

Preparing to Say Your Final Goodbye

Funeral Planning Guide for Families

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff,
they comfort me. Psalm 23:4



One of life's most difficult assignments for families comes when a loved one passes away and the family has the responsibility of planning how they will say their final goodbyes. Whether it's called a funeral, a memorial, or a celebration of life service, planning it can be difficult for those who remain. Taylors FBC is committed to helping families through this difficult time by coming alongside them to help create, and then experience, a fitting tribute for their loved one. As a part of that commitment, as soon as possible once the church office is notified of a death, our Minister of Pastoral Care will contact the family, not only to offer comfort, but also to provide practical guidance in planning a fitting farewell service.

“

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-31

A funeral service is a great opportunity to accomplish several very important outcomes:

- To worship the Lord who created heaven and earth.
- To celebrate the life of the individual who has passed.
- To proclaim two important spiritual truths about death – (1) to acknowledge the reality of death and why it is our enemy, and (2) to declare the living hope which believers in Jesus Christ have. The Apostle Peter describes that living hope well in 1 Peter 1:3-5: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded by faith for a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.” (ESV)
- To help family and friends find God’s peace and comfort in the midst of their deepest grief.

This guide has been prepared to help you and your family plan a service for your loved one that accomplishes these purposes. Whereas this document speaks to funerals held at Taylors FBC, the general information is transferable to any setting. Our prayer is that God will use this guide to help you know what to anticipate.

“

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life.[a] Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

John 11:25-27

General Questions

01

▶ Did your loved one leave either verbal or written instructions and information indicating their last wishes regarding their funeral? If your loved one did, you will need to decide how closely you can adhere to those wishes, given present circumstances.

02

▶ Which funeral home will be used, if one is used at all? The answer to this question hinges primarily on another decision which must be made: burial or cremation? It also hinges on whether or not your loved one preplanned and prepaid all or a portion of their funeral and burial services. Use of a traditional funeral home is a given only if they are to be buried in a casket. If they are to be cremated, then you have the option of using either a traditional funeral home or using an independent cremation provider. Taylors FBC members are blessed to have a number of excellent funeral homes and cremation providers in the Greenville area to choose from.

“

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:1-6

03

If it is to be a casket funeral these questions must be answered:

- a. Will the casket be present during the service?
- b. Where will the burial take place? Again, the answer to this question hinges on whether you're loved one has preplanned and/or prepaid for their funeral services. If it is a casket funeral, funeral home personnel will be a good resource for guidance in choosing a place of burial if one has not already been purchased.
- c. Will the graveside service be before or after the service or at a totally different time?
- d. Will the graveside service be open to the public or only to the family?

04

If they are to be cremated, these questions need to be answered:

- a. What will be done with their ashes? Some choose to keep the ashes at home. Some choose to spread them over a significant place. For those who want a formal resting place for the ashes, many cemeteries have a columbarium for that purpose. Taylors FBC does have a columbarium in our cemetery.
- b. Will the ashes be present during the service? Part of the answer will be governed by whether or not the ashes will be available in time for the funeral service. Funeral home and cremation provider personnel can assist in making this information known. If the ashes are to be present, a decision must be made regarding a container to place them in. Some people purchase an urn through the funeral home, while others purchase an attractive box from a local store.

Planning the Funeral Service

In regards to the funeral service itself, the following are decisions which must be made:

1. Where will the service be held? Options include:
 - (1) Taylors Worship Center or Chapel (depending on the anticipated size of the crowd),
 - (2) Funeral Home Chapel, and
 - (3) Graveside only.

2. When will it be held – day and time?

Factors impacting this decision are:

 - (1) Family needs and desires,
 - (2) availability of the church facilities
 - (3) availability of ministers and musicians,
 - (4) availability of funeral home staff, and
 - (5) availability of the cemetery.

All of these entities must align before a date and time can be set.

“

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our

Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

3. Will there be a visitation? If so, when will it be? Whereas on some occasions a family will choose to have visitation on a separate day from the funeral, the vast majority of families choose to have visitation either before or after the service. Taylors FBC provides a designated visitation area adjacent to both the Worship Center and the Chapel.
4. Who will participate in and lead the service?
 - a. Minister(s): If two or more will be involved, what role will each play?
 - b. Musicians: Our Worship Pastor is available to assist families in deciding on song choices, and in deciding whether they will be done as solos, congregationally, or instrumentally, He will also assist in the recruitment of musicians to fulfill the family's song requests. Non-Taylors FBC members are welcome to play and/or sing.
 - c. Will any family member(s) and friend(s) sharing special memories regarding their loved one? Whereas by no means is this mandatory, it is offered as an option to the family.
5. Are there any specific scriptures the family would like for the minister(s) to consider using as part of the service. For example, did your loved one have any favorite scripture verses or passages, or do you as a family have any?
6. Will pallbearers be needed, and if so, whom will they be?

“

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 1 Thessalonians 4:13

Ministry Services Offered

1. Family meal on the day of the service.

Our Bereavement Ministry Team stands ready to provide family members a meal prior to or after the funeral service at the church or delivered to a home designated by the family. A member of the Bereavement team will be in touch with the family contact.

2. Live-streaming and/or recording of the service.

If the service is held in the Worship Center, it can be streamed live on our website and/or recorded. Let the Church Office know your preference as soon as possible. There is a minimal cost for this service.

3. Printed programs for the service.

Details for the program are due to the Church Office no later than two days before the service. There is a minimal cost for this service.

4. Family pictures on the screens.

If the service is held in the Worship Center, family photos can be displayed in the Worship Center and/or the Welcome Center. Digital photos must be submitted to the Church Office no later than 24 hours before the service.

5. Usher services.

The Taylors FBC Head Usher will contact the family to discuss your preferences for seating, visitation, arrival time, and processional. He will also be in contact with the funeral home.

May God bless you in your journey of grief. We cherish the opportunity to come alongside you.



www.taylorsfbc.org | 864-244-3535

Jerry Long, Minister of Pastoral Care

jerryl@taylorsfbc.org