

SAMPLE FUNERAL PLANNING PACKET & Bereavement Ministry Protocols 2022



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“Dear Churches and Church Leaders...” 10 Things Funeral Home Directors Wish Churches/Church Leaders New



1. **Points-of-Contact Communication is Key:** The funeral home needs points-of-contacts from the family and the church enabling the funeral director to receive and give funeral related information in a timely manner.
2. **Communication Between All Parties Involved (the family, church, & funeral home) is Generally the Main problem.** The funeral home is contracted and bound to the family to carry out funeral arrangements and not to the church. With exception to funeral service protocols of the church, the funeral home will abide by the family's wishes and preferences.
3. **Undecided Family Points-of Contact:** In the event that the family has multiple family members claiming the right/authority to make funeral related decisions, funeral homes will often acknowledge the person who has signed the contract and made payment on the funeral services as the Executor of the Estate.
4. **The Power-of-Attorney is not the same as the Executor of the Estate.** Power-of-Attorney ceases at the time of death. The Executor of the Estate or designee (must be in writing) and is considered the person who handles funeral arrangements.
5. **Cemeteries are not always available** for the times requested by the families. When times are requested for services, be aware that certain cemeteries have different guidelines and time restrictions.
6. **Each Church Cemetery Has Different Policies.** If the cemetery at the church, the funeral home needs to know the church's cemetery written guidelines as each church's cemetery requirements are different.
7. **The Funeral Home Needs the Church's Live Stream Information is Needed Even When the Service is Not at the Funeral Home.** Churches are asked to provide the funeral home with live stream links as funeral homes often get calls during funeral services requesting live streaming links and information enabling them to view the service.
8. **Open or Closed Casket:** Families need to be familiar with the policies of each church open/close casket requirements.
9. **Who's Responsible:** Death Certificates are applied for and provided by the Funeral Home, not the family.
10. **Updates Needed:** Churches should regularly update their funeral protocols and policies and forward the same to the funeral homes allowing the funeral home directors to know what can and cannot be done in each church.



Funeral Honorariums & Fees

“To Charge or Not to Charge? How to Receive What’s Been Charged.”

Should members be charged honorariums and building usage fees for funeral services in their own churches? If so, should members be the same or a lesser rate than non-members? Should “active” members charged the same fees as “inactive” members? While charging some level of honorarium and fees is a common practice in most churches, receiving the honorarium and fee checks from families (especially church members) is an altogether different story.

For churches that do have a fee structure for funeral services, what are “best practices” for ensuring that honorarium and fee checks are received?

Pastor Coordinated: Some churches, especially small churches or churches where the pastor is not supported by leadership, the pastor finds him/herself coordinating funerals and weddings to include all associated fees and honorariums. With Pastor Coordinated fee structure, the pastor has challenge of setting and receiving fees from grieving families and wedding parties.

Special Events Volunteer Coordinated: Churches that have some measure of internal structure often have members/volunteers assigned to coordinate special events. In a Special Events Volunteer Coordinated ministry, funeral and wedding related checks/payments are coordinated and received by a Special Events Coordinator and forwarded appropriate persons to include the pastor for his/her services.

Funeral Home Coordinated: Regardless of the church size, one effective practice of ensuring that fee/honorarium checks are received is to work with the funeral home chosen by the family to have the church’s funeral related checks included the funeral home’s contracted fees to the family. The funeral home will then receive the church’s fee/honorarium checks along with the other funeral related expenditures and forward the same to the appropriate church officials.

Requirements for the Funeral Home Coordinated Practice: Develop a strong relationship with the local funeral homes in your community by...

- Assigning a trusted member of your church to serve as the church’s point-of-contact and develop strong communications with all funeral homes in the area BEFORE funeral services area needed.
- Maintain an updated Funeral Policy that includes funeral-related honorarium and building usage fee amounts and ensure that each funeral home in the area has a current copy BEFORE funeral services area needed.
- Request that all funeral related honorariums/fees associated with your church be included in the funeral home’s contracted fees to the family BEFORE funeral services area needed.
- Receive funeral related checks directly from the funeral home and not from the family.

