Grieving Remembrance Thanksgiving

Prayers for a Funeral (1)

Opening prayer

Gracious and loving God, you are the giver of life. We come from you, and in death we return to you. Be with us now.

We bring to you our grief and loss, because ... A ... was part of our lives, we loved *them* and now it hurts.

We bring to you our thanks for all that ... A ... meant to us, all that *they* shared with us and all that *they* gave us of *themselves*.

[as appropriate]

We bring to you our relief, that for ... A ... there is nothing left to fear, no more suffering, no more frailty, no more confusion, and *they* are with you and at peace.

Come into the turmoil of our emotions, renew our faith and grant us the peace that only you can give.

All Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving for a life

God of life and light and hope, with your whole Church in heaven and on earth we bring to you our thanks, we offer to you our praise, for all that you have done for humankind through Jesus who is the Christ.

You gave him to live and die for us. You showed your plan for the world and proved that your love has no limit, and on that first Easter when you raised Jesus from the dead you promised that all humankind might share his resurrection life

For the hope of our faith, for the good news of your kingdom, and for all those whom you have welcomed into your loving presence, we thank you, gracious God.

But especially now, we thank you for the life of ... A ... whom we loved. We thank you for all the ways in which ... A ... became special and precious to each of us who knew *them*;

for the values and standards *they* set *themselves* and lived by; for *their* sense of what was good and right and decent;

for their warmth and humour and sense of family;

for every life that *they* enriched and all that *they* invested of *themselves* in our lives;

for the faith by which *they* lived and in which *they* died. We thank you for the glorious treasury of memories that are ours to keep, to hold on to and to enjoy – the moments that were deep, special and personal, the times that rang with laughter and fun,

and for the ordinary days of discovering each other a little more, when affection and love, trust and respect, grew and were deepened. We thank you for the courage shown, and for a life fulfilled, and for all that ... A ... reflected of your goodness and love.

And now we are glad that ... A ... has found peace and will neither suffer nor mourn again. *They* have laid *their* burden down before you and are with you, safe, happy, whole, and welcomed by those for whom *they* once mourned. Help us to hold on to what we should and to let go what we must. Help us not to cling to the past constantly brooding for what might have been, but rather to take forward what *they* gave us for the rest of our lives' journey. Help us to trust and to know that ... A ... will never be far from us till that day when we all stand together in your presence.

Through Jesus who is the Christ.

All Amen.

Closing prayer and benediction

Loving God, grant to us all now the grace to turn back to our lives and our tasks with calm hearts, minds at peace, and a renewed faith.

Help us to be worthy of the (wo)man whose death we mourn today, but whose life will always be dear to us.

May we go on from today to be the same people ... A ... helped us to become, the people *they* were proud to call *their* family and *their* friends – living out our lives as *they* want us to live, and celebrating in them all that *they* gave us.

And may strength and courage and hope be with us all in the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always.

All Amen.

Alan Paterson

Prayers for a Funeral (2)

Introductory prayer

Compassionate God, you have loved ... A ... , and we have loved them too. We come to you because the love we feel is hurting and distressing. We feel lost and helpless, sometimes lonely. We miss ... A Help us to believe that your love is greater and more farseeing than ours. Help us to find confidence in your love and peace in your compassion so that our fears are calmed and our loneliness is eased. May today and tomorrow be filled with your comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer after the eulogy

Gracious Father God, your love never ends and is always willing to comfort us. On this occasion grief can threaten us and over-shadow our hope and optimism.

Help us to remember with gratitude ... A May their influence remain with us because they were dear to us. May your compassion lead us from the grief of separation to the hope of resurrection.

We thank you for the life which has passed; we give thanks because we have seen the leading of God in ... A ... who has died.

We give thanks because of the virtues, love and activity which made them what they were. We thank you for their life with all its achievements and for the love given and received by them among their family and friends.

We are content that whatever suffering and pain, sadness and sorrow there was in their life has now passed and ended and that they have entered into a life which is eternal.

We are grateful that they were such a person that our grief and sorrow is real and pray for your comfort in healing the absence of their laughter and joy of life.

We pray that you will bring comfort to those who grieve.

We pray particularly for parents, children, relations and friends of ... A Give them courage to adapt to living. May grief and distress not overwhelm them so that in time the wounds left by this death may be healed. Give us insight to believe that physical death is the gateway to a more complete and fulfilling life.

So give us your peace and light, comfort and compassion in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Graham Robson

A service for the interment of ashes

Introductory words

We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we cannot take anything out of the world.

After labour comes rest; after struggle, peace; after life's fitful fever, this last sleep.

Don't worry, said Jesus; I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and now I am alive for eternity, and I have the keys to eternal life.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. So there is consolation in the love and activity of God.

