

## Concern for the Bereaved

### Find out who is in charge

I attended a funeral far away from home. It was the first time that I did so at the church hosting it. I wore a clergy robe, black clergy shirt, and clergy collar.

Someone (perhaps a family member or close friend) entered the church and said to me; “The family is here.” I told her that I would tell the pastor the family arrived.

This family member or friend did not need to know the following:

- I am from out of town.
- I do not know the protocol of this church.
- I do not know who is in charge (I knew the pastor).
- I am not in charge.

Serving means that I let her know I will take care of her concern. She need not seek another to help.

### Information Coordinator

A person who agrees to serve as information coordinator can help the bereaved by being the person who attendees are sent to for information about the funeral and burial. It seems better to have a coordinator to answer repeated questions than to have the bereaved to do so.

## **Resolutions**

Groups use resolutions to (e.g.) express sentiments. So they are used for funerals. One way of viewing resolutions is as follows:

A resolution is a person's attempt to express in writing what the group would say if given the chance to do so.

All resolutions are not adopted (voted in favor of). Some are defeated; some are not even seconded. The hearer should not assume that a resolution read at a funeral was properly moved, seconded, and adopted

### ***Condolence instead of Resolution***

Based on the above, I prepare condolences rather than resolutions for bereaved families. Other reasons why I do so are the following:

- Resolutions tend to be written in language one would not use were one speaking in person to the family.
- Resolutions tend to sound “stuffy” and “highbrow.”

Wording can be improved by eliminating the words:

- Whereas
- be it Resolved
- be it further Resolved
- inscribe upon our records. It is simpler to say: “We will include this condolence in our records.”

# Protocol

## **Altar Calls at Funerals**

Based on what God does, people may want prayer or to give themselves to God.

Some would come forward were the deceased not in front. A suggestion to address this is the following:

- Ask those who will minister to ones that come to stand in front of the deceased and/or in front of aisles on each side of the deceased. While making the altar call, tell the hearers that there are men of God in front (give their exact locations) who will take them into another room for prayer..

## **Clergy Attire at Funerals**

For clergy who are not apostles and bishops, wearing a black suit, clergy collar and black clergy shirt is always appropriate attire.

Please note the following:

- The Chief Apostle does not always wear a robe at funerals. In fact, the only time I recall his doing so was when he was to be the main eulogist at Mother Bessie Jones' funeral, a member of his church.
- All apostles do not wear apostle's robe at funerals.
- Many apostles do not wear clergy collars at funerals.
- Some apostles determine whether they will wear robes depending on whether they will march ahead of the family.

## **Expect not to be called on Prepare to be called on**

For various reasons including:

- Time limitations,
- The perception that you will do more than the family asked you to do, and
- You ignore time limits,

you might not be called on during a funeral. "Take it in stride."

Prepare your oral or written eulogy just in case you are called on.

When your group expects you to represent it at a funeral, make two copies of the condolence. Give one to the person collecting them for the family. Be ready to read the other if called on

### **First Row on the Floor**

Sometimes the first row of a section designated for dignitaries is for healthcare professionals. They might be strategically seated to minister to the bereaved.

Some in error have chosen the first row, but later find out they need to move and sit elsewhere (sometimes in the “bleachers”).

### **Seating of Dignitaries**

It might be better to seat dignitaries (e.g., clergy) before the family arrives to insure that they are seated per protocol. When this is the case, informing them as soon as possible is very helpful. Doing so may determine whether they wear robes.

### **Special Recognition**

When it is appropriate to do so, you might give special recognition at the beginning of the service. For example:

To the Chief Apostle, Presiding Apostle, and the main eulogist, and

To the host pastor and his staff when using another's church.

## Time Savers

### **Adhering to Time Limits**

The main error in not adhering to the time limit requested by the bereaved family is:

lack of concern for and insensitivity to the bereaved family.

Do only what the family asks you to do within the time limit they give.

Do not ask the person directing the service for permission to do something else. If you are directing the service and you are asked, say no.

### **Come Forward and Wait Nearby**

When you have been asked to participate in the funeral service:

- Determine from the program or from the director of the service when you are to participate.
- Come forward and stand nearby so that when your turn comes, you can immediately go to the microphone to participate.

Sometimes clergy need not use the main microphone because they are not seated in elevated seats and there is a floor microphone.

### **Commenting After All That Happens**

Commenting after everything said and done prolongs the funeral service.

Rather than take an additional few minutes to eulogize, use one of the “comment after all that happens” occasions to do so.

