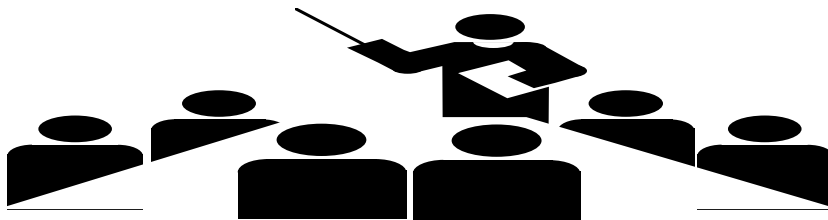


CHRISTIAN MINISTRY SEMINAR



Facilitator
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The Minister's Role in Bereavement

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY SEMINAR

Rev. Darryl B. Starnes, Sr., Instructor

TOPIC: THE MINISTER'S ROLE IN BEREAVEMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- # 1 We must not see our ministry to the bereaved family as a “one man show,” instead we must see ourselves as a pastor leading a congregation in its ministry to the bereaved.
- # 2 We must let our knowledge of the unique circumstances and special needs of each family determine the nature and extent of our ministry to the bereaved.
- # 3 We must understand that our private, behind the scenes ministry to the bereaved family is as meaningful and significant as our public ministry.

I. The Initial Call

- A. Cancel all appointments.
- B. Visit the scene of death and/or the home immediately.
- C. Comfort the family with our presence, prayer and scripture.
- D. Offer to accompany them to the funeral home of their choice to assist with the necessary arrangements.
- E. If the bereaved member is alone, arrange for a church member to stay with them until family arrives.
- F. If needed arrange for church member to provide transportation from the airport for arriving family members.
- G. Have church leaders to check in with the family from time to time to provide comfort as needed and to provide meals for the family until the funeral.
- H. Schedule another visit with the family at their convenience after family members have arrived to discuss the details that they would like included in the funeral service.
- A. Encourage family members to speak concerning their needs.

II. The Funeral Preparations

- A. Have self, church leaders and members make personal visits during the viewing of the body at the funeral home or church.
- B. Have church leaders and members prepare a meal for the family after the funeral.
- C. Contact church leaders and members who shall participate in the funeral service. (Musicians, choirs, soloists, ushers, pallbearers, flower bearers, other ministers, etc.)
- D. Plan the funeral service.

III. The Typical Funeral Service

- A. Organ Prelude
- B. Procession (Ministers, pallbearers, flower bearers, family)
- C. Hymn of Comfort
- D. Old Testament Lesson
- E. New Testament Lesson
- F. Prayer of Comfort
- B. Selection – Choir or Soloist
- C. Obituary (Read aloud or silently)
- D. Acknowledgements and/or Resolutions/Remarks
- E. Vocal Solo
- F. Eulogy/Sermon
- G. Recession

IV. The Committal Service

- A. Words of assurance from the Scriptures
- B. Words of committal
- C. Prayer of comfort for the bereaved
- D. The Lord's Prayer in unison
- E. Benediction

V. After the Committal

- A. Linger informally with family members and friends of the deceased until the funeral director signifies it is time to return to the funeral home or church building.
- B. If driving or having access to another ride, stay at the cemetery as long as you wish, departing only when you feel that the family has no further need of your services.

VI. After the Funeral

- A. Visit the family to ascertain their needs, including the need for financial or legal counsel, and subsequently help them obtain the needed services.
- B. Thereafter visit regularly and have another church leader do the same for about six months to a year.
- C. Mobilize other resources of the church to encourage the family members who may struggle to venture forth into the mainstream of life once again.