

# End of Life

## RESOURCE BOOKLET

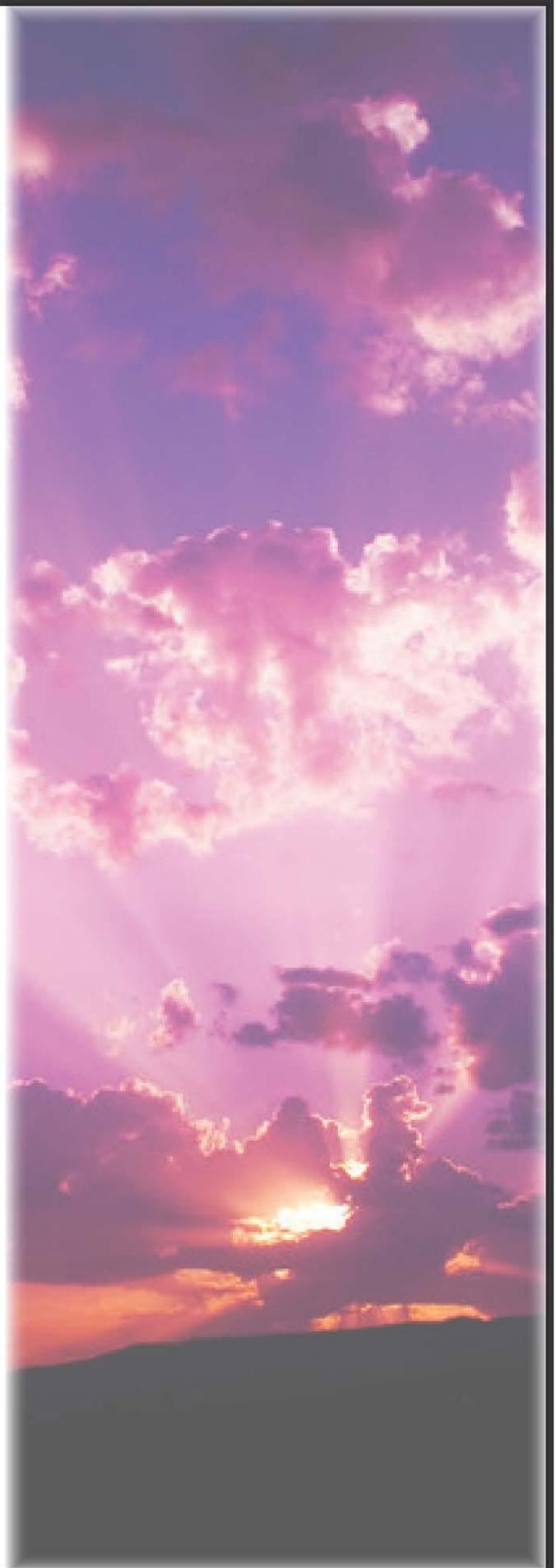
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CARE MINISTRY  
GRACE FELLOWSHIP  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?’”

JOHN 11:25-26



## Grace Fellowship Members and Regular Attenders

Whether you are planning ahead for final arrangements or dealing with the immediate death of a loved one, there are many actions that will need to be taken and decisions that will need to be made. This booklet is designed to provide you with information that should help in this process. This resource is offered only as an aid to facilitate your knowledge in making these important decisions.

Our church staff is available to help you as well. If you need assistance at the time of a death, please contact us. If a funeral is to be held at Grace Fellowship, the church's Bereavement Coordinator will coordinate arrangements at the church.

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## Table of Contents

I. COMMON QUESTIONS AND RELATED HELPFUL SCRIPTURES .....	4
II. OVERVIEW & BASIC DECISIONS .....	7
III. NOTIFICATIONS .....	9
Notifying Others of a Loss.....	9
Obituary Guideline.....	10
Sample Obituary .....	12
IV. PLANNING A FUNERAL/MEMORIAL SERVICE .....	13
Sample Funeral/Memorial Service .....	13
Guidelines for Pictorial Slideshow Presentation.....	14
Options for Receptions .....	15
Scriptures for Services .....	16
Suggested Bereavement Songs .....	19
V. FUNERAL AND MORTUARY SERVICES .....	20
Family Decisions .....	20
Funeral & Mortuary Services.....	22
Terms used by Funeral Directors.....	24
Cremation.....	27
Casket Information.....	28
Outer Burial Containers .....	29
Types of Cemetery Property .....	30
List of Local Cemeteries .....	31
Funeral Home Directions .....	32
Veteran’s Burial Benefits.....	34
VI. GRIEF .....	36
Grief Overview .....	36
Grief Support .....	39
Bereavement Literature.....	40
VII. OTHER ACTIONS THAT MAY NEED TO BE TAKEN.....	42
Personal Affairs Checklist .....	44
Grief Journaling 101 .....	49

# I. COMMON QUESTIONS AND RELATED HELPFUL SCRIPTURES

## A. How does God regard the death of humans?

- God does not wish for any to perish. (II Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:32; II Samuel 14:14)
- God does not regard lightly the death of those who love Him. (Psalm 116:15)
- God calls the righteous home. (Isaiah 57:1-2)

## B. What does the Bible say about the transition between life and death?

- God will make the path of life known to us. (Psalm 16:10-11)
- Christians will not see death. (John 8:51)
- Christians pass from death into life. (John 5:24)
- How the dead are raised. (I Corinthians 15:35-58)
- Christians shall all be changed in the twinkling of an eye. (I Corinthians 15:51-53)
- Jesus will take us to be with Him. (John 14:3)
- Christians know the way to heaven. (John 14:4-6)

## C. What does the Bible say about resurrection?

- Resurrection is life after death. (John 11:25)
- Christ's resurrection is our hope of life after death. (I Peter 1:3; Romans 6:5; II Corinthians 4:14)
- Belief in Christ's resurrection is essential to the Christian faith. (I Corinthians 15:40-53; I John 3:2; Romans 6:5)
- Hope in resurrection of Christian loved ones who have died changes the grief process. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

## D. What does the Bible say about what Heaven will be like?

- Heaven is home to Christians. (John 14:2)
- Christ has prepared a place for Christians since the creation of the world. (John 14:2; Matthew 25:34)
- Christians will be with Christ. (Luke 12:37; Romans 8:38-39; John 14:1-4, 17:24; Revelation 21:3)
- Christians will have rest from their work. (Hebrews 4:10)
- Christians will have a heavenly, imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual body resembling Christ's heavenly body. (I Corinthians 15:40-53; I John 3:2; Romans 6:5)
- What Christ has prepared for Christians in heaven is beyond what we have ever seen or heard or has been in our heart. (I Corinthians 2:9; Romans 8:18)
- Christians will stand before God cleansed and without fault. (Jude 1:25; Revelation 19:7-8)
- Christians will be rewarded for their faithfulness and obedience to Christ.
  1. Crown. (I Peter 5:1-4; II Timothy 4:7-8; Revelation 4:10-11)
  2. Glory. (II Corinthians 4:17; I Peter 5:10)
- "The things of earth will grow strangely dim." (Isaiah 65:17)
- Christians will have no spiritual hunger or thirst. (John 6:35)

- Christians will be co-heirs with Christ of His inheritance. (I Peter 1:3-5; Romans 8:14-17)
- All will be revealed. (Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17; Luke 12:2)
- Christians shall behold Christ face to face. (I Corinthians 13:12; Revelation 22:4; I John 3:2; Psalms 17:15; Matthew 5:8; John 12:44-45; Hebrews 2:9; Psalms 27:4; Job 19:25-27)
- There will be no suffering. (Revelation 21:3-4)
- Christ will wipe away our tears. (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:3-4)

#### **E. Is it wrong to be cremated?**

- When we die we are completely done with our bodies and our spirits (of believers) go to be with the Lord. (II Corinthians 5:1-9; I Corinthians 15:35-58)
- See section about cremation.

#### **F. What does God/Bible say about suicide?**

- Suicide is NOT the unforgivable sin. The “unforgivable sin” is talked about in Matthew 12:22-37 and nowhere is suicide mentioned in this passage. The “unforgivable sin” is defined as “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” and appears to mean “attributing to Satan what is actually God,” and most likely indicates a heart that is so hard that it refuses to trust in Jesus Christ.
- All sin is forgivable if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ (I Tim 1:15-16; Colossians 2:13-14; 2 Tim 2:13; John 10:27-30; Romans 8:31-39; 10:9). Suicide is a sin (Exodus 20:13), but the issue is not which sin you have committed (lying, gossiping, stealing, suicide, adultery), but whether you have placed your faith in Jesus or not (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9).
- Moses (Numbers 11:14-15), Job (Job 3), Elijah (I Kings 19:3-5), and Jonah (Jonah 4:3,8) all struggled with suicidal thoughts.

