

# Shepherding Through Sorrow

## Pastoral Care in Seasons of Grief: MTI Seminar Outline



### How do we pastor when someone dies?

- a. We know those connected to our congregation.
  - i. We pray for God's strength and wisdom when we don't!
- b. We enter into the brokenness of grief and point others to Jesus.
- c. We bring the comfort and hope that life is available by trusting in Jesus.

### What does a pastor need to do prior to a funeral?

- a. Take time to learn about the person who has died by spending time with family members or loved ones who remain.
- b. Be ready to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ and to comfort those who mourn with the hope that Jesus offers.

### What should the funeral look like? What about gravesides?

- a. Consider coming up with an outline or order of service beforehand (see resources listed below!).
- b. Your job is to point others to Jesus (John 3:30; 2 Tim. 2:19).
- c. Clarity and brevity are powerful tools during times of mourning.

### How do I work with the funeral home?

- a. Funeral homes will always be involved, so know who you'll be working with.
- b. They are resources that help you navigate cultural customs and practices.
- c. Knowing who your church prefers to work with is helpful, too.
  - i. Knowing your church's practices and procedures if there is a cemetery on the property is a great help, too!
- d. Logistical outline/checksheet for the service details (see links below)

### How does the church respond and continue to care for those who grieve?

- a. Funerals are not the end of the grieving process.
- b. Consider how the church can continue to care for the grieving after the funeral.
- c. Remembering the anniversaries of deaths as well as their birthdays/anniversaries can be a powerful comfort.
  - i. Bible is clear that caring for widows is part of the reason why deacons were appointed! How does your church do this?
- d. Some churches have times of remembrance. Not necessarily a practice that needs to be included, but a reminder that when any part of the Body suffers, the whole should feel it and "rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15).

### 6. Where do the Advent Christian distinctives come into play on this?

- a. Funerals are opportunities to witness for Christ; not convince others of theological positions. Our aim must be to minister Jesus to the hurting and sorrowful.
- b. Let Scripture speak and be the resounding truth that is shared.

### 7. What are possible texts to use for the funeral?

- a. Job 19; Ps. 23; 46; 91; Isa. 42/Mt. 12; John 11; 1 Cor. 15; Thess. 4; Rev. 21

## Resources

*The One Year Book of Hope: A 365-Day Devotional with Daily Scripture Readings and Uplifting Reflections that Encourage, Comfort, and Restore Joy*, Nancy Guthrie

*Grief: Finding Hope Again* (CCEF minibook), Paul David Tripp

*Conducting Gospel-Centered Funerals: Applying the Gospel at the Unique Challenges of Death* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), Brian Croft & Phil Newton

*The Pastor's Book: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide to Pastoral Ministry*, R. Kent Hughes & Douglas Sean O'Donnell

*The Minister's Manual for Funerals, Updated Edition*, Al Cadenhead, Jr.

*Sermon Outlines for Funerals and Other Special Services*, Al Bryant

*Please Don't Make My Funeral All About Me* (Article)

*Funeral Service Essentials* (Article)

*Comfort When An Unbeliever Dies* (Podcast)

*The Pastor's Guide to Graveside Services* (Article)

*Funeral Worksheet* (PDF)

*Service Worksheet* (PDF)