... A ... has now departed and *they* now rest with those who have gone before. What *they* have been and what *they* have given now rests with the God whom *they* worshipped and to whom *they* gave *their* life through Jesus, the Christ.

We thank God for who and what *they* were; for the love and concern *they* showed and was experienced by *them* and given by *them*. May *their* rest be in the peace and love of God, and our memory of *them* be blessed and loving, gracious and accepting. *They* have lived *their* life, and have departed to be with those who went before.

May we continue to be content to release *them* to you, and to be assured that in your keeping *they* are safe, happy and complete.

Prayers

Let us pray

God of mercy, and God of all comfort; look in love and compassion on us. Enable us to find in you refuge and strength, and close friend in times of trouble and stress, and to know, though it is beyond immediate knowledge, your strength which upbuilds and surrounds us in times of bereavement. Grant us faith and hope, and peace and comfort through Jesus the Christ who gave himself for us that the life we live may be filled with peace and hope.

Accept to yourself the life of ... A ..., with its achievements and failures, its ups and downs; its funny times and serious times, and deal with *them* graciously as we say goodbye to *them* and use our own lives to bring goodness and truth to those whom we know. These things we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Put ashes into ground

We have entrusted ... A ... to God's eternal keeping. Now we commit their ashes to their resting place; in the sure and certain hope of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who dies, was buried and rose again for us. To him be glory for ever.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. His servants shall worship him and attend him and they will acknowledge his name.

Throw flowers over the casket

In memory, and in gratitude for the life of ... A ... we offer our flowers, confident of the certain hope that they are with their loved ones and cared for by God, and that we who are left will think of them with kindness and love.

We commend ourselves to you, praying that what we have done today will give us a deeper understanding of the issues of this life and an appreciation of its appointed end. Keep us in fellowship with the Church Triumphant; enrich us with light and truth, and enable us to find peace in the present and hope in the future since truth and light are both alike to you.

May the God of peace, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, love us and all his people, now and always,

All Amen.

Graham Robson

A Funeral service in a church followed by committal prayers at a cemetery or crematorium, and a rite for the burial of ashes

These alternative prayers of approach make provision for the violent grief of those who are bereaved by accidental death to be acknowledged and shared

The funeral of a young person may be attended by large numbers of people who are unfamiliar with church ritual and may bring their own symbols with them; these should be acknowledged where possible.

Appropriate liturgical provision may also be made for the inclusion of music that speaks meaningfully of lament and hope.

Introduction

Opening sentences

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble

(Psalm 46:1)

Jesus said, Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, And I will give you rest.

(Matthew 1:28)

Hymn

Prayer

(a)
God, O God,
we turn to you in anguish,
our hearts are screaming,
our minds are weeping
our spirits are numb.
We remember with sorrow
how we failed one another.
In the bitterness of regret, we turn to you.

(b) Living God, God of our strength we come to you in sadness at this time of parting. We are restless and cast down. Eternal Love, you know our guilt, you taste our pain, your outstretched arms enfold us. God of mercy, hear our cry, breathe on us, raise us up, speak to us and strengthen us in hope in the power of the holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Readings from the Bible

Address

Hymn, song or music for reflection

Prayer

God our Father, we thank you that you have made each of one of us in your image and likeness.

Especially today we thank you for ... A ... , for the life we shared with them, for the good times and the bad for the love they gave and the love they received.

Faced with the mystery of life, we affirm that love is unconfined. Faced with the mystery of death, we affirm that love is stronger then the grave.

Gentle God, for your pity's sake, deal tenderly with those who mourn, Especially ... A ..., ... A ..., and their families and friends. In the pain of grief, may they find comfort in you. In their helplessness may they find help in you; In their loneliness, may they find companionship in you. May they find in us your comfort, your help and your companionship.

God of undying life, we thank you that in Christ Jesus your Son, you have given us life which even death cannot destroy. Form in us his likeness and deepen his life in us until our work on earth is done; then time shall be no more and night shall no more hide us from each other' sight. These things we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught his disciples to say:

All Our Father ...

Where the coffin is open, the congregation may now be invited to come and take their leave of the body; music is played. The coffin is closed during the singing of the next hymn.

Hymn

Prayer of release

We now release ... A ... into the hands of God, our Maker and our Redeemer.

Let us pray

Holy God,

in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning, you have illuminated our human life by the radiance of your presence in Jesus Christ.

Sun of our souls, you pierce the mystery of death with the light of eternity, and great is your faithfulness.

We now release ... A ... to your merciful care; we entrust *them* to your undying love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rest eternal grant unto *them*, O Lord, Let light perpetual shine upon *them*.

All Amen.

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look kindly on you, and give you peace.