#### **G. What does God/Bible say about the future/hope?**

- Have hope because God/Jesus is your hope. (Psalm 71:5; 146:5; Romans 15:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; I Timothy 1:1; 1 Peter 1:21)
- Have hope because God’s Word contains hope. (Psalm 119:49,74,81,114,147; 130:5; Romans 15:4)
- Have hope because God is going to help you. (Psalm 33:20; 42:5; 2 Corinthians 1:7,10)
- Have hope because God is going to save you as you place your faith in Him. (Psalm 25:5; 62:5; 130:7; 147:11; Micah 7:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; 1 Timothy 4:10)
- Have hope because hope is one of the keys to getting your heart well. (Proverbs 13:12; Isaiah 40:31) and hope is an anchor for your soul (Hebrews 6:19)
- Have hope because God says there is hope. (Jeremiah 29:11; Lamentations 3:19-26; Hosea 2:15)
- Have hope because hope will not disappoint you. (Romans 5:5)
- Have hope because God wins and is glorified (Roman 5:2; Colossians 1:27), and He will glorify you as you place your trust in His Son Jesus. (2 Corinthians 3:7-12; Colossians 1:27)
- Have hope because it is the purpose-filled end result of your suffering. (Romans 5:3-5)
- Have hope because hope lasts. (1 Corinthians 13:13; 15:19)
- Have hope because God is giving you righteousness as you trust in Jesus. (Galatians 5:5)
- Have hope even though you cannot see it – by definition hope is something you cannot see right now (Romans 8:24-25).

- Have hope because it is the first step toward faith (Hebrews 11:1).
- Dead people do not have the capacity to hope (Isaiah 38:18).
- There is no hope apart from Jesus Christ (I Thessalonians 4:13).
- Have hope because God has eternal life/heaven in store for you as you believe in His Son Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:5,23; Titus 1:2; 3:7).
- Have hope because Jesus Christ is coming again (Titus 2:13; 1 Peter 1:13).
- Have hope because you will see believing loved ones and friends at Christ's second coming (I Thessalonians 2:19).
- Have hope because a 100-year old man hoped that he would have a child and he did (Romans 4:18).
- Have hope because the greatest human example of suffering in the Bible, Job, dared to hope in God (Job 13:15).
- Have hope because God has a calling on your life (Jeremiah 29:11; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4).
- Have hope because hope in Jesus purifies you (I John 3:3).
- Have hope because in Christ, you are living hope (I Peter 1:3; 3:15).

## II. OVERVIEW & BASIC DECISIONS

### Death

Death is a difficult life event to deal with and it touches us all at some point in life. Others can help you through this difficult time if you let them. It is best to be specific as to what your needs are. The document on the following page, “The 7 Days Prior and 7 Hours After,” may provide you with some considerations surrounding the death of a loved one when you may not be thinking clearly and logically. If the death is anticipated and dying at home is an option, make sure you are emotionally and physically ready, and have the appropriate support of others to successfully do this PRIOR TO making the commitment. Taking care of someone at home is not for everyone and it is important to recognize this prior to making the commitment.

### Notifying Others

Notifying others of the death of a loved one can be overwhelming. Strongly consider asking someone (family, friend) close to assist. Use these references to aid you in the process.

### Planning a Funeral/Memorial Service

This booklet contains information found by others to be useful in the planning of services related to the loss of a loved one. Visit with the Care Ministry as appropriate for assistance.

### Funeral Home and Mortuary Services

Funeral homes and mortuary service companies provide a needed/required service relative to the death of a loved one. The extent of their involvement is directly related to your needs and instructions. **The biggest question related to planning a funeral/memorial service is that of traditional burial versus cremation.** Is it a big decision and should be discussed with family members. Some family members may have a need to view the body, which can also be combined with cremation. This decision can be very emotional to make and the impact on your emotional well-being and grieving process should be considered. If you choose cremation, and you capable of making the arrangements yourself, the full services of a funeral home may not be needed; resulting in significant cost savings.

### Grief

It is important to recognize everyone’s grief is different (timeline, emotions, and ability to move forward). It is very helpful to allow others to assist you in the grieving process to help you understand these points. Avoiding your grief will simply prolong it. Use the following summary to understand the “journey” of grief and how others can assist you.

### Other Actions That May Need To Be Taken

Death touches many parts of our life. Use the checklist provided to assist you with some of the other questions which may affect you.

## **Considerations as death approaches... 7 Days Prior/7 Hours After**

### Just prior to death...

- If there is anything that needs to be said or asked, do it sooner than later. As the body begins to shut down it will become increasingly difficult to communicate. Encourage family members to spend time alone with the person expected to pass soon. Hearing is the LAST to go, even though your loved one can't respond.
- Do you know everything you need to know (location of keys, passwords, online banking, etc.)?
- Consider starting a notification list (who to tell and how, whether it's in person, phone, or written letter. Email is not recommended).
- Consider gathering information for the obituary (life history, photo for obituary).
- Determine what final arrangements need to be made (e.g. funeral home or crematorium selection).
- Ask Hospice and/or medical staff about body changes as death approaches.
- Having as much of the work done prior to death will GREATLY ease the burden later.

### Just after death...

- Who should be present (anyone you want- immediate family, siblings, pastor, friends)?
- EVERYBODY grieves differently. Some want to be alone and some really need family and friends close by.
- EVERYBODY grieves differently. Don't be concerned when others tell you how you should feel and you don't feel that way. This is very common.
- Do you have religious considerations at the time of death (prayer, candle, etc.)? Visit with your pastor to explore what feels appropriate.
- Respect the need of the family to spend some time alone with the person who has just passed, from a few minutes to a few hours.
- Some families want to stay and observe until the funeral home departs with your loved one.
- Rely on the facility to oversee the funeral home representatives that all is done with respect and good practice.
- Call the funeral home (only AFTER the family directs them to do so) to pick up your loved one.

### III. NOTIFICATIONS

#### Notifying Others of a Loss

Receiving word of someone's death is very difficult. Having/needing to tell/inform others can be more difficult as you repeat the news over and over to equally emotional family members. Strongly consider involving someone else to assist you with this task, especially for those beyond the immediate family. The following template may be useful to think through how you wish to make the necessary informs and /or official notifications. Telling someone in person is best, but may be too emotional and/or difficult to do for individuals geographically dispersed across numerous locations.

	Face	Phone	Letter	Comments
<b>Family</b>				
Children				
Parents				
Siblings				
Cousins				
Ex-Spouses				
<b>Friends &amp; Church</b>				
Church				w/ instructions to share (yes / no)
<b>Employer</b>				
<b>Business</b>				
				where an agreement/contract existed
<b>Acquaintances</b>				
				Professional & Social
e.g. professional societies				
e.g. country clubs				
e.g. civic organizations				
<b>Financial Institutions</b>				
				banks, investment firms
<b>Government</b>				
Police				If a death occurs at home
Medical Examiners off.				Handled by the agency/doctor in charge
IRS				
Social Security Admin.				
Dept. of Veteran's Affairs				
County Clerk's Office				

# Obituary Guideline

The following list might be helpful in writing an obituary notice. It is most helpful for the family to write this together so no one is left out. All of the following is not necessary; include only the information that is important to your family. Funeral directors usually help with the preparation of the obituary. Try not to give too much detailed information such as exact date of birth, addresses, etc. This can enable someone for identity theft or a robbery if they see the opportunity for an empty house.

- Full name of deceased:
- Last address (town only):
- How many years:
- Age:
- Date of death:
- Cause of death (optional):
- Date of birth:
- Place of birth:
- Proceeded in death by:
- Survivors
- Spouse's maiden name:
- Father's full name:
- Mother's full maiden name:
- Date, city and state of marriage:
- Children's names:
- Grandchildren:
- Great grandchildren:
- Church affiliation and information:
- Education (college or university and information):
- Employment (company and city):
- Job classification:
- Military service:
- Lodge or club membership:
- Accomplishments and honors:
- Pallbearers:
- Honorary pallbearers:
- Memorial requests: Get credit union or bank account # plus address for donations.

*See also section on required personal information required by funeral director.*

References: [ObituaryGuide.com](http://ObituaryGuide.com)

# Submitting an Obituary

## HOUSTON CHRONICLE

713-220-7914

713-362-7835 (fax)

[obits@chron.com](mailto:obits@chron.com)

Email is the most effective way to submit an obituary to the Houston Chronicle. Obituaries must be placed by 2 pm to appear in print the following day. All photos must be in .jpg format.