CONDOLENCE LETTER TO THE FAMILY

*Written by the Pastor



TO THE FAMILY

Pastor _____, ministerial staff, officers, and the entire _____ Baptist Church family would like to express our sincerest condolences to you and your family as you grieve the passing of your loved one. May you know the Lord's comfort and may His love surround you during this time of loss.

Because the transition from life temporal to life eternal is such a sensitive time, we have assigned members of our diaconate ministry to serve and minister to you through your bereavement process. Additionally, we have assembled this Bereavement Manual to assist and comfort during this difficult time. As you follow these guidelines you may be assured that everything will be done for your comfort and convenience.

We will do our very best to honor your reasonable requests as we are able. We know that Homegoing Services are worship services designed to comfort and encourage the family and bring Glory and Honor to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To that end, it our heart's desire to provide this Ministry of Comfort & Service to you and your family.

May the Lord bless you.

Rev., Dr. _____

Pastor

_____ Baptist Church



The BGCVA Sample Funeral Policy

Church Funeral Guidelines For the Family of the Deceased

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TO THE FAMILY

INITIAL CONTACT & VISIT

At the time our services are needed, please contact the church at _____ and advise us of your loss. The ____BC Diaconate/Congregational Care Ministry will make the initial visit and contact with your family and remain your point of contact from _____ Baptist Church for all funeral related accommodations. During the initial visit, the date and time of the service and repast will be discussed and the Deacon's Ministry will also minister to the family through prayer on behalf of the Pastor and the _____ Baptist Church family. Persons representing the family of the deceased are asked to contact _____ should you have need to notify a ministry or church official with funeral arrangements. Guests of _____ Baptist Church are asked to contact _____ with any funeral related needs you may have.

ARRANGEMENTS

_____ Baptist Church members and guests should not make any plans for participation in the wake, Homegoing service, burial, or family meal without prior approval from the Pastor. The ____BC Diaconate/Congregational Care Ministry will ascertain the desires and wishes of the family, but make no decisions that will commit or bind the Pastor or the _____ Baptist Church Ministry in any way.

The Diaconate/Congregational Care Ministry will also work in coordination with the family and funeral director on the following arrangements:

- ❖ Preferred date and time of service;
- ❖ Estimated number of attendees;
- ❖ Special needs, i.e. wheelchair access, etc.
- ❖ Draft and finalize the service program;
- ❖ Equipment desired, i.e. guest register stand, reserved seating signs, etc.
- ❖ Location of the service, i.e. sanctuary or Funeral Home;
- ❖ Time deceased will be brought to the church;
- ❖ Delivery of flowers and other articles.



TO THE FAMILY

ARRIVAL OF YOUR LOVED ONE

Your loved one should arrive at the church 1 hour prior to the visitation hour. The hearse should park in the church's rear entrance. Your loved one will be brought into the church through the rear entrance and placed in front of the pulpit. Flowers should be brought in the same way and arranged in a manner not to impede the entrance to the pulpit or the choir loft areas. These matters will be arranged by your mortician.

PARKING

The hearse and cars belonging to the funeral home and family should be lined just outside the rear entrance. Upon conclusion of the service, cars going to the interment should line up as instructed by the Funeral Director.

PROCESSIONAL

Family members are to be seated prior to the start of the service beginning with the 2nd row on the left side (facing the pulpit) of the sanctuary. The first row is to remain vacant.

The order of line-up is as follows:

- ❖ The Pastor
- ❖ Officiating Minister
- ❖ Other Clergy
- ❖ Others participating in the service
- ❖ The Family of the Deceased

The processional will proceed down the center aisle with individuals walking in pairs.

The Pastor and pulpit participants should continue to the rostrum. Other clergy, diaconate and program participants should continue processional and seat to the right of the pulpit (facing the pulpit) beginning on the second row. Individuals who are designated pallbearers should sit to the right of the pulpit on the first row of the center section. All other guests will sit in the rows behind the family and rows as instructed by the ushers.