All Amen. Fleur Houston

Prayers at cemetery or crematorium

Sentences

Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive for ever and ever. (Revelations 1:17-18)

I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:38-39)

Committal

(At the grave)

From the dust we have come, to the dust we return. The earthly life of ... A ... has come to an end. We have released *them* into God's merciful keeping; we now commit their body to the earth. dust to dust, ashes to ashes, trusting in the power of God who raised our saviour Jesus Christ in triumph from the dead that we might live in glory everlasting.

All Amen.

(At the crematorium)

All fire and heat, bless the Lord, praise him and magnify him for ever, The earthly life of ... A ... has come to an end, we have released them into God's merciful keeping.

We now assign *their* body to the flames. Formed of the earth, to dust it shall return Breathe on us, breath of God; in the refining fire of your holy Spirit, may we be brought with ... A ... to everlasting life.

All Amen.

Nunc Dimittis

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

Blessing

May the peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, keep your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus. And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you, now and for evermore.

All Amen.

Note: At the cemetery after the blessing, mourners may, by prior arrangement, fill in the grave as others sing hymns/songs of faith and assurance. Flowers may then be removed from their wrappings and 'planted' on the mound.

Fleur Houston

Burial of the ashes after cremation

Greeting

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be always with you

We have come together to bury ... A ... 's ashes. As we do so, we remember our own mortality, affirming our faith that whether we live or die, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Prayer

God of the living and the dead, strengthen us with peace and steady us with hope; speak to us the word of life through Jesus Christ your son who once was dread and now lives forever.

All Amen.

Readings from the Bible

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made, he remembers that we are dust. As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him.

(Psalm 103:1,13-17a)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house, there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself so that where I am there you may be also.

(John 14:1-13)

Prayer

(During or after which the ashes are buried)

Lord of life

You have promised that none of those you have redeemed will ever be lost.

Strengthen us now as we return ... A... 's ashes to the earth in the knowledge that all life finds fulfilment in you and death has no domination over us.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Closing sentences

I will not fail you or forsake you says the Lord.

(Joshua 1:5)

Jesus said: And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

(Matthew 28:20)

Blessing

Now may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep guard in your hearts and minds so that you may be found secure in Christ at the last. And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all today and for evermore.

All Amen.

Go in peace and the God of all peace go with you.

Fleur Houston

Words and prayers for a child's Funeral

Opening words

We gather here, needing God's healing love, and searching for his reassuring strength.

We gather to share our grief, to comfort and support one another in our common loss.

We gather to share our hurt and our sense of outrage that A's life has been unjustly cut off, and we have been robbed of that promising young life.

We gather to commend to God, ... A ... and ... A ... , and to look for his comfort in our loss.

Opening prayer

Eternal God, you have loved us from the beginning. In a vulnerable infant born in a stable you began the demonstration of your eternal love, and with an empty tomb you sealed your promise of eternal life.

In the ache that seems endless and the longing that we cannot let go, speak to us in the depth of our being, and help us to know that the God who made us in his own image never lets us go, never tires and never abandons his children.

In our grief for ... A ... , as we hear again the words of our faith, let your peace that passes understanding and your love that is deeper than words touch our hearts. Transform our grief with the certainty that Christ walks beside us through this life and beyond.

All Amen.

Prayer of thanksgiving

God of grace and light and healing,

God of our depth and our elation,

God of today's sorrow and of eternal joy,

We bring to you the turmoil of our emotions.

We bring to you our sense of injustice and understand that you too are outraged by this injustice.

We bring to you our indignation and recognise that it is you who inspires our indignation.

We bring the ache of our bereavement to the God whose only child died on a cross.

We bring our fear and despair for a stark and bleak future without ... A We bring our thanks for *their* life – and for all the lives *they* touched and enriched – for the *daughter/son*, the *granddaughter/grandson*, the great *granddaughter/grandson*, the *niece/nephew*, the cousin, the friend, the pupil, the *Brownie/Cub*.

We thank you for the pictures *they* painted and the ones *they* were going to paint, for the music *they* played and the music *they* would have played, for the languages *they* were keen to learn.

We give thanks for the swimming and the sports *they* had found – for the open heart and the open mind, committed to the present and fascinated by the future, for *their* feet on the ground and *their* eye on fresh horizons. We remember *their* zest for life, in a hurry to grow up, but with time for friendship, fun and family.

Help us to know that what we shared with ... A ... is ours to keep, and let *their* questions, *their* jokes, *their* enthusiasm and *their* grin fill the empty future that frightens us. Our hopes are thwarted, our plans for ... A ... have been destroyed and the colour and the music have gone from our lives. We miss that boundless energy and *their* limitless fresh enthusiasm.

On that first Easter, you helped Jesus' friends to discovered that he was alive to inspire and encourage them; help us today to know that ... A ... is alive with the God who has always loved *them* and always will. Help us gathered here this morning to find comfort in this place where ... A ... loved worshipping.