The obituary is placed on the Houston Chronicle website ([houstonchronicle.com](http://houstonchronicle.com)) for 30 days so family and friends can sign in on a Guest Book, which the family can then print out. This 30 day period can be extended at the request of the family by contacting Legacy, the Guest Book host, at 888-397-9494.

## KATY TIMES

281-391-3141

281-391-2030 (fax)

[news@katytimes.com](mailto:news@katytimes.com)

Submission deadline is 2 pm Tuesday for the Thursday paper.

## **Sample Obituary (Simple)**

Sue Davis, 35, passed away Saturday, September 27, 2003 in Palo Alto, California. Sue is survived by her husband, Trevor Davis, son Steven Davis, parents John and Karen White, brother Les White, sister Sara Black, and grandmother Leslie Black.

A memorial service will be held on Tuesday, September 30, 2003, at 11:00 am at Grace Fellowship United Methodist Church, 2655 S. Mason Road, Katy, TX 77450, with Rev. John Doe officiating.

In lieu of flowers, a donation in her honor may be made to Katy Autism Support Group, 21314 Park Orchard Dr., Katy, TX 77450.

## **Sample Obituary (Detailed)**

Randal Giles Rockett passed away Sunday, October 14, after a long and fulfilling life. He was born in Red Oak, Texas, on December 6, 1931, to Lisle Strength rocket and Grace Lee Giles. After serving in the army, Randal had a 29 year career with AT&T. He began his second career in commercial real estate at the age of 52 and continued to work until the end of his life. He also served on the faculty and various boards at Houston Community College. Randal had a generous heart and loved to help others. He served on several non-profit boards, including KVPAC and the Katy Family YMCA. In addition, Randal was an Eagle Scout and loved volunteering his time with the Boy Scouts. He was a faithful and serving member of Grace Fellowship United Methodist Church.

He is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Marilyn Bolin Rockett, sons Randal Giles Rockett, Jr. and William Wesley Rockett, daughter Lori Ann Rockett, daughters-in-law Jean Ann Rockett and Joanne Osborn, grandchildren Kyle and Kelcie Rockett, brothers Kermit Rockett and Terry Rockett, sister Evelyn Pearson, sisters-in-law Wyona Rockett, Marty Rockett and Linda Rockett, brother-in-law William Bolin and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by brother Chad Rockett and sister Mary White.

## **IV. PLANNING A FUNERAL/MEMORIAL SERVICE**

Memorial services and funerals can be held at any funeral home of the family's choice, or held at Grace Fellowship (Monday through Thursday). If the service is to be held at Grace Fellowship, the family should meet with the Care Pastor as soon as possible to discuss and plan.

Please note: If the service is to be held at Grace Fellowship, we can help facilitate a casual lobby reception, but we are unable to host a meal.

### **Sample Funeral/Memorial Service**

Shown below is a sample of a typical funeral or memorial service. The family will work with the pastor conducting the funeral to determine the content and order of the service. The Worship Pastor is available to assist in arranging the music. Family or friends are welcome to provide music as well.

Reading of Obituary

Opening Prayer

Reading of Scriptures (See list of possible scriptures on page 16)

Music - 2 praise/worship songs, hymns, or other songs of family's choice  
(See list of possible songs on page 19)

Eulogy (by a friend, relative, or pastor)

Open Microphone – to be discussed with Pastor

Video/DVD of photos and favorite music provided by family

Song

Closing Prayer

## Guidelines for Pictorial Slideshow Presentation

- **Length** - Slide shows are typically the length of one song (3-3.5 min) but should be no longer than 5 minutes.
- **Format** - Although there are many programs (such as iMovie or Windows Movie Maker) you can use to make the slide show, it must be formatted as a .mov or a .mp4 file in order to be compatible with Grace Fellowships A/V equipment. Please preview it on a separate computer before delivery. **Tip** – If it will play on an iPad or an iPhone (any apple product) it will work here.
- **Resolution** – The higher the resolution the better it will work.
- **Music** – Please fade the music at the beginning and at the end to avoid loud breaks.
- **Deadline** - We need to have the slide show at least 24 hours before the service. Please deliver it on a jump drive rather than a DVD. You can also download it to our drop box at [www.dropbox.com](http://www.dropbox.com) Login Email: [rmowrer@whatisgrace.org](mailto:rmowrer@whatisgrace.org) Password: careministry

# Options for Receptions

## Church Lobby Reception

The lobby is available for receptions. Grace Fellowship UMC is unable to absorb the cost of the reception food; however your friends, small group, or others can provide. There is no fee for using the church space for reception.

- Complimentary Options

Water, punch, coffee

Crackers/cheese, fruit, cookies

- Other Options

If you wish to serve a full reception you can use family or any of the local delicatessens, such as those listed below, at your own cost:

Jason's Deli – 281-693-3354  
21953 Katy Freeway (Mason Rd.)  
Katy, TX 77450

Skeeter's – 281-398-9260  
1553 S. Mason Rd.  
Katy, TX 77450

Bagel Café – 281-646-7474  
631 S. Mason Rd.  
Katy, TX 77450

## Scriptures for Services

**Psalm 130** – “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, O Lord, keep a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, therefore you are feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.”

**Lamentations 3:21-26** – “Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. ”

**Isaiah 40:28-31** – “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

**Jeremiah 33:3** – “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

**John 11:25-26** – “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ”

**John 14:1-3** – “Do not let you hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ”

**2 Corinthians 5:1-9** – “Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.”

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** – “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”

**Romans 8** – “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ; he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation – but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘*Abba, Father.*’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that word cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

‘For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## Suggested Bereavement Songs

Contemporary	Traditional
As the Deer	Abide With Me
Better Is One Day	Amazing Grace
Blessed Be Your Name	Because He Lives
Breathe	Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine
Facedown	Fairest Lord Jesus
Grace Flows Down	Great Is Thy Faithfulness
Here I Am To Worship	How Firm A Foundation
How Great Is Our God	How Great Thou Art
I Can Only Imagine	I Surrender All
I Need You More	It Is Well With My Soul
I Surrender All	Jesus Paid It All
In Christ Alone	Just A Closer Walk With Thee
One Thing	Lift High The Cross
This Is Our God	My Jesus I Love Thee
We Fall Down	Precious Lord
With Hope	Rock Of Ages
Wonderful Maker	Tis So Sweet
You Are God Alone	What A Friend We Have In Jesus
Your Love Is Extravagant	
Your Unfailing Love	

Special music such as a favorite of the family or loved one is suggested to be used in precession, recession, or slideshow portion of the service.

## V. FUNERAL AND MORTUARY SERVICES

### Family Decisions

On behalf of the Grace Fellowship family, please accept our heartfelt sympathy for the loss of your loved one. The following is a list of things we have found helpful to decide fairly soon.

1. Decide the type of disposition (cremation, embalming) and the type of interment. Take time to discuss these options with family, clergy, and/or your funeral director to understand how these options impact the grieving process.
2. Decide date, time, and location of funeral or memorial service with our Care Ministry, coordinating with your funeral home. The best times are Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. at Grace Fellowship. Please provide a rough estimate of number of guests.
3. Compose obituary for newspaper publications within 1-2 days and submit to the Katy Times and/or Houston Chronicle. See Section II for deadlines, guidelines, and examples.
4. If you will be having a graveside burial or interment, decide if it will be before or after the service and if it will be family only, and discuss with church and funeral home.
5. Depending on burial timing, think of reception possibilities and secure support (i.e. small group, catering, location as your home, relative's home, church, or restaurant).
6. Prior to making final funeral arrangements, you often will need the following information:
  - Full name of deceased
  - Occupation
  - Date of birth
  - Social security number
  - Residence address
  - Spouse's name (maiden name)
  - Father's name, mother's maiden name
  - Place of burial or disposition
  - Discharge papers, if veteran
  - Recent photo of deceased for the purpose of grooming
  - Life insurance paperwork if payment is to be handled with insurance.
  - See also Section II on Notifications/Obituary
7. Establish memorial or flower donations and list all data in obituary for you and your family's wishes to be honored.
8. Choose music, scriptures, bulletin cover, and program preference with pastor.
9. If you and your family want a photo slide presentation representing your loved one's life, ask a friend or family member to produce a DVD or PowerPoint presentation. See guidelines in Section III.

We will be happy to walk you through these steps, and we want to help with any questions:  
281-646-1903.

References: Funeralwise.com

## Guidelines for Funeral Home Visit

It has been suggested that families take along a friend who is not a relative so that an objective party is present. If you would like to be accompanied by someone on the Grace Fellowship Bereavement Team as well, please let us know. Funeral homes are businesses, and like any other business, hope to sell as many of their products and services as possible. Grieving families are vulnerable and may base purchases on emotions alone. Families should recognize that they do not have to purchase all products and services offered by the funeral home. *Caskets and outer burial containers can be purchased at retail casket stores, usually at much cheaper prices, and funeral homes must accept these items.* We have a healthy, working relationship with many businesses.

