



## **The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord - Job 1:21b**

In your hour of loss, Calvary Baptist Church would like to express our deep and heartfelt sympathy in your hour of bereavement and would like for you to know our prayers are with you at this hour.

In our efforts to assist you in properly planning the eulogistic services for your loved one, our Pastor has prepared this information for your perusal and consideration.

### **I. The Christian Funeral**

The Christian funeral is a worship service in which God's people witness to their faith in the hope of the Gospel, the communion of saints, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting and in which also assurance of God's love and salvation in Christ is ministered, especially to the Christian bereaved. The Gospel is also presented to any present who are unsaved after which an invitation is given to accept Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. 1 Peter 1:3-4; 1 Peter 3:15

### **II. Towards an Understanding of the Christian Funeral**

A funeral service at Calvary Baptist Church is *worship* of the true and living God. The funeral is God's way of bringing comfort to the hearts of those who mourn as Scripture is read and preached, prayer is offered, praises are sung, grief is expressed, remembrance is cherished; and it is an occasion in which we, by the grace of God, bless the name of the One who gives and takes away, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The presence of family and friends at this time serves to support and strengthen those who sorrow. The funeral gives thanks for life lived and lifts meaningful memories of lost loved ones helping us learn vital lessons from it.

Thus, in the funeral service, *we gather primarily to worship God and confess our faith in a living Savior*. Though we mourn our loss and remember our loved one, *our focus is fixed on Jesus Christ*, the Author and Finisher of our faith. John 4:23-24; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 3:23

### **III. Funeral Matters/Logistically Speaking**

1. While many choose the chapel at a funeral home for the memorial service, others prefer the church building where the Gospel is preached, believers are baptized, faith is nourished, marriage vows are made, communion is received, and prayers are offered by the people of God. Genesis 35:15
2. The practice of "viewing the remains" is customary; however, it is totally a family decision. Accordingly, the church will abide by the family's wishes. In some instances the family may wish to have the casket kept closed.
3. Because fraternal or civil rites are not part of the worship service, these organizations should pay tribute to the deceased at another hour and place, i.e. the graveside service.

4. Many people choose to have the memorial service before the burial; others have the burial before the service. Either approach is appropriate and the church makes no recommendation in this regard. Over the years Christians have generally shunned the practice of cremation.
5. When funerals are conducted at Calvary Baptist Church, the Pastor shall ordinarily conduct the services in their entirety. The Pastor has sole responsibility and discretion in carrying out the church guidelines for funeral services. Only those special requests (regarding things pertaining to the service itself, whether music or guest minister) that meet the approval of the Pastor are acceptable.
6. *The Word of God is central*, and everything that takes place must be consistent with biblical principles of worship. Matthew 4:4; Romans 15:4; John 6:63
7. Prayer in funerals normally includes thanksgiving for the memory of the dead, one's triumph in the resurrection of Christ, and intercession for the family and friends who remain.
8. Worshipers are participants in the service; therefore, the singing of hymns, confession of faith, prayer, and hearing God's word are appropriate means of worship. John 4:23-24
9. Since God is the object of worship, the eulogizing of a person in the worship service is discouraged. Colossians 1:18; John 3:30; Rev 5:12

#### **IV. Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Is there any day right for a funeral? No. Generally, it is customary to avoid the Lord's Day as to keep it set apart unto the Lord. Any day Monday through Saturday is deemed appropriate. You'll also want to keep in mind the various events already slated for the auditorium use and do your best to work around these.
2. Is there a cost for the use of the church? Only for nonmembers and in cases where the member has become inactive will there be a cost to use the church for funeral purposes.
3. What is the best place for a funeral? No one can answer that question for you. This suggestion is offered only to assist you in making a proper determination. Customarily, Christians prefer the church. The church is the center for worship and the most familiar setting in which to contemplate God and sacred events such as communion and baptism. Through the ages the church has been the gathering place of the saints for the preached word, where the Songs of Zion and the prayers of believers are lifted to God. These memories comfort those who mourn. The church is open for you at any time that you wish to plan your service Monday through Saturday. It is your church and a Christian burial will not be denied anyone.
4. Do you eulogize unbelievers? No. Unbelievers are asked to make funeral arrangements with the funeral chapel.
5. Does the pastor or his designee perform graveside services? Yes. Graveside services are often for simplicity and convenience and are sometimes the expressed wish of the deceased. The following are some issues you may want to consider in making graveside plans:
  - a. You may wish to consider the forecast for wind, rain, snow or harsh summer temperatures.

- b. The time must be brief as to prevent prolonged standing.
  - c. The ministry of comfort may be lost to physical stress and inclement weather.
6. What do I say when friends come to call? Thank them sincerely for their kindness. Usually they don't know just what to say. But receive their comfort as from the Lord, and listen to it for God's voice speaking to you through them in terms of strengthening. Don't be afraid to talk with them about your loved one who has passed away. Put them at ease and they will be able to strengthen you even more.
  7. What passages of Scripture will help me most? The word of God is the only source of true comfort and strength to you, especially the Psalms. Psalm 1; Psalm 23; Psalm 24; Psalm 27 (particularly in the death of a parent); Psalm 34; John 14:1-6; Romans 8:35-39; II Corinthians 5; I Peter 1; Revelation 22.

## **V. Funeral Arrangements**

1. Call a funeral home of your choice. Later, they will ask you to come to the funeral home to make arrangements for the service.
2. Upon the death of a loved one it is customary that family members contact the pastor directly rather than the funeral home.
3. Please do not plan a funeral without first consulting the church. The schedule of the pastor and the church should be considered as well as the schedule of the funeral director.
4. Select a resting place, if you have not done so already. Keep in mind the coming generations who will be interested in the life and character of your beloved one.
5. Put your trust in God. Do not ask, "Why?" - but ask rather - "How can I find comfort and strength from the Lord that I need now?"

A Christian's funeral should be a testimony to Our Lord Jesus Christ, drawing attention to Him, that the family may be comforted and non-Christian friends may come to Him through His grace. A Christian funeral can be a great climax to an earthly life that has been lived in trust and service to Jesus Christ.