We pray for all those who are not able to be with us today, but who desperately want to be. We ask you to help them. Assure them all, and us, that ... A ... is with *their* God, safe, happy and whole. Help us to face the future in the certainty that ... A ... will never again know fear or worry, and the only pain left is ours at parting.

Help us to grieve for *them* honestly as we should, but spare us from the bitterness that corrodes and destroys. Help us not to turn *them* in our memories into a plaster saint, but let us take into our future *their* giggles,

their shrieks their nonsense, their chatter, along with their laughter, their music and their bright open mind. Help us to recognise that our grief is part of loving, but that we will still be able to find warmth in their memory when the pain has eased.

Let your love enfold us today, dear God, as it also enfolds ... A Let the love which raised Christ from the dead, sustain us all till that day when together with ... A ... , we all worship you in the glory of your eternal kingdom.

All Amen.

Dismissal and blessing

Go in peace. Take into your future the joy that ... A ... gave you. Be glad that you were part of *their* happiness. Know that death has not separated *them* from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord: And may grace, and mercy and peace, from Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all evermore.

All Amen.

Alan Paterson

A prayer for children who have died

Ever-loving Father we pray that you will receive the soul of this child ... A You will care for *them* and *they* will find life in you which is no longer possible here. We are devastated by this death, where we would expect so much to be achieved and where the innocence and joy of childhood has been cut short so tragically. We ask that in the midst of this grief you will surround us with your compassion and love and that you will instil in us the thought that your love is greater than ours and that this tragedy will not make us despair or that our grief will be unending. May our memories of ... A ... be gracious and loving, our remembrances compassionate and creative. Accept this child into your care, and help us to cope, find love and hope, and may our lives not be blighted by this death, but find new ways of love and care – for *their* sake and through Jesus Christ, our loving and caring Saviour.

Graham Robson

A prayer in a service for a stillborn child

God of healing and God of hope,
God who made us to know depth and elation,
We turn to you for help
because ... A's ... birth has become their death.
God of our sorrow and our joy,
we bring to you the frustration, the pain,
the confusion and the disappointment
that have stirred turmoil in our hearts and minds.
We bring our grief to the God who knows grief well.
We bring our fear for a future, now bleak and overshadowed
by the loss of a life that we should have been part of.

We did not know ... A ..., but we anticipated *their* presence. We knew *they* were there – on the way and we celebrated *their* coming.

We were glad and we were hoping, making plans and looking forward.

And now the hopes have become sorrows, our plans for a welcome have become a goodbye, and instead of sharing in a new life we have found an aching emptiness.

Be with us.

Help us to remember this time honestly, to let it deepen our characters and our understanding.

Help us still to be the people we intended being for ...

Assure us today that ... A ... is safe and whole in the love and care of the God whose image *they* bear.

Our lives can never be quite the same again. We have no wish to forget them, nor do we want to cling to the past, brooding constantly for what might have been. So lead us through this time into your future, God of life. Hold out your hand when we are lost, embrace us when we are desolate, and support us when we are staggering. Show us what we should take forward from this time into the rest of our living. As colours come back to our world And we hear again the song of creation, let ... A ... be in the music and in the brightness. Let hope surprise us again. Help us in today's darkness and tomorrow's light To know that neither death nor life Nor things present nor things to come, Nor powers, nor height nor depths, Nor anything else in all creation,

You demonstrated to the world in Jesus who is the Christ.

Will be able to separate us from the love

A// Amen.

Alan Paterson

Burial of the organs of a baby removed during post-mortem

Greeting by the grave-side

We meet in the faith of God who created us, Christ who redeemed us, the Holy Spirit who brings us life. We meet in the faith that, though ... A ... has died, their life is not destroyed by death. They now lay cradled in God's love, whose warmth gives life to the dead.

As we return their remaining organs to the earth, let us comfort one another with the assurance that one day we will be reunited with them in joy and blessing beyond our imaging.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day

(John 6:39)

Prayer

Loving God, giver of life, all that we have and hold is on trust from you. What you have given to us we return to you. Give us grace to let go of those things we can cling to no longer that we may know ourselves to be held by you through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who taught us to say when we pray:

All Our Father ...

Prayer of committal

(During or after which, the casket is buried)

We now return to the earth the remaining organs of this little child.

God of compassion, We pray for this family in their pain and grief. Give them courage and strength in the days ahead. Touch then tenderly with your love that they may know your peace, and have hope in their hearts through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

All Amen.

(Numbers 6:24-26)

So let us go in peace

Fleur Houston

A Funeral prayer for a person who has committed suicide

(Exploring our sense of guilt and anger)

Loving God, our words are not enough. We remember before you today our friend ... A ... whose hurt we were not able to ease. We feel as if we let them down, because the hurt was too great, life too frightening, worries too great and our efforts failed. Help us to let go, to forgive ourselves and others, just as you have always forgiven your children. We celebrate