotions of the next.

Sometimes it is better to say less and listen more; people don't want to accept the lost of loved ones.

You can't answer all the questions grief have; accept it like it is.

The natural nature of people is to either blame God or simply ask why? You can't explain these things, but you can be there when they're ready to listen.

Intercession is of vital importance. Many times with people who are angry at God for losing their loved ones don't want people to sit and pray with them, even their own pastors. This is your time to intercede for such folks.

Most importantly, be there when they want you there, and be not when they want not.

Helping People Through Grief

There are various types of grief and no one grieves that same way. Grief is a mysterious experience due to the fact of one doesn't know exactly how they will handle the grief until it comes. And when it comes, people say, "Well what is good about grief?" It is a healthy thing. It is a natural thing. It is a normal thing in life. Yet it is a tough thing when you face it alone.

As a minister we should understand that a true born again Christian does not experience death, but rather a passing – passing from this life to eternal life in Heaven; and on the other hand, someone who is not born again or not a true Christian might not. It is not for us to judge or give false hope; because a true born again Christian in our eyes could have secretly live very far from God, whereas a true evil doer could have surrendered his heart totally to Jesus in his/her last breath. Only God knows!

We are not here to reassure grieving people of the final destination of those passing away, rather we are here to comfort and support them that is grieving. Good grief is when we normalize the grieving process. It is bringing into reality the acceptance that we all will experience

either death or passing on. Bad grief on the other hand is when people remain in denial and bitterness or anger rage in them. It is good to get a grieving person to attend a grief counsel group; because a grieving person can only be healed through other grieving people under structure and experienced supervision.

Grief is a natural reaction to lost; and no one can say that another is over grieving, or should grief their lost for long periods of time; but counseling does help relief certain pains of lost – but the pain will remain for a very long time. It will never truly go away, but it will become easier; therefore, we must endure it with people.

When you minister to somebody, you just don't want to fake it or put it on or act like this what you're called to do as a pastor so you're just doing it like perfunctory with all your heart. You've got to have that caring spirit and you have to have that acceptance in your attitude as you accept them where they are. And in your practice as a minister and in your ministry, you need to accept and affirm all of the person's feelings in your support circle whether you're doing pastoral counseling one on one in your office or you're having a support group that would be involved with good grief, the circle of grief or whatever.

As you provide the caring support and serve as companions on each of the individuals unique journeys through their loss, you want to be an empathetic listener and a compassionate witness. You want to witness with your heart and your eyes and your ears. Put yourself into it. Be there with them and be prepared to minister to them. We believe, and **you should believe, every person has the right** to be heard and understood. So say, no feelings are wrong feelings so to speak. There can be feelings that are not helpful, but we're not going to say that it's wrong because it's you. Whatever you're going through is important to you.

So if the community is grieving, the Bible says that if one member

suffers, they all suffer. You want to hold on to hope in that presence of suffering.

There's Five Stages of Grief; and You've got to go through them all in order to experience the proper healing process.

- How long it takes?
- What it takes in the process of it?

That's up to each person. But they must go through the five stages to be well to heal again. Not everyone goes through the stages at the same time. It's different for each person. You can't force a person through each stage. They have to go through it at their own pace. And you miss one step forward, and that's two steps backward maybe in this experience. But it's all part of the process.

Stage 1 is called Denial

This thing can't be happening to me. You're looking for your spouse in familiar places. And in death there, you might still be setting the table for the person. Or right thing as if they're still living here. Maybe they're on vacation, you're thinking into your mind.

Stage 2 & 3 is called Anger / Blame

...or like they say they don't have to sequential here. When it happens, before, middle or after, all three parts or all five stages have a little bit of anger in it, I don't know. But we go into the why me? I'm very upset. You want to fight back or get even with someone. Some of you may have offended your loved one or maybe you could've even had a harsh thing to do or say before or after the death. There's a lot of anger there.

And you want to get even with the spouse of divorce for death, anger at the deceased.

- Blaming them for leaving.
- Anger with a doctor,
- anger with a medication,
- anger with someone who didn't do more,

- anger at God,
- anger at life,
- anger at the devil.
- Anger, anger, anger, anger.

Stage 4 is called Depression

This is the big one. And this one can last for a long time. It can be sporadically filled in and out of your life if you don't get the proper help you need. And if you get involved in this, it brings out a chemical imbalance and it can really affect you. They can go to mood disorders. So there will be overwhelming feelings of hopelessness and frustration and bitterness and self-pity and mourning, loss of the person as well as the hopes and dreams and plans for the future.

- You'll feel a lack of control.
- You'll feel, lots of times, numbness.
- You'll sometimes feel suicidal.

Stage 5 is called You have to accept the loss

...not just to try to bury it quietly. You must have a realization that it takes two to break a marriage. So in death it is very important to realize that the person is gone. Death is not their fault. They didn't leave you on purpose. Even in the case of suicide, we see that often as the deceased person is not in their right mind at the time that they took their own life.