At the conclusion of the service, the funeral director will give flowers to the designated flower bearers who will proceed up the center aisle and line up on the sidewalk at the rear entrance to the church. The pallbearers will follow the direction of the funeral director and place the casket into the hearse. The processional will exit up the center aisle at the direction of the funeral director.



TO THE FAMILY

HOMEGOING SERVICES (Days available for...)

Funeral services may be held on any day except for Sunday. Dates and times are at the discretion of the Pastor or his designee.

After having met with the family, the Diaconate/Congregational Care Ministry will share with the Pastor the family's desires and wishes for the program order of service. The Pastor or their designee will make the necessary changes and/or corrections to the program and will have the final word on the finished document.

FUNERAL PROGRAMS/BULLETINS

All programs and bulletins for services to be held within _____ Baptist Church must be approved by the Pastor before the program is printed. All decisions relative to music selections, solos, musicians, etc. are at the discretion of the Pastor. All requests for changes to the order of worship must be submitted to the Pastor for their approval not later than two days prior to the date of the funeral service.

The Pastor shall officiate all funeral worship services in _____ Baptist Church except as they delegate this responsibility to other ministers at their discretion. Requests for guest ministers to officiate or serve in any capacity during _____ Baptist Church funeral services must receive prior approval from the Pastor. The Pastor will also bear the responsibility for the burial and administering of the final rites.

ORDER OF SERVICE

The casket is open during the scheduled time of the family visitation and thereafter closed. Funeral services will not begin or be conducted with an open casket. The order of service must be approved by the Pastor prior to printing of the bulletin. The funeral service itself should follow as printed in the program. Licensed ministers and guest soloists should use the pulpit podium for scripture reading and solos.

CARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cards and letters of acknowledgement will be received by the Church Secretary not later than the day of the funeral service. Although they will not be individually read, they will be referenced by the Church Clerk or the Pastor during the funeral service and provided to the family for their private reflection during their personal quiet time.



TO THE FAMILY

AVERAGE FUNERAL SERVICE TIME

Funeral worship services average 60 minutes (1 hour) or less for _____ Baptist Church and provide a ministry of comfort to the family and friends of the deceased. Persons giving “Special Comments” in respect to the deceased as a part of the worship service should limit their comment time to not more than 2 minutes.

THE FAMILY MEAL (REPAST)

The family may choose to have a repast for family and friends which normally takes place at after returning from the interment at the graveside. The family is responsible for coordinating and paying for repast related events to include catering, food service, and venue negotiations.

SERVICE LIVE STREAMING

Live streaming services are available for all funeral services held in _____ Baptist Church. The live stream link/access credentials will be provided by the church office once the funeral service has been confirmed and scheduled on the church calendar. Live streaming information for funeral services to be held in the funeral home chapel will be provided by the funeral home staff.

SERVICE TAPES/RECORDINGS

Recordings of live streamed funeral services held within _____ Baptist Church are provided to the family free of charge if available. Additionally, if available, one DVD recording of the service is given to the family free of charge. Additional DVD's may be purchased by prior arrangement for a fee to be established at that time.

OTHER COSTS

If your loved one is a member of the _____ Baptist Church, there is no charge for the use of the sanctuary, Officiant and musician. If the deceased is not a member, applicable costs will be discussed by the Deacons at the time of the initial visitation.

CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS MASONIC, SORORITY, MILITARY, AND FRATERNAL SERVICES

Masonic, Eastern Star, Sorority, Military, and Fraternal organizations desiring to participate in funeral services are encouraged to do so in the wake, burial, or repast activities. All participation in _____BC funeral/worship related activities that will take place in the church facilities are at the discretion of the Pastor.