Funeral homes offer many services, some of which are included in a basic quoted price and others that are optional and carry an additional charge. By law, families must be presented a retail price list itemizing the costs of funeral services, and the merchandise for sale from a funeral director. Usually three price lists are given:

1. General Price List – included staff services, overhead, transportation, body preparation, viewing and other services.
2. Casket Price List – Itemized price of caskets.
3. Outer Burial Container Price List – The outer burial containers are grave liners, placed into the ground after a grave is dug. Caskets are placed inside these containers

Under the law, funeral directors who offer cremations are required to tell you that state or local law does NOT require a casket for direct cremations. They also must make an unfinished wood box or alternative container available for cremation and disclose in writing your right to purchase such container.

# Funeral & Mortuary Services

## Basic Services

### Basic Services of Funeral Director and Staff

The professional service charges related to the basic funeral directors services includes, but it not limited to: a proportionate share of the taxed, insurance, licenses, utilities and business expenses necessary to serve the public in a professional manner. Also included in this charge is the consultations and arrangements with family, clergy, cemetery or crematory, and others as required, including coordinating with those providing other portions of the service. The preparation, filing, and securing of necessary notices, authorizations, and permits is also included. We offer assistance with forms and notary service, and other services and attendance prior to, during, and after the funeral. This fee for our basic services and overhead will be added to the total cost of the funeral arrangements you select. (Such a fee is already included in our charges for direct cremations, immediate burials, and forwarding or receiving of remains.)

### Embalming

Embalming is a chemical process which provides temporary preservation of the body and eliminates certain health hazards. A person licensed by this state must complete this procedure. Except in certain special cases, embalming is not required by law. Embalming may be necessary, however, if you select certain funeral arrangements, such as a funeral with viewing. If you do not want embalming, you have the right to choose an arrangement that does not require you to pay for it, such as direct cremation or immediate burial.

### Direct Cremation

Cremation is a process whereby the body, in a container, is placed in a retort (furnace) and reduced to a combination of bone mass and ash. Direct cremation, is without attendant rites, and includes transfer of body locally to a funeral home, shelter and care of body without embalming, basic services of the funeral director and staff, fee for the use of the crematory, and the state medical examiner permit and fee. If you want to arrange a direct cremation, you can use an alternative container or a cremation casket for your loved one to be placed in. Alternative containers encase the body and can be made of material like fiberboard or composition materials (with or without an outside covering).

### Receiving of Remains from Another Funeral Home

Services typically include basic services of the funeral and staff, a proportionate share of overhead costs, care of remains, transportation of remains to funeral home and to cemetery or crematory.

## Mortuary Services

Depending upon the size of the funeral home, some mortuary services (cremation, embalming) may be performed by a mortuary services company separate from the funeral home. This is also common when a death occurs out of state relative to the location of the funeral home handling the arrangements.

## Other Services

### Other Preparations

- Dressing and Casketing
- Hairstyling
- Donor or Autopsy Repair
- Shelter and Care of Body without Embalming
- Transfer of Remains to the Funeral Home

### Use of Facilities, Staff, and Equipment for Services Conducted at Out Facility

- Viewing and Visitation
- Funeral Ceremony

### Use of Staff and Equipment for Services Conducted at Another Facility (e.g. church)

- Funeral Ceremony
- Memorial Service
- Graveside Service

### Automotive Equipment

- Hearse
- Family Limousine
- Casketbearer Limousine
- Flower Car/ Utility Vehicle

### Registers, Cards and Programs

- Programs, memorial folders, acknowledgement cards, prayer cards, register book, other.
- Temporary Grave Marker

### Other

- Casket (purchase, rental (viewing prior to cremation), cremation casket, transfer containers)
- Columbarium or Mausoleum niche for cremains as related to cremation
- Cemetery Expenses (Lots, Open/Close grave, greenery, chairs, tents, music)
- Tent and Chairs for Graveside Service

### Flowers and/or Memorials (in lieu of flowers?)

## Terms used by Funeral Directors

Various “terms” are used by funeral personnel to facilitate arrangements. Listed below is a glossary of words that you might encounter at the funeral home.

**Autopsy** – procedure which determines cause of death. Family must provide consent unless autopsy is mandated by law. Autopsies are not mandated for all deaths.

**Caskets** – a coffin made from various materials (wood, bronze, copper or steel). May be purchased from a retail casket store and delivered to the funeral home or bought directly from the funeral home. If cremation is the preferred choice, a cremation container or cremation oriented casket can be purchased, or a casket and liner can be rented from or the funeral home.

**Cemetery Plot** – land purchased in cemeteries for earth burials. Plots vary in price according to (a) cemetery ownership (b) site of plot in the cemetery (c) prestige of the cemetery. It is suggested consumers visit several cemeteries before purchasing a plot. Note maintenance and care of the grounds. Inquire about perpetual care and provisions for the cemetery lots when cemetery is at capacity.

**Columbarium** – A special building at the cemetery which contains niches to accommodate urns holding cremated remains.

**Cosmetics** – used by the embalmer to restore as natural an appearance of the deceased as possible. Cosmetics applied are appropriate for age and gender of loved one.

**Counselors** – The label funeral salespeople use. These people work on a commission basis.

**Cremains** – a term used to refer to the cremated remains of the deceased.

**Cremation** – a process whereby the body, in a container, is placed into a retort (a small rectangular furnace). The body is reduced to a combination of bone mass and ash. Cremation must be authorized by “next of kin.” Bodies cannot be cremated less than 48 hours after death except by special authorization. Caskets are not required for cremation.

**Crematory** – a building with a furnace (retort) for cremating bodies.

**Crypt** – a chamber or vault serving as a burial place.

**Death Certificate** – form needed to proceed with a funeral, memorial or commemoration service. Must be signed by a doctor, coroner, or medical officer. The certificate attests to the cause of death. Funeral directors will assist in requesting death certificates from the county clerk’s office. The county clerk’s office charges \$15.00 for the first death certificate and \$4.00 for each additional certificate.

**Direct Cremation** – (see direct disposition)

**Direct Disposition** – sometimes called immediate burial and/or direct cremation. This process does not require embalming. Immediately after death occurs and after the death certificate is signed by a coroner, the body is cremated or buried. Does not preclude a memorial or graveside service.

**Dispositions of the body** – options for the disposition of human remains include earth burial, entombment, cremation, direct disposition, donation for scientific study.

**Embalming** – the use of chemicals, internally and externally, to disinfect and temporarily preserve the body for open casket viewing, and/or for the removal of the body to distant destinations (across the Texas border). Texas law does not require embalming. Texas Health Services Rules require that bodies held for over 24 hours or in transit must be embalmed, refrigerated, or encased in a leak and odor proof container. Embalming only helps preserve the body for a short period of time and is used to help keep the body presentable until after the funeral.

**Entombment** – the placing of a casket into a mausoleum or tomb.

**Funeral Service** – a ceremony connected with the burial of the dead. The body of the loved one (open/closed casket) is part of the service.

**Funeral Director** – employed by funeral home and arranges the funeral of choice. Usually the reference of a relative or friend who has been served satisfactorily is helpful in making a selection. This person would be able to answer questions concerning all aspects of funeral arrangements.

**Immediate Burial** – (see direct disposition)

**Interment** – burial

**Mausoleum** – (tomb) above ground structure used for the burial of caskets. Often constructed of marble or stone, some can hold a number of caskets, and are on cemetery grounds.

**Memorial Service** – Church or Funeral Home service marking the death of a loved one without the body present. The service can look exactly like a funeral without a casket.

**Niche** – part of a columbarium. Typically, a niche will have a glass door and an inscription on the urn will be turned toward the glass.

**Outer Burial Container** – (also known as a Vault or Grave Liner) A structure the casket is placed into for the prevention of “cave-ins” at the cemetery. The requirement for an outer burial container is dictated by the cemetery, not by law.

**Perpetual Care** – an optional upkeep charge levied by cemeteries for the care of the cemetery plot.

**Scattering** – term used to describe a type of disposition of cremains. In Texas, there are no laws against scattering remains. If remains are to be scattered, the crematorium should be notified.

**Urns** – containers for cremated remains made of a variety of materials including wood, metal or marble. Some people choose to have the urn at the Memorial Service. At GFUMC, we place it near the altar, but not on the altar.

**Urn Garden** – cremains placed in urns buried in a grave in a cemetery. The place the urns are buried may be referred to as a garden.

**Viewing** – after embalming, a time in which family members and friends may view the deceased.

**Visitation** – period of the funeral which includes calling hours. Friends, relatives, and associates of the deceased pay their respects and offer words of comfort to the family.