They weren't in the right frame of mind at all. And it's a healthy process to accept and look for the good that can come out of pain of loss. And in turn, to find comfort and healing, that's your goal and in turn towards personal growth. Work hard at focusing on fond memories of that person regularly.

Even if you can't believe that right now, just know that in time, you will be better. It will get better. To feel the pain after loss is normal.

It proves you're alive

Helping Those Who are in Denial

Keep Them Close and Offer Support

It is important to consult with leaders who are full of compassion to quickly work on a support system in assisting the family with all they need in a time of loss. There's three stages you and your team's involvement are crucial:

Before the funeral

During the funeral

After the funeral

Offer your team's assistance before the funeral. Perhaps some leaders can take care of children, providing meals, and making the necessary funeral arrangement; but don't overwhelm the family with your presence.

Have leaders beside the close family during the funeral. I have seen so many times the heartless acts of people laughing and joking during funerals while the close family is laying to rest their loved ones, but you will have people like that. Let your leaders shield the close family from such insensitivity. If there's any small children, have some leaders look after them.

The after funeral can be a difficult time for the family. While at a funeral you have some inconsiderate folks, people simply move on with life after a funeral; and they forget that the family is still grieving.

You must ensure that you and your leaders check in with the family; even weeks and sometimes months afterwards if necessary.

The After-Care of Grieving Souls

After laying a loved one to rest, things can get lonely and the devil uses this as play time. Deep depression can start, even suicidal thought may developed. If you don't have a grief counseling group at your church, find a good Christian Grief Counsel Group. They will be able to be of great assistance and comfort for those who are mourning.

We should never assume that people are fine, that they simply mourning. When people feel alone they feel that people don't care about them; and this is when people leave the church. You should put all your focus on those who are mourning, but do make the time to follow up, visit them, assist them wherever you can, and keep them close to you or your leadership.

Conclusion:

No one is perfect in dealing with those left behind after loosing a loved one, but having real and sincere compassion towards them is key in ministering to the broken hearted. If a family have lost a Mother / wife or father / husband, things can be real though financially. Get some leaders who are willing to help out. If there's little children left behind, make sure to assist them wherever you can. If a couple have lost a child; or brother or sister, the grief is almost always far worse than lassoing a spouse. It is hard to deal with such lost; so just think of how difficult it must be for the family.

There's many Christian websites with a lot more information on dealing with funerals and grief; please do research as this segment is meant to be a guideline only.

Sample Funeral Service 1

Introduction:

In this segment, we will assume the deceased was a good man and lived a good life. This message simply serves as an example of how to construct your message.

Message:

Each and every one of us are limited by time in this world; and when death comes, it is sure to leave us with grief; and while it is okay to grieve our loved ones, we must understand a few simple things about life. One is, that a born again Christian does not experience death; rather, a born again Christian merely passes on. The Bible reveals to us both ends of the story; of those whose faith is in Christ and also those whose faith is not in Christ. The one whose faith is in Christ passes on to everlasting life in Heaven with God, while those whose faith is not in Christ dies and awaits the second death which the book of Revelations speaks about. 1 Corinthians 15:26 foreshadows this by saying: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Where is your faith invested? Romans 5:17 says: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign by one, Jesus Christ." Is your faith invested in Christ?

Some of you might think how is this an appropriate message for a funeral, but it will all make sense in a moment. Today as we are gathered here to lay to rest the body John Doe on our end, someone is welcoming him on the other end. The most difficult thing to except in life when we feel that we lost someone is to understand that death is gain. Now you might ask: 'How can there be gain in loosing one's life; and moreso, loosing a loved one?'

In some stage of our life we will experience pain and hurt, we will

experience grief; and it is okay for us to feel these emotions. It is understandable that sometimes we even experience anger, but we should not dwell on it, for anger is the shortfall of fools. We can never blame God for taking away our loved ones. Some ministers will say at the grave side that 'God has given and God has taken'. This is not true and it's a lie. God gives, He does not take away; devil takes away – but we have the assurance that when a Christian passes on, he or she will not be taken by devil, but enters the everlasting peace haven of Heaven.

We see in 1 Corinthians 15:25-26 that death is an enemy of God - "For He [Jesus] must reign , till He [Jesus] hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Understand that the word destroy means to; paralyze, nullify, or annihilate. Therefore, we can rest assure in Christ Jesus that one day soon, we will reunite with our loved ones, for death will be annihilated, it will be completely remove from existence. As a Christian, when we pass on from this world, we are baptized into everlasting life. Death in this world [or in the flesh] is gain in the spirit for a Christian; and although we can only truly understand the peace our loved ones are experiencing in Heaven when we ourselves pass on, it can give us the hope of seeing them again.