About Your Loved One

FUNERAL DETAILS & ARRANGEMENT SHEET For the PASTOR & Diaconate (To Be Completed by the Family)

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TO THE PASTOR/DIACONATE

*Completed by the Family of the Deceased



_____ Baptist Church
Funeral Arrangement Sheet

*To be Completed by the Family of a Deceased Loved One.
Please forward the completed form to the Church Office.*

I. Family Point-of-Contact (P.O.C.)

**Funeral arrangements will only be discussed with the P.O.C. or an appointee of the P.O.C. Appointees must be provided in writing/email by the P.O.C.*

Name of Family P.O.C.: _____

Relationship to the Deceased: _____

Family P.O.C. Phone #: _____

Family P.O.C. Email Address: _____

II. About Your Loved One

A. Name of Deceased: _____

B. Date of Birth: _____

C. Place of Birth: _____

D. Date of death: _____

E. Address for Church to Correspond with Family:

Street Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

F. Maiden Name: _____

G. Spouse's Name: _____

H. Number of Years Married: _____

I. Place of Worship (If not ___ BC): _____

J. Education (Highest Grade Completed) _____

K. Employment _____

L. Military Service

1. Rank: _____

2. Branch of Service: _____

3. War Service: _____

TO THE PASTOR/DIACONATE

*Completed by the Family of the Deceased



M. Other Activities

1. Organizations: _____

2. Hobbies/Interests: _____

III. About the Family of the Deceased

Please provide the following information about the family of the deceased so that we can be in contact with and minister to your family. If the family member is deceased, please give an approximate year they passed. Please write "N/A" in spaces that do not apply to your family.

A. Mother: _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)
Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

B. Father: _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)
Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

C. Children

1. Child: _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)
Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

2. Child: _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)
Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

3. Child: _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)
Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

4. Child: _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)
Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

TO THE PASTOR/DIACONATE

*Completed by the Family of the Deceased



About the Family of the Deceased (cont'd.)

D. Siblings

1. **Sibling:** _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)

Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

2. **Sibling:** _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)

Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

3. **Sibling:** _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)

Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

4. **Sibling:** _____ Living or Deceased (year: _____)

Phone (if living): _____ Email: _____

E. Other Close Relatives and Friends:



FUNERAL WORSHIP SERVICE PARTICULARS

FOR THE PASTOR for the PASTOR'S APPROVAL

*To be completed by the family and approved by the Pastor.

Desired Officiant(s)	16
Requested Hymns, Music, & Musicians	16
Requested Scriptures & Readers	16
Requested Acknowledgements & Reflections	16
Pastor's Approval/Signature	16

FOR THE PASTOR for the PASTOR'S APPROVAL

*To be completed by the family and approved by the Pastor.



Funeral Worship Service Particulars

A. Desired Officiant(s): _____

** Guest officiating ministers must receive the Pastor's approval before being scheduled to officiate ___BC related funeral services. The Pastor of _____ Baptist Church or a ___BC Minister appointed by the Pastor will also participate and lead ___BC related funerals where guest officiating ministers are requested.*

B. Requested Hymns/Music to be Sung/Played During the Funeral Service:

C. Requested Songs, Soloists, & Musicians to Participate in the Funeral Service:

Name of Song	Soloist	Musician
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

D. Requested Scripture/Other Readings:

Scripture/Reading	Reader	Relation to the Deceased
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

E. Requested Prayer Provider(s):

Name: _____
Relationship to the Deceased: _____

Name: _____
Relationship to the Deceased: _____

F. Requested Acknowledgements & Reflections:

All reflections and acknowledgements must be limited to two (2) minutes or less.

Speaker's Name	Relation to the Deceased
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Pastor's Approval:

Pastor _____ Date _____



FUNERAL HOME/DIRECTOR INFORMATION SHEET (To Be Completed by the Family)

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Designated Funeral Service Seating	21

FOR THE FUNERAL HOME DIRECTOR

*To be completed by the family.



Funeral Home/Director Information Sheet

(Please give the following pages to the Funeral Home/Director when the funeral date/time has been confirmed at ____BC.)