## Funeral Homes and Retail Casket Stores

### Beresford Funeral Service

13501 Alief-Clodine Rd (Houston)  
281-933-9090  
[www.beresfordfunerals.com](http://www.beresfordfunerals.com)

### Carnes Funeral Home

1102 Indiana St. (Houston 77587)  
713-943-2500  
[www.carnesfuneralhome.com](http://www.carnesfuneralhome.com)

### Cavazos Funeral Home

2412 LittleYork Rd (Houston 77093)  
713-884-8814  
[www.cavazosfunerals.com](http://www.cavazosfunerals.com)  
Email [robert@cavazosfunerals.com](mailto:robert@cavazosfunerals.com)

### Brookside Funeral Home

9149 Highway 6 North (Houston)  
281-345-6061

### Earthman Funeral Home

8303 Katy Freeway (Houston)  
713-465-8900

### Forest Park Funeral Home

12009 Westheimer (Houston)  
281-497-2330

### Memorial Oaks Funeral Home

13001 Katy Freeway (Houston)  
281-497-2210  
[www.dignitymemorial.com](http://www.dignitymemorial.com)

### Schmidt Funeral Home

1508 East Avenue (Katy)  
281-391-2424  
[www.schmidtfunerals.com](http://www.schmidtfunerals.com)

### Waltrip Funeral Home

1415 Campbell Road (Houston)  
713-465-2525

### Woodlawn Funeral Home

1101 Antoine Drive (Houston)  
713-682-3663

# Cremation

Today, increasing numbers of people are choosing cremation for a wide variety of reasons. Apart from religious reasons (discussed below), some people find they prefer cremation to traditional burial for personal reasons. Other people view cremation as a way of simplifying their funeral process. These people view a ground burial as an unneeded complication of their funeral process, and thus choose cremation to make their services as simple as possible. Cremation is typically a less expensive alternative to a traditional casket. Direct cremation involves cremating the body as soon as legally possible without any sort of services. Most expenses associated with the cemetery are not incurred with any cremation option, and there are alternatives to direct cremation that allow for visitation and viewing.

The practice of choosing cremation instead of bodily burial has been gaining wider acceptance among Christian faith traditions. Although the United Methodist Book of Discipline does not specifically address cremation, the church, like other Protestant denominations, provides for that as an option in its funeral and burial liturgies. Protestants have not been opposed to cremation and do not see any conflict with the belief in the resurrection of the body. The scriptures make it clear that we are dust and to dust we shall return (Genesis 3:19). Cremation does rapidly what nature does slowly. Resurrection is not an argument against cremation, for Paul says “it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). Another relevant Scripture is Ecclesiastes 12:7 which says, “The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.” The Scriptures seem very clear that we no longer have any use for the remains of our physical body – our true life is in our spirit which goes to heaven (2 Corinthians 5:1-8).

Cremated remains may be disposed of in a number of ways: privately scattered, scattered at sea, interred in a cemetery, placed in a niche, in a columbarium, or kept by the family in their home. It has been suggested families consider children present in the home when deciding whether or not to keep cremains. It is legal in the State of Texas to be in possession of your family member’s ashes.

A columbarium is a special building at a cemetery that contains niches to accommodate urns holding cremated remains. A cemetery plot or special section of a cemetery for burying urns can also be purchased. Urns can be purchased from several sources. Containers for cremated remains are made of a variety of materials including wood, metal and marble. The container needs a capacity of 175 to 300 cubic inches. The crematorium should be notified if the remains are to be scattered. In Texas, there are no laws against scattering remains. Usually there is a crematory charge along with a transportation charge. If the cremains are to be transported out of state, a burial transit permit is required (obtain from crematorium).

Very inexpensive Direct Cremation, \$900-\$1400, but no other services supplied (you get ashes directly):

**Carnes Funeral Home**, 1102 Indiana St., Houston, TX 77587

713-943-2500

**Integrity Funeral Care**, 3915 Dacoma, Suite E, Houston, TX 77092

713-344-0764 or 866-571-5040

**National Cremation Service**, 5400 Highway 6 North, Houston, TX 77084

281-855-4400 or 1-866-432-2913

## Casket Information

Selecting a casket can be an emotional and difficult purchase and often family members are uncomfortable in the selection room. Prices can differ between funeral homes and retail casket stores for identical or similar caskets. It can be difficult to compare shop caskets because of the different styles available. Caskets purchased at retail casket stores must be accepted at funeral homes.

### Protective vs. Non-Protective Metal Caskets

A protective type casket has a rubber gasket that lies on the rim of the body of a metal casket. The lid is closed against the body of the unit, and a locking device presses the lid tightly against the gasket, creating a seal. The protection is maintained as long as the seal is not compromised. A non-protective type casket does not have the rubber gasket.

Rubber gaskets do not come on wooden caskets; therefore, the “protective” – “non-protective” terms do not apply to wooden caskets.

While the term “protective” is used for metal caskets, and may make the casket tighter than a metal casket that does not have a gasket, the rubber gasket does not guarantee long term preservation of the remains. And, as mentioned above, rubber gaskets are not used in wooden caskets and wooden caskets can be as tight as metal caskets.

**Caskets come in a variety of materials. The most common are as follows:**

<u>Metal Casket</u>	<u>Wooden Caskets</u>
Bronze – most expensive	Mahogany – most expensive
Copper – expensive	Cherry
Stainless Steel – expensive	Oak
16 Gauge Steel (Thickest)	Maple
18 Gauge Steel (Thick)	Pine
20 Gauge Steel (Thin) – least expensive	Hardwoods – least expensive

**For metal caskets**, the types of metals used are bronze, copper, stainless steel, and steel. Bronze and coppers come in 32 ounce and 48 ounce with the 48 ounce being the thicker metal. Steel caskets are compared by the gauge of steel. The gauge is simply the thickness of the steel. The higher the number, the thinner the steel. The thinnest is 20 gauge, the least expensive. 18 gauge is thicker and the thickest steel is 16 gauge steel.

**For wooden caskets**, hardwoods are usually the cheapest and mahogany is the most expensive.

**Interior Finishes** for both metal and wooden casket usually are made of velvet or crepe. Some interior finishes come with designs on them and others do not.

## Comparing Caskets

When comparing caskets be aware:

- Some casket makers are more well-known (Batesville, York, Marsellus).
- Some caskets may be of better quality construction.
- Some are comprised of more durable material than others.
- Casket makers and sellers do not guarantee that any casket will be airtight or watertight or will provide long-term preservation of the human remains.

**Therefore, casket selection is more a matter of eye appeal, personal choice, and affordability, than preservation of the body.**

## Outer Burial Containers

An outer burial container is a container that the casket is placed in for burial. They can be manufactured in a variety of materials, the most common of which are concrete, steel, and composite materials. They are commonly referred to as “vaults” or “liners”. The purpose of these containers is to keep the weight of the earth off the casket; to facilitate maintenance of the grave by retarding settling of the grave over time; and to offer a measure of additional protection from grave site substances (water, soil, etc.). In Texas, an outer burial container is not required; however, individual cemeteries may require the use of a container.

## **Types of Cemetery Property**

Not all funeral homes will voluntarily show you a price list of cemetery properties. Always ask to see an entire range of cemetery property prices and to physically see the property. There are families willing to sell their cemetery properties directly to individuals. Independent funeral consultants can aid in the purchase of these properties. Sometimes the obituary section of the newspaper lists ads for a cemetery plot. Federal laws are established to protect the consumer. If possible, a third party in attendance would be helpful to offer support and objectivity when selecting property.

### **Choices of Interment include:**

Mausoleum Space – usually a covered area; indoor or outdoor. This is usually the most expensive choice for interment.

Lawn Crypts – reinforced concrete boxes built under the ground.

Side by Side Ground Burial – requires a casket and outer burial container.

Double Depth Interment – two caskets interred in the same plot.

## List of Local Cemeteries

Forest Park Funeral Home  
12800 Westheimer  
281-497-2330

Katy Magnolia Cemetery  
1508 East Avenue  
281-391-2266

Memorial Oaks Cemetery  
13001 Katy Freeway  
281-497-2210

Woodlawn Funeral Home  
1101 Antoine Drive  
713-682-3663

Veterans National Cemetery  
10410 Veterans Memorial Dr.  
281-447-8686

## **Funeral Home Directions**

### **Directions from GFUMC to Funeral Home:**

#### **Brookside Funeral Home (281-345-6061)**

9149 Highway 6 North

North on Mason Road, East on I-10 exit Highway 6 and go North. Funeral Home is just after West Road on the left.