### **Do Not Read Condolences**

By not reading condolences (telegrams, resolutions, cards, etc.), the time that would have been spent reading them can be saved. A note in the funeral program can acknowledge and express appreciation for their being given.

### **Family Arrival before the Beginning of the Funeral**

A family might be able to save time between the beginning of the funeral and the arrival at the burial by arriving at the funeral early (perhaps 15 or 20 minutes early).

Some families have come to funerals by up to 2 hours ahead of its beginning. Doing so allows:

- more time for them to compose themselves, and

- time for others to greet them before the funeral rather than after when there might be a time constraint.

### **. . . from the heart**

One should not conclude that written (funeral) words are *not* from the heart. If you think people whose opinion you care about might conclude your written words are not from your heart, you might:

- say (e.g.): “These words are from the heart. I wrote them to help me observe the time limit.
- Use one and two syllable words rather than more than two syllable words. Extensive use of long words gives the impression that the words are not from the heart. We learn how to use long words. We can learn to use simple words.

### **Giving Honor to . . .**

With prior approval, the person directing (officiating) the funeral service can save time by:

1. Giving honor (in detail) to everyone to whom honor is due (the Chief Apostle, Presiding Apostle, the Co-presiding Apostle(s), the Apostles, Bishops, Presbyters, the host pastor and his staff (when a church outside of the organization is being used), Deacons, Missionaries, International, Regional, Diocesan, District, and church auxiliary heads, saints, friends, and the family, *and*
2. asking others to simply say “giving honor to whom honor is due.”

### **Listing Participants in the Program**

Funeral time can be saved by:

- listing in the program each person along with what each is to do,
- telling all at the beginning of the service to be ready to participate as outlined in the program, for you will not be called on

### **Seating Dignitaries Before the Family Arrives**

The family might ask that dignitaries (e.g., clergy, deacons, missionaries, and pallbearers) be seated in designated areas before the family arrives. This will save time and can save seating confusion.

**Write It, Practice It, Then Say It*****Write It***

To limit what you say (your eulogy) to the time allotted by the family, you might:

- write various things in outline form that you would like to say,
- rank them according to what will most comfort the family,
- choose the top two, and
- refine how you would express the top 2 with 1) comforting the family, and 2) time, in mind.

Something with humor might be just what the family needs. Be prepared to use something different if you sense that the preceding eulogies contain too much humor or were too somber.

***Practice It, Then Say It***

At E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company (DuPont), I was often asked to present information to other departments on behalf of the department for which I worked. The information had to be exact.

I was asked to write a draft. The draft was recycled to me by my supervisor for correction and modification when necessary. The draft he approved was recycled to him by his director for modification when needed. The draft the director approved was recycled by the vice president for modification when necessary.

I practiced presenting the final draft so not to sound as if I were reading it. Sometimes the presentation would take an hour.

This kind of experience, which was required of all at my level and above, is very good for making remarks at funerals. It helps overcome nervousness and yields a more cogent eulogy (remarks).

## What Kind of Girl Do You Want to Marry?

At age 17, I was asked the question: What kind of girl do you want to marry? (The young woman asking the question thought I was older than 17.) My answer is as follows. What I wanted was *not negotiable*:

I want to marry the woman God wants me to; one who:

1. is born again, godly, prayerful,
2. is committed by action to the salvation of others,
3. will enhance my ministry,
4. loves God more than she loves me,
5. loves me,
6. will treat me according to the vow:  
forsaking all others, to keep me only unto her for better or for worse, for richer or poorer,  
in sickness and health, until death do us part.
7. is willing when necessary to live within the means God enables me to provide,
8. is friendly,
9. loves children,
10. is intelligent,
11. is attractive *to me*,
12. has an interest in and will engage in, marital sex,
13. can cook.

Except for the ability to cook, she should have the following expectations of me:

I want to marry the man God wants me to; one who:

1. is born again, godly, prayerful,
2. is committed by action to the salvation of others,
3. will enhance the work God has for me to do,
4. is a good minister of Jesus Christ,
5. loves God more than he loves me,
6. loves (agapeo per Eph. 5:25) me,
7. cleaves (clings, united) to me (Gen. 2:24),
8. puts me ahead of his mother,
9. will treat me according to the vow:  
forsaking all others, to keep me only unto him for better or for worse, for richer or poorer,  
in sickness and health, until death do us part . . .
10. endeavors to be better, not worse, to be richer, not poorer,
11. is willing to give me his best,
12. is friendly,
13. loves children,
14. is intelligent,
15. is attractive to me,
16. has an interest in and will engage in, marital sex.