



# Preparing for Your Christian Funeral

This "PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET" was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV • jtaylor@southreno.com  
Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

## A. A Personal Word to you about your Funeral Service

Once you pass away, there will be no time in your loved-ones grief process more important than the funeral—that time to memorialize, celebrate, grieve, and seek solace in their loss. "Closure" is not the goal of a funeral; transition is. Transition from life with you to life without you. The funeral is the true beginning of that process. When your family loses you in death, the first thing they will want to do is establish the significance you had on their lives and the meaning of your life and death. Thank you for helping them through a difficult event—your own funeral—by doing a little "pre-planning" process. Trust me, you will never know how great a gift you are about to give them. Whether your death is imminent or in a season to come, thank you for taking time to think through and document your important wishes on how you want them to remember and commemorate your cherished life. Remember, the funeral is for them—you will be in a perfect place.

Warmly,

*Pastor Joe*

## B. The Funeral Basics

There are three main purposes/parts of a funeral: (1) -One is the message of encouragement, (2) the music, and (3) the memories. This document will help you with every detail of this service. FYI: A memorial service is when a body is not present or only a person's cremains are present. A funeral is when a body (i.e., a casket) is present. For this presentation, both terms will be used synonymously.

Regarding each of these:

1. **The Music:** The funeral and/or memorial service for a person is an incredibly important time to your family. It does not help you bring closure, but it does help you bring transition from life with to life without your loved one. I would strongly suggest sacred music, the great hymns of our faith, and Christian songs that speak to eternal values be used to encourage you in this service.
2. **The Memories:** The word *eulogy* comes from the Latin word meaning "to remember or to praise." There are two types of eulogies: an open eulogy is where someone would walk around with a microphone and anybody that attends the service can stand and offer an anecdote or memory of the loved one. The other type of eulogy is a formal eulogy. This is where certain friends and family are assigned a task in helping the crowd and family remember your loved one. Formal eulogies are typically done by one to three family members and/or friends that stand at the pulpit with no open microphone allowed during the service.
3. **The Message:** I will be happy to provide for you a brief devotional during the service to encourage your family and loved-ones from God's Word. It may be that you have a family member or another Pastor in your history that you would like to take the service or assist with the service. At SOUTH RENO BAPTIST CHURCH we willingly and openly welcome Christian ministers who mean the world to you, to help during this time. If you bring that to my attention, I will honor that wish fully and joyfully.

The following QUESTIONNAIRE is designed to help you document your wishes and thoughts needed for us (your loved ones and me) to prepare your funeral service.

**Please copy this QUESTIONNAIRE and give copies to your pastor and to your family.**

# My Christian Funeral Questionnaire

## My Personal Information

Full Legal Name \_\_\_\_\_

How do you want to be referred to in your service \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Your Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

## My Funeral Home Information

What Funeral Home do you want to use? \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_

Any additional Information \_\_\_\_\_

What type of service do you desire?     Funeral (with casket)\*     Memorial (without a casket)

\* What clothes do you wish to be buried in? \_\_\_\_\_

*NOTE: My expenses*     *have*     *have not been paid for*

What are your burial wishes? \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_

Grave Marker/epitaph Info. \_\_\_\_\_

Any additional Information \_\_\_\_\_

*NOTE: My expenses*     *have*     *have not been paid for*

## Other Important Questions

Where will your service be held? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Clergy you wish to perform you service? \_\_\_\_\_

Church/contact information \_\_\_\_\_

This minister has been informed about my wishes     Yes     No

Second option of clergy? \_\_\_\_\_

Church/contact information \_\_\_\_\_

This minister has been informed about my wishes     Yes     No

Where are important documents located your family will need in the event of your death? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



I accepted Christ as my savior at the age of \_\_\_\_\_. It happened ...

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I would like to be remembered as one who ...

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The greatest treasures in my life were ...

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The great storm in my life was ...

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This great moment in my life was ...

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## Eulogy Information

I would like the following type of eulogy:

Informal (everyone invited to say something)

Formal (Selected friend/family member/s) \*

Name	Contact Information	Relationship
1.		
2.		
3.		

## Music Information

The following are hymns I would like sung at my service: (Circle no more than 3 or 4)

*"A Mighty Fortress"*

*"Amazing Grace"*

*"Because He Lives"*

*"Blessed Assurance"*

*"He Hideth My Soul"*

*"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"*

*"Holy, Holy, Holy"*

*"How Great Thou Art"*

*"It Is Well With My Soul"*

*"I Know Whom I Have Believed"*

*"In The Garden"*

*"Just A Closer Walk With Thee"*

*"Love Lifted Me"*

*"Precious Lord, Take My Hand"*

*"Rock Of Ages"*

*"The Old Rugged Cross"*

*"What A Friend We Have In Jesus"*

*I would like these songs*  *sung congregationally*  *sung as a solo*

Other music \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My Soloist/music leader could be \_\_\_\_\_

My pianist/musician could be \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded music would be fine

My family can decide about the music

My pastor can decide the music

Other information about music at my service \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Scriptures I would my pastor to read and/or speak about

I will let my pastor decide what scripture and remarks he will say.

I would like my pastor to strongly consider the following popular, Holy Scriptures:

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, NIV** - <sup>13</sup> Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. <sup>15</sup> According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Therefore encourage each other with these words.

**Psalm 23, NIV** - <sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup> he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. <sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. <sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**Isaiah 43:2, NIV** - <sup>2</sup> When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

**2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, NIV** - <sup>16</sup> May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, <sup>17</sup> encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

**Isaiah 61:1-3, NIV** - The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NIV** - <sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

**1 Peter 5:7, NIV** - <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

**1 Corinthians 15:55-57, NIV** - <sup>55</sup> "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Hebrews 4:15-16, NIV** - <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

**Isaiah 41:10, NIV** - <sup>10</sup> So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Isaiah 51:11, NIV** - <sup>11</sup> The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

**2 Corinthians 5:8, NIV** - <sup>8</sup> We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

**Revelation 21:4, 21-27, NIV** – <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. ... <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. <sup>22</sup> I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. <sup>27</sup> Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Revelation 22:1-6, NIV** - Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. <sup>6</sup> The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

Other Scriptures / Thoughts I have for my Pastor \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Other Information

I would like my family to place some pictures at the front of the building to help remember me.

I would like memorials be made to the following:

via flowers to my service

via financial gifts to my church

via financial gifts to the following ministry

\_\_\_\_\_

via financial gifts to the following organization

\_\_\_\_\_

I would like my cremains (i.e., ashes) be broadcast (i.e., scattered) at the following location:

\_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_



A Friendly Church That Cares!

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