#### **Earthman Funeral Home (713-465-8900)**

8303 Katy Freeway

North on Mason Road, East on I-10, exit Wirt Road, stay on the feeder road for about ¼ mile. Funeral home is on the right.

#### **Forest Park Funeral Home (281-497-2330)**

12009 Westheimer

North on Mason Road, East on I-10, exit Dairy Ashford and go right. Go right on Westheimer. Funeral home is on the right.

#### **Memorial Oaks Funeral Home (281-497-2210)**

13001 Katy Freeway

North on Mason Road, East on I-10, exit Eldridge and continue on the feeder. Funeral home is on the right.

#### **Schmidt Funeral Home (281-391-2424)**

1508 East Avenue

North on Mason Rd., West on I-10, exit Pin Oak Road and go right. Cross over the railroad tracks and immediately turn right on First Street, go to East Avenue and go left. Funeral Home is located between Fifth Street and Tenth Street on the right.

#### **Waltrip Funeral Home (713-465-2525)**

1415 Campbell Road

North on Mason Road, East on I-10, exit Blalock and go left under the freeway. Go right on Westview. Go left on Campbell, Funeral home is on the left.

#### **Woodland Funeral Home (713-682-3663)**

1101 Antoine Dr.

North on Mason Rd., East on I-10, exit Antoine and go left. Funeral home is 2 blocks on the left.

#### **Veterans National Cemetery (281-447-8686)**

North on Mason Road, East on I-10, exit Sam Houston Tollway going North, take exit toward VA Houston National Cemetery, turn slight left onto Beltway 8/N Sam Houston Parkway W/N Belt Dr. W. Right onto Veterans Memorial Rd/Stuebner Airline Rd., end at 10410 Veterans Memorial Dr.

## **Directions from the Funeral Home to GFUMC:**

### **Brookside Funeral Home**

Go south on Highway 6, West on I-10, exit Mason Road and go south, Grace Fellowship UMC is approximately 3 miles down on the left, at 2655 S. Mason Road.

### **Earthman Funeral Home**

Go West on I-10, exit Mason Road and go south, Grace Fellowship UMC is approximately 3 miles down on the left, at 2655 S. Mason Road.

### **Forest Park Funeral Home**

Turn left on Westheimer, go left on Dairy Ashford. West on I-10, exit Mason Road and go south, Grace Fellowship UMC is approximately 3 miles down on the left, at 2655 S. Mason Road.

### **Memorial Oaks Funeral Home**

Go west on I-10, exit Mason Road and go south, Grace Fellowship UMC is approximately 3 miles down on the left, at 2655 S. Mason Road.

### **Schmidt Funeral Home**

Go right on East Avenue, left on First Street, left onto Pin Oak, East on I-10, exit Mason Road and go south, Grace Fellowship UMC is approximately 3 miles down on the left, at 2655 S. Mason Road.

### **Waltrip Funeral Home**

Go right on Campbell Road, left on Westview, right onto feeder. Travel West on I-10, exit Mason Road and go south, Grace Fellowship UMC is approximately 3 miles down on the left, at 2655 S. Mason Road.

### **Woodlawn Funeral Home**

Go West on I-10, exit Mason Road and go south, Grace Fellowship UMC is approximately 3 miles down on the left, at 2655 S. Mason Road.

## **Veteran's Burial Benefits**

From "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents," 1999 Ed.  
(Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public Affairs (80D),  
810 Vermont Ave, N.W., Washington D.C. 20420)

### **Burial in National Cemeteries**

Burial benefits in a VA national cemetery include the gravesite, a headstone or marker, opening and closing of the grave, and perpetual care. Many national cemeteries have columbaria or gravesites for cremated remains.

Veterans and service members are eligible for burial in a VA national cemetery. An eligible veteran must have been discharged or separated from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable and have completed the required period of service. Persons entitled to retirement pay as a result of 20 years creditable service with a reserve component are eligible. A U.S. citizen who served in the armed forces of a government allied with the United States in a war also may be eligible. A 1997 law bars persons convicted of federal or state capital crimes from being buried or memorialized in one of the VA national cemeteries or in Arlington National Cemetery.

Spouses and minor children of eligible veterans and of service members also may be buried in a national cemetery. Adult children incapable of self support due to physical or mental disability are eligible for burial. If a surviving spouse of an eligible veteran marries a non-veteran, and remarriage was terminated by divorce or death of the non-veteran, the spouse is eligible for burial in a national cemetery.

Gravesites in national cemeteries cannot be reserved. Funeral directors or others making burial arrangements must apply at the time of death. Reservations made under previous programs are honored. Cemeteries do not provide military honors but may make referrals to military units or volunteer groups. The National Cemetery Administration normally does not conduct burials on weekends. A weekend caller, however, will be directed to one of three VA cemetery offices that remain open during weekends to schedule burials at the cemetery of the caller's choice during the following week. Directions to Veterans Memorial Cemetery found on page 14.

### **Headstone and Markers**

Headstones and markers are inscribed with the name of the deceased, branch of service, and the years of birth and death. Optional items that may be inscribed are military grade, rank or rate; war service such as "World War II"; months and days of birth and death; an emblem reflecting one's religion; and text indicating valor awards. When burial is in a national, state veteran or military post cemetery, the headstone or marker is ordered through the cemetery, which will place it on the grave. Information on style, inscription and shipping can be obtained from the cemetery.

### **Burial Flags**

VA provides an American flag to drape the casket of a veteran or reservist entitled to retired military pay. After the funeral service, the flag may be given to the next of kin or a close associate. Flags are issued at VA regional offices and national cemeteries, and post offices.

### **Reimbursement of Burial Expenses**

VA will pay a burial allowance up to \$1,500 if the veteran's death is service-connected. In some instances, VA also will pay the cost of transporting the remains of a service-disabled veteran to the national cemetery nearest the home of the deceased that has available gravesites. In such cases, the person who bore the veteran's burial expenses may claim reimbursement from VA.

VA will pay a \$300 burial and funeral expense allowance for veterans who, at time of death, were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled to compensation but for receipt of military retirement pay. Eligibility also may be established when death occurs in a VA facility, a nursing home under VA contract or a state nursing home. Additional costs of transportation of the remains may be paid. There is no time limit for filing reimbursement claims of service-connected deaths. In other deaths, claims must be filed within two years after permanent burial or cremation.

Ask them to see local VA site before deciding that is the only way. \$150.00 plot allowance is granted.

VA will pay a \$150 plot allowance when a veteran is not buried in a cemetery that is under U.S. government jurisdiction under the following circumstances: the veteran was discharged from active duty because of disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty; the veteran was in receipt of compensation or pension or would have been except for receiving military retired pay; or the veteran died in a VA facility. The \$150 plot allowance may be paid to the state if a veteran is buried without charge for the cost of a plot or interment in a state-owned cemetery reserved solely for veterans burial. Burial expenses paid by the deceased's employer or a state agency will not be reimbursed. For information on monetary benefits, call 1-800-827-1000.

## VI. GRIEF

### Grief Overview

Grief is our natural reaction to the loss of someone near and dear to us. It results in emotional, physical and spiritual reactions that can be slight, moderate, or even become complicated taking years to work through. Your whole perspective of life can change. We often become numb during this period of time and we must pay attention to our emotions and ability to think clearly. Assistance with the healing process and/or dealing with our personal affairs can be extremely helpful and is recommended.

It is important to recognize everyone's grief is different (timeline, emotions, ability to move forward). There is no "short cut" through grief and it can be very helpful to allow others to assist you. Everybody experiences grief, but how we process it is a personal decision. Avoiding your grief will simply prolong it. You may succeed at distracting yourself from emotional pain, but the pain will eventually erupt and/or may lead to physical illness.

Most individuals find it helpful to share "our story" with others. Talking with others can be extremely therapeutic. Some will easily seek and engage help from others. Some will seek the solitude of being alone. Those around us should respect our needs. Enlist the help of a trusted individual to check on you, ensuring you don't slip into an unhealthy situation (e.g. spiritually, financially, or mentally).

The Four Tasks of Grief (Adapted from: Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy- J.W. Worden, Ph.D)

- Accept the reality of the loss
- Experience the pain of grief
- Adjust to an environment with the deceased missing
- Withdraw emotional energy and reinvest in other relationships

Common Symptoms of Complicated Grief (potentially requiring professional help)

- (1) Prolonged disbelief, anger and bitterness regarding the death
- (2) Intense yearning and longing for the deceased
- (3) Avoidance of reminders of the deceased
- (4) Preoccupied thoughts of the loved one
- (5) If the complications of grief are not resolved, they can lead to negative health outcomes.

The funeral and/or memorial service(s) we conduct for those lost have a huge impact upon our grieving process. The religious rites, liturgies, and rituals help us in several ways to memorialize those lost and provide a transition point for moving forward. Work closely with a care pastor for this.