Information for the Funeral Home/Director

A. Preferred Funeral Home & Director:

B. it is the responsibility of the Funeral Home/Director to...

- Arrange for placement of the body (1 hour prior to the start of the visitation hour)
- Care for the family prior to the beginning of the funeral service
- Guide and direct the family to the designated “gathering area” within ____BC as mentioned above
- Give instructions and guide the family and guests for the recessional after the funeral service has concluded
- Lead the funeral procession to the cemetery

C. Preferred Location of Funeral Service?

D. Cemetery Burial/Internment Location:

Burial/Graveside Service?

- Before Funeral (Location: _____)
- After Funeral (Location: _____)
- No Burial

E. Cremation? ___ Yes ___ No

F. Viewing/Visitation? ___ Yes ___ No

G. When Meeting with the Funeral Director, Please Bring...

1. A completed copy of the ____BC Bereavement Manual to be left with the Funeral Home staff.
2. Military Discharge Papers (DD-214) If Applicable
3. Clothing (full garments) to be placed on your loved one for burial
4. A Photo of Your Loved One
5. Insurance Policies (if you are using insurance to secure & fund the funeral)
6. Any questions you may have for the Funeral Director

FOR THE FUNERAL HOME DIRECTOR

*To be completed by the family.



H. Questions for the Funeral Director

Our family has the following questions for the Funeral Director/Staff:

I. Requested Date, Time, and Location of Funeral Particulars:

**The requested date and time must be confirmed with the Pastor before finalizing the date/time with the funeral home.*

1. Requested Service Date/Time

Optional Service

Date: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Time: _____

2. Desired Location of Family Visitation

J. Family Visitation (Requested Date, Time, & Location):

Requested Date/Time

Optional Date/Time

Date: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Time: _____

K. Repast

Is a repast desired and requested? ___ Yes ___ No

If "Yes"...

1. Please see page ___ of the ___ BC Funeral Guide for repast information.

2. Desired location of the repast? (Please check which one applies.)

_____ Baptist Church

Family Home (Address of Home: _____)

Other (Name of "Other" Location: _____)

3. Requested Date/Time of the repast?

Date: _____

Time: _____

4. Optional Date/Time of repast (if your requested date/time is not available)?

Date: _____

Time: _____

FOR THE FUNERAL HOME DIRECTOR

*To be completed by the family.



L. Funeral Service Bulletins

Families are asked to work with the funeral home/director for the provision of the funeral bulletins. However, the order of worship and worship service participants must be approved by the Pastor before the funeral bulletins are finalized and printed.

M. Open/Closed Casket Funeral Service

All _____ Baptist Church funeral services are closed casket. The casket may be open for viewing prior to the start of the funeral. However, it must be closed before the processional can take place.

N. The funeral vehicles are asked meet at the following address where family will be gathering prior to leaving for the funeral:

O. Family Contact's Cell Phone #: _____

P. Parking for the funeral home vehicles is reserved...

___ In front of the Main Sanctuary Entrance
___ Other _____

Q. Upon arrival at _____ Baptist Church, the family will be gathering in...

___ The Fellowship Hall ___ The Chapel ___ Other _____

R. Worship Service Processional Participants:

1. # of Paul Bearers: _____
2. # of Flower Bearers: _____
3. Organizations:
 - a. ___ Military
 - b. ___ Fraternity
 - c. ___ Sorority
 - d. ___ Masonic/Eastern Star
 - e. ___ Other _____

** Masonic, Eastern Star, Sorority, Military, are Fraternal organizations are required to request and receive prior approval and clearance from the Pastor BEFORE make any plans for participation in the wake, Homegoing service, burial or repast without prior approval and clearance from the Pastor.*

FOR THE FUNERAL HOME DIRECTOR

*To be completed by the family.



S. Funeral seating is designated as follows in the ____BC sanctuary:

- The Family is/is not permitted to be seated on the first row of _____ Baptist Church
- Family (left side facing the pulpit)
- Paul Bearers (Right Side facing the pulpit in front of the Flower Bearers)
- Flower Bearers (Right side facing the pulpit behind the Paul Bearers)