

Funeral Services

Funeral customs are the ceremonies connected with the disposition of the dead. Anthropologists have found that formal procedures exist for ensuring proper treatments of the deceased in virtually every society, regardless of how primitive or remote. Like birth and marriage, death seems universally to be regarded as a socially significant event, marked by rituals and beliefs that dictate how the dead are to be dealt with and how the survivors are to mourn.

Cultural structure, religious beliefs and superstition have contributed much to diversity of methods in disposing of the corpse. Elaboration of funerary practices has swallowed up any moral value. The burial of those with rank, nobility and wealth are known for large vaults with mausoleum compare with less inexpensive for the lower class. In short, funerary service and burial places have become a platform of arrogance.

Many customs of mourning have been observed around the world, including weird and irrational practices, all in the name of the deceased. Some funeral ceremonies lasted for weeks, months, or even years after the death. The longer the ceremonies, the more burdensome it is.

Majority of Church Age believers were baptized in a pagan church without their knowledge (when they were infants) and will be buried with cultic rituals (without their knowledge). Their local churches have adapted and practice these rituals since their existence. Majority of the so-called church practices are not biblical in context.

They have not examined their various rituals, practices and teachings in the light of the Scripture. Few dared to examine the so-called Christian practices due to biblical ignorance or fear of being tagged as heretics or doubting Thomas. The disposal of the corpse is very simple and for Christians it must be free from any elements of paganism or cultic principles, practices or rituals.

The so-called modern Christian funerals are the blend of ancient Egyptian, Greeks, Romans, Etruscans and other cultic funerary traditions. Elaborated funeral ceremonies were intended to ensure that the spirits of the deceased is properly treated so that it will gain admission to its final resting place.

The fear that the spirits of the dead will return to the world to bestow tragedy or death upon those who do not venerate them in the prescribe manner has been the major motivation for elaborated funeral practices. The deceased has become the object of adoration, glorification, and exaltation even without their knowledge.

You have to take away every fragment of cultic practice from what we called Christian funeral beginning from the carpet, crucifix, candles, flowers, music, lights, displayed of memorabilia, family tree of the deceased, obituary notices, display of pictures, wearing funeral attire, and glorifying the dead.

The Church Age believers must discriminate and reject every questionable funerary customs and traditions which religion have popularized. Some Christians are lazy to study the Word of God and thereby failing to recognize the Truth from myth and superstition, the mystical from reality. Most Christians simply follow traditions and customs without thinking. They are following the path of mystical Christianity without a thought.

The bereaved in almost all societies cry, sometimes for long periods of time. In many societies, anger and aggression are also part of grief and mourning. Funerals provide a means for the deeply grieved relatives and friends of the dead to openly display their grief and so channel their intense emotions into nondestructive paths.

This therapeutic value of funerals, in providing a means of catharsis for those individuals most seriously affected by their loss, (especially those who maltreated the deceased while alive), enables them to resume a less normal life after the appropriate period of mourning has passed. Everything the bereaved are doing have no meaning and significant to the diseased person. In fact, the dead person have no way of knowing what people are doing for him.

The tradition or the details surrounding the disposal of a dead body either by burial, cremation, or other means have become showcase of arrogance and boasting. The funeral manager will offer the bereaved the most expensive and elaborated services, amenities, coffin, and arrangements and make them feel guilty if they have not given the best for the departed one.

Solemn acts such as the preparation of the body, songs (laments), offering of gifts, the funeral procession, provision of a memorial, and mourning are subject to codes of procedure in most cultures. Crying and wailing at funerals are common throughout the world; yet do not necessarily reflect any affection for the deceased.

Physical death is the termination of everything related to the affairs, activities, and participation in the world of the living. The deceased person has ceased to exist from the world; their life on earth has stopped. They are history. But some ignorant people talk to their dead as if they can be heard. This is the basic form of necromancy.

The human corpse decomposes rapidly without chemicals used for embalming. It is nothing but rotten meat without senses and consciousness, but some talk, kiss and treat the corpse as alive. The Bible did not outline a definite funerary practices but it does permit the believers to do just anything they may wish.

The funeral (the disposal of the corpse) is not very important for the deceased but the livings are making great business and ceremonies out of it. The funerary practices and burial has nothing to do with the deceased relationship with God, destiny (heaven or hell) or peace and happiness. Culture, religious traditions, practices and myths should never allow to dictate what ought to be Christian practices.

Believers must be very meticulous to the details of things we used to practice, because what we might consider Christian are actually pagan. Religion and culture cannot set the norms and standards of Christianity. The Bible alone is the basis of all practices, doctrines and principles of the Christian life. Never complicate what the Lord has already simplified.

Religious traditions tend to elaborate and exaggerate what God has never augmented. They magnify the non-important and non-essential, they major on the minors. As Christians who are students of Bible doctrines, you must see to it that when you die, they will never use your corpse for heretical and blasphemous rituals, and practices.

Your loved ones must properly inform and oriented what to do with your corpse. It is important that you write down your personal instruction for your own funeral and burial before hand to avoid argument among your relatives. It must be sealed and properly addressed.

The following is a basic format of a personal instruction for your own memorial service and burial:

Signed in three copies, two copies address to your closest loved ones and another to the person (pastor or deacons) who will execute your instruction.

I, (your complete name), hereby instruct my immediate relatives, that after I die, my corpse will be laid in the state at the (your church), for not more than (no. of days), with no cross or crucifix, no flowers, no red carpet and curtain, no candles, no light bulbs, no picture of mine, no family tree, no memorabilia, no music or special number.

That, no gambling, no drinking, smoking, and serving of food within the premises of the chapel;

That, no public commendation or open testimony related to the good things I have done shall be said;

That, while my corpse lie in the said premises, doctrinal Bible study shall be provided by the members of the church, whenever there are visitors;

That, I personally desire my corpse to be cremated without bringing home the ash, and my corpse will be laid in a rented coffin;

That, all love gift and donation shall be handled by (a designated person), and use for (state the purpose),

That, there will be no procession going to the crematory except for the four people who will witness the cremation,

That, no person other than the pastor and elders of my church will lead the funeral services and Bible studies, and my family members must coordinate and cooperate with them, That, I hereby decreed that these shall be executed accordingly without revision right away after I die,

Signed with two witnesses

The loss of a loved one is probably one of the greatest pressures in life. Many well meaning people will try to comfort you by saying, "Everything will be all right," but you will find that everything cannot be all right, because you will miss that loved one. So, when a severe pressure comes to you, like the loss of a loved one, you have to have something more than human viewpoint.

The word funeral, seems to be very final, very mournful, and fatal, and sounds absolutely hopeless in its expression. The home going of a believer is a victory, not a defeat. It is a promotion, not a demotion. So I refer to the death of a believer as a "memorial service."

A memorial service because it is a memorial service of what the Lord has provided for us in grace. The memorial service looks back to past grace and forward to future more grace. So the memorial service is over the loss of a loved one. We remember them, and the relationship we had with them when they were with us on this Earth. The memorial service reminds us that we will be with them again, just as we do when we remember the Lord Jesus Christ who is not here with us physically today, but will return for us, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Physical death is designed to remind us of many things. It reminds us that physical life lived to its fullest is just a short time compared to eternity. God controls not only our life, but our death. In His perfect time, He selects the time for us to go home to be with Him. It is His plan, His timing, and not our plan or our timing. So when we have a loved one depart from us into the presence of the Lord, you will remember that God's plan and desire is much greater and more beneficial than ours.



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