What is it then that we can learn from the experience of earthly or bodily death of those who has passed on? The first and foremost important lesson to learn is: We are all limited by time – and the Bible tells us; 'Salvation is for today, tomorrow is promised to no man'. Yes, we are left in this world with the hope that our loved ones has passed on to Heaven; but what about those who are not of the household of faith? The answer to that question is what should lay a burden on us and compel us to minister salvation unto those in our midst who is not born again.

1 John 5:4 tells us a beautiful story; "For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the

world, even our faith.” The word overcomes in this passage echoes the word conquerors found in Romans 8:37 – “...in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.” It also echoes the word reign in 1 Corinthians 15:25 – “For He [Jesus] must reign , till He [Jesus] hath put all enemies under His feet.” The proper expression of the word reign used in the Greek translations is ‘to King.’ In other words; ‘Jesus must King, till He hath put all enemies under His feet’; and continuing into verse 26, ‘The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.’ The question today is; how does Jesus King in this world if He is seated in Heaven. He Kings through those who are filled with His Spirit; and the last enemy to be put under Jesus’ feet will be done through us. How? Every time a Christian passes on, death is being brought down; and when the last Christian enters Heaven, death will be destroyed together with satan and everyone who did not believe. Therefore, as we lay John Doe at peace today, let us also take the opportunity to invite those who are not born again to except Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

John Doe lived a life of a perfect example, baring witness of Jesus Christ to his world; and although he can speak for himself today, I am confident in the fact that he would say the same thing today to you: ‘Come, except Jesus while you still have time.’

Sample Funeral Service 2

Memorial Service of Ruth Smith (Name Change)

By Henry Reyenga

Ruth Smith was born on March 27, 1949 to George and Dorothy Allen. She adored her mother and father, and brothers, Ted and Leon. Her father was not just any ordinary man, George would roam the streets with a megaphone, encouraging and cheering people into a walk with Christ. When someone seemed interested, George Allen would personally witness to him or her. Many times a struggling man or woman began a walk with Jesus right then and there. Ruth admired her dad's passion. His talk and walk were tightly connected.

In high school, Ruth became a cheerleader. And like her father, she was no ordinary cheerleader. She would encourage and cheer for the team like the other cheerleaders, but if she saw someone who was new, alone or struggling, she would actually put her pom-poms down, and while the rest kept cheering for the game, she would cheer up the hurting person. This beautiful, bold and vivacious Greek girl, caught the eye of a talented, but quiet young Dutch man. They married in their early twenties and together had six boys. We're going to hear from two of their sons shortly.

When her marriage and family was young, Ruth became a megaphone of encouragement, and faith to everyone she connected to: As Ruth's dependence on Christ deepened, so did her desire to encourage others in their faith!

2 Cor. 4:13-15 It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Ruth believed in Christ and she, like this passage highlights, spoke with that same spirit of faith. Ruth had a living walk and relationship with Jesus. She also sought to share her walk with as many people as possible! Ruth not only

spoke with that same spirit of faith, she also encouraged in that spirit of faith, prayed in that spirit of faith, remembered in that spirit of faith, embraced, loved, and cherished in that same spirit of faith.

Oh, how she cherished and respected you, Marty. Then Ruth led as many women as possible to cherish and respect their husbands. She cherished and encouraged her six sons and led others to cherish and encourage their own families. And Ruth loved the wives of her boys.

You were “her girls”. Her grandchildren delighted her. And even on her last day, Ruth was able to enjoy some of her young grandchildren by her side. Like her father before, Ruth’s megaphone was not only her words of faith, but also her faith expressed in deeds of faith and love. Whether you were in her family or not, if you knew Ruth Smith, you were blessed!

Our Pain is God’s Megaphone

Ruth Smith’s earthly absence brings to all of us a painful sadness. But we grieve in hope! 1 Thessalonians 4:13 says, “We do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope.” Her hope was and our hope is in Christ. We celebrate her life today, while also grieving her death. I believe that Ruth would ask us to bring all that painful grief to God. C.S. Lewis said, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone!” (The Problem of Pain, 1940).

The pain of our dear Ruth’s departure is tempered by her conviction, echoing the Apostle Paul urgency, in Philippians 1:21, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

Ruth is Still A Cheerleader

In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, those who have died in the Lord are depicted as fans in the stands, cheering on the faithful in the great race of faith. Hebrews 12:1 says, “therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...Let us throw off everything that hinders us.” I am trying to listen carefully for her voice of her cheering in that great cloud of witnesses. I want to hear her. What would she be urging us this morning? What would her cheer be?

I think I know. It was Ruth Smith herself who designed the sign that is nicely situated on the front of this auditorium. What would she be cheering us

to do this morning? Can you hear her cheer? I hear it in my heart and I see it on the wall. I read it in Philippians 4:4a, what would she be cheering us to do this morning? Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice..."Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." Philippians 4:4-5.

Oh I think I hear one more encouragement. "Hey everyone, get out your megaphones of faith out and cheer the world to come to Christ.

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