Most people are afraid of their emotions, avoid them, and fail in learning how to accept them. Therefore, our family and friends typically don't know what to say or how to act around us. Be also aware that an emotional state will often cause people to say things they ordinarily wouldn't say, some of which can be hurtful. Be specific with your needs (including the things you don't need).

Grief is not about an end point, but instead it is about adapting, accommodating, acknowledging, and accepting the "new normal." Is it NOT about returning to normal, which will not happen. It is about flux, change, moving forward (better or bitter; we must choose). Grief is like a mountain we must get over. We should seek the help of others, but we are the ones that must get to the other side. Lean into it and keep putting one foot in front of the next; be intentional.

## DEATH / INITIAL GRIEF

Initially, we can be overwhelmed by death, our minds numb, and we struggle to think clearly. It can be very beneficial to seek basic timely guidance of others to avoid problems/issues (e.g. paying the bills, other obligations). Others can include family, trusted friends, and church family. Additional resources include the GFUMC Funeral Planning Booklet (Personal Affairs Checklist), Care Ministry, Stephen Ministry, and related resources that are helpful.

Note: Everybody's grief is different. Focus on what you identify with in the following and how you feel (not the phases).

## EARLY GRIEF

We continue to be overwhelmed with Grief & associated feelings, but may begin to think and ask questions. Seek to address any "big rock" issues/emotions affecting us (anger, blame, depression, etc.) from an individual familiar with grief. During this time, someone more knowledgeable with Grief may be valuable to you to discuss concerns that may otherwise adversely impact you (e.g. sleep and/or other issues). You may or may not be ready for resources such as a Grief Class yet. You may be willing to be out in public more, but only in safe intimate settings with friends and church family (most likely closed to other external contact). Resources include Care Ministry and its library, and Stephen Ministry.

## LOOKING WITHIN

While our thoughts and feelings continue to be a rollercoaster, we may be ready to explore and better understand the "rollercoaster." We are mostly beyond the initial devastation of the loss and motivated to continue processing the grief with the help of others. An organized Grief Class can often be very helpful when we surround ourselves with others who have suffered a loss and we can leverage off of each other's participation. Self-esteem is key as we may feel abandoned as most friends and family have returned to their own personal lives. A grief class can provide a safe setting to discuss grief surrounded by others who have also experienced a loss. Hopefully, we can begin to move towards accommodating, adapting, and acknowledging a new life going forward. Resources may include GFUMC GriefShare Class (Fall & Spring each year), Care Ministry, and Stephen Ministry.

## REACHING OUT

Our need for others (community) is **STRONG**, we need companionship, and many of our relationships will change. Our senses are beginning to return. Our emotions and feelings are less of a rollercoaster. Seek out activities involving an abundance of sensory input (art shows, movies, festivals, school programs) or expressing yourself (painting, singing, music). Engage others as you feel comfortable (introverts will struggle a little more than extroverts, thus need more opportunities). Some find "giving back" in some fashion to be very helpful. We acknowledge our new life and work to accommodate and adapt to it. Our need for community is strong, therefore seek out activities involving an abundance of human interaction (church, community groups, AARP, Senior Centers, or start your own).

## GRIEF NIGHT OUT

Our need for others (community) is **STRONG**. Even though we have adapted, accommodated, acknowledged, and accepted the "new normal," most find comfort in an occasional "Grief Night Out" with others who have suffered a loss. Grief Night Out is a safe and supportive environment to be with others in a community setting and not be afraid to remember or talk about loved ones. Do this on your own or seek out organized events through church or other organizations. Watch a movie together or play a board game. Don't be afraid of your emotions; it is a sign that you haven't forgotten.

## GRIEF RESOURCES

<http://www.webhealing.com/>

<http://griefnet.org/>

Publications by Steven Levine

On Grief and Grieving – Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler

The Tunnel and the Light, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Poetry is powerful – Mary Oliver is a favorite as related to bereavement

Contact Care Ministry for GFUMC resource list

## RECOGNIZED GRIEF CENTERS

<https://www.hospiceandcommunitycare.org/pathways-center-for-grief-and-loss/index.html>

<http://www.fernside.org/>

<http://www.dougy.org/>

## **Grief Support**

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS are for people experiencing the loss of a loved one. Meeting with others who have experienced a similar loss, supporting one another, and learning from one another can be very helpful in the grief process.**

The following bereavement support groups are available:

### **GRIEFSHARE – GRACE FELLOWSHIP UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

GRIEFSHARE is a 13-week biblically-based small group, to assist you during your grief and healing. Meets Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30pm.

Contact: Care Ministry, Grace Fellowship UMC, 281-646-1903  
[www.whatisgrace.org/care\\_griefshare.html](http://www.whatisgrace.org/care_griefshare.html)

### **STEPHEN MINISTRY – GRACE FELLOWSHIP UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

In the time of loss and grief, you may need someone to listen. Stephen Ministry at Grace Fellowship is a confidential ministry that equips a layperson to provide distinctively Christian one-to-one care. Those involved with the Stephen Ministry do not give advice or counsel. They do active listening and praying. They are available as long as they are needed.

Contact: Care Ministry, 281-646-1903

### **BO’S PLACE- LOCATIONS IN HOUSTON AND KATY**

Bo’s Place is a non-profit, free-of-charge bereavement center offering multiple ongoing grief support services for children, families, and adults in their grief journey. There are two locations:

Bo’s Place (10050 Buffalo Speedway, Houston, TX 77054) — meets multiple evenings

Bo’s Place- Katy (20018 Chateau Bend Drive, Katy TX 77450) — meets every other Tuesday

Contact: 713-942-8339

[www.bosplace.org](http://www.bosplace.org)

### **COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS – KINGSLAND BAPTIST CHURCH**

The mission of Compassionate Friends is to assist families after the death of a child of any age.

Meets monthly at Kingsland Baptist Church (20555 Kingsland Blvd., Katy 77450).

Contact: 281-492-1262

[www.compassionatefriends-katy.org](http://www.compassionatefriends-katy.org)

### **HOUSTON HOSPICE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP**

This is an ongoing support group for individuals who have experienced a loss through death.

Meets twice monthly: Texas Medical Center, 1905 Holcombe Blvd , Houston, TX 77030

[www.houstonhospice.org](http://www.houstonhospice.org) 713-467-7423

# **Bereavement Literature**

## **Books for Adults**

*From We to Me* by Susan J. Zonnebelt- Smeenge & Robert C. Devries

*How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies* by Therese A. Rando

*Jesus Calling (Daily Devotional)* by Sarah Young

*Death and the Afterlife* by Billy Graham

*When Will I Stop Hurting* by June Cerza Kolf

*Journeying through Grief* by Kenneth C. Haugk

*When God Does Not Make Sense* by James Dobson

*Disappointment With God* by Philip Yancey

*Good Grief* by Granger Westberg

*Helping People Through Grief* by Delores Kuenning

*Life After Loss* by Bob Deits

*A Grace Disguised – How the Soul Grows Through Loss* by Gerald L. Sittser

*A Decembered Grief – Living with Loss While Others Are Celebrating* by Harold Ivan Smith

*Lament for a Son* by Nicholas Walterstorff

*Where Is God When It Hurts* by Philip Yancey

*You Are Never Alone* by Charles Allen

*When You Lose a Loved One* by Charles Allen

*Don't Waste Your Sorrow* by Paul Bilheimer

*Kind Words for Sad Hearts* by Amy Bolding

*Triumph over Tears* by Mary Brite

*A Path Through Suffering* by Elizabeth Elliott

*Count It All Joy* by Barbara Lee Johnson

*Recovering from the Losses of Life* by H. Norman Wright

*I'll Love You Forever* by Norman and Joyce Wright

## **Books for Children**

*The Fall of Freddie the Leaf – A Story of Life for All Ages* by Leo Buscaglia

*Everett Anderson’s Goodbye* by Lucille Clifton

*Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* by Tomie de Paola

*Lifetimes – The beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen

*It Must Hurt A Lot -- A Child’s Book About Death It Must Hurt A Lot* by Doris Sanford

*Tell Me, Papa* by Joy and Marv Johnson

*Grandpa & Me -- We Learn About Death* by Marlee & Ben Alex

*What Happens When We Die?* by Carolyne Nystrom

*What Happened to Auntie Jean?* by Paul White

*What Happened When Grandma Died?* by Peggy Barker

*The Cherry Blossom Tree* by Jan Godfrey

*It Must Hurt a Lot* by Doris Sanford

*Somewhere Heaven* by Larry Libby

## VII. OTHER ACTIONS THAT MAY NEED TO BE TAKEN

Some or all of the following actions may need to be taken by the family of the deceased:

- Contact the Social Security Administration concerning survivor benefits. See next page for more details. Provide death certificate.
- Contact any pension fund that provided or was providing retirement benefits to the deceased, provide death certificate.
- If a will existed, make sure it is filed in a timely manner with the appropriate county clerk's office. Call 713-755-6425 to reach the county clerk's office in Harris County, or 281-341-8685 to reach the county clerk's office in Ft. Bend County.
- Contact all insurance companies with whom the deceased was insured. Provide copy of death certificate.
- If the death was accidental, insurance coverage may have existed through a local bank, a credit card company, a travel agency, or other institution to which the deceased belonged. Contact each association, agency, or institution, to determine if such coverage existed.
- Obtain adequate copies of the death certificate. Proof of death will be required for each insurance claim and may be required by some other agencies.
- Contact banks, mutual funds, or any other institution that pays you interest or dividends to make certain that they are credited to the proper social security number.

The following was printed from the Social Security website:

### **WHAT TO DO WHEN A SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARY DIES:**

**A family member or other person responsible for the beneficiary's affairs should do the following:**

- Promptly notify Social Security of the beneficiary's death by calling SSA toll-free at 1-800-772-1213.**
- If monthly benefits were being paid via direct deposit, notify the bank or other financial institution of the beneficiary's death. Request that any funds received for the month of death and later be returned to Social Security as soon as possible.**

### **One-time Lump Sum Death Benefit:**

A one-time payment (varying amounts) is payable to the surviving spouse if he or she was living with the beneficiary at the time of death, OR if living apart, was eligible for Social Security benefits on the beneficiary's earnings record for the month of death.

If there is no surviving spouse the payment is made to a child who was eligible for benefits on the beneficiary's earning record in the month of death.

### **Benefits for Survivors**

Monthly survivors benefits can be paid to certain family members, including the beneficiary's widow or widower, dependent children and dependent parents. The following booklets, which are available from the Social Security Administration, contain more information about filing for benefits.

*Survivors Benefits* (Publication No. 05-10084)

*Social Security: Understanding the Benefits* (Publication no. 05-10024)

(From the Social Security Administration)

# Personal Affairs Checklist

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**Fears and/or concerns**

**What do you think of/about?**

**Money issues**

**Security**

**Being by yourself**

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**Spirituality**

**The Journey**

Discuss with your pastor possible changes to your “church experience” during your bereavement and transition

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**Self/ Personal Management**

**Take responsibility for the care of yourself**

**Counseling**

Seek counseling for help making necessary life transitions due to death

**Vision & Life / Personal Purpose**

**Interpersonal Skills**

**Communications**

**Personal Organization**

**Self-esteem / Self-confidence**

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## **Relationships / Community**

**Relationships will change, keep family and friends close for emotional support**

### **Family**

- **Children**
- **Parents**
- **Siblings**
- **Extended**

Counseling, school, homework, routines, sports, other

Caregiver roles

### **Friends**

### **Colleagues**

### **Acquaintances**

### **Intimate Partner**

Defer (general rule of thumb: wait 12 months), Knowing when you are ready

### **Giving Back**

Once you get yourself stabilized, move towards serving others (it helps)

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## Financially

### Banking

- **Bill Payment**

Do you know how to pay bills (online, auto draft, telepay, etc.)? Locate all accounts.

### Cash Flow / Budgeting

Make sure your cash flow is sufficient to pay the bills.

### Investing / Retirement Planning

### Legal Issues

### Risks (e.g. insurance)

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## Wellness

### Take extra steps to keep yourself well

### Nutrition

Make sure you eat a well-balanced diet to stay healthy.

### Physical

Exercise (walking, riding a bike, etc.) will help immensely.

### Medical / Dental

Take care of yourself (don't defer medical and dental care. Stress CAN express itself through your body).

### Sleep

Consider a sleep aid when appropriate.

### Leisure

Maintain a routine to get away from your day to day activities (weekly dinner out, etc.).

### Mental

Do something to keep your mind occupied (work, hobbies, volunteer work, etc.).

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## Professional

## Family / Work Balance

## Career Opportunities / Retirement

## Education

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### Asset Management

**Establish someone to teach and/or provide guidance on the following.**

#### Car

Find someone to help you understand basic maintenance related to owning a car.

- **Air Pressure**
- **Checking the fluid levels (oil, etc.)**
- **Oil Changes / Maintenance**

#### House / Yard / Pool

Find someone to help you understand basic maintenance related to your residence.

- **Alarms (e.g. smoke, security)**
- **Filters (furnace, water, pool)**
- **Emergency Shut-offs (utilities)**
- **Furniture Arrangement**
- **Redecorating**

Remain the same / change to signify new era?

Don't mention it / Redecorate to issue in new change?

#### Electronics

Knowledge about computer (virus utilities, etc.), operation of TV remote, phone voicemail

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**Domestic Arts**

**Cooking**

**Cleaning/ Laundry**

**Shopping**

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**Other**

**Disaster Planning**

Power outages, hurricanes

**Home Safety**

- **Firearms**

Find them/secure them

- **Smoke Alarms**

Testing and battery replacement

- **Security Systems**

Understand them

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# Grief Journaling 101

Recording your thoughts (aka keeping a journal or diary) is the oldest and most widely practiced form of self-help. Doing so allows you to record your most meaningful thoughts and feelings. Writing in a grief journal helps you process your feelings and express yourself in a safe, nonjudgmental place. By writing it down, your mind feels like it has been heard. Both journaling and talking through your thoughts with someone else will help ease feelings of emotional trauma following a death.

## To Begin

Just start writing! Begin with writing down exactly what you are thinking on anything, anytime, anywhere. As you write more it will become clearer what has the most meaning for you. As you continue to write you will develop a sense for the need to write more, less, and/or in greater detail. As you write more, you may choose to develop a system of flagging items or thoughts for future action or review. Simply begin to write and capture your thoughts.

## Format

The format is whatever works for you. Composition Books, journals, and spiral notebooks all work. Some people prefer to keep their journals on their computers; however hand writing your thoughts is found to be most beneficial. Some find it helpful to write on a routine basis, such as daily writing at a certain time, or perhaps once a week. It is often valuable to date your journal entries so you can look back and track your progress. Do what feel best and keeps you motivated to continue.

## Rules

There are no rules except for those you make for yourself. If you need to scream and yell at someone (including God), this is a safe place to do it. You make up the rules!

## Confidentiality

Most people do not share their journals, but some do. Do not share your journal with anyone unless you have thought it through and know the other person is trustworthy. Don't allow someone to violate your confidentiality. Be aware that sharing your closest thoughts and feelings with someone of the opposite gender could develop into an emotionally intimate relationship. Also, consider if you want anyone to read your thoughts after you have died.

## Prompts and Questions for the Loved One Lost

- What are you thinking about today?
- What emotions do your thoughts make you feel?
- What inspired you today?
- Write down helpful quotes and bible verses.
- What do I miss about you?
- What do I need your forgiveness on?
- What will I take forward by knowing you?
- What do I wish I had asked or said?
- What do I wish I had done or not done?
- What do I wish they had done or not done?
- What will I keep with me to cherish as a part of my memories?
- What photographs, videos, recordings, music trigger thoughts, feelings and memories?

## **Grief Journaling with the Psalms of Lament**

One way to guide grief journaling is to follow the structure of the psalms of lament. Some of the psalms of lament include Psalm 6, Psalm 13, and Psalm 88. Below there are listed questions that you might find helpful for your own reflection. You can use them for writing your own lament or praying them verbally. Feel free to adapt them according to your own situation and way of relating to God.

1. Address to God: How do you address God? How do you believe your relationship with the Divine will initiate change in your life situation?
2. Complaint: What is your complaint? What anger do you have that may need to be discussed with God?
3. Affirmation of trust: Have you experienced God being on your side in the past? Is there something you can look back on and say that you experienced the presence of divine love in your life?
4. Petition: What is your deepest desire from God? What do you want for your life situation right now?
5. Additional Argument: Having gotten in touch with your desire, is there anything else you want to say to God about your need and why God should intervene? What past situation do you feel like you would like to “remind” God of?
6. Curse on enemies: Are there things or people in your life that feel like enemies? How can you bring them to God?
7. Assurance of being heard: What do you need from God to feel heard?
8. Vow of praise: What can you promise or offer to God?
9. Hymn or blessing: What thing/person/event (no matter how small) can you thank God for? What other things/persons/events can you be grateful for?

### **References**

There are several grief journals for those who need guidance on what to write.

“From We to Me”

“Reflections of a Grieving Spouse”

<http://www.journey-through-grief.com/grief-journaling-with-laments.html>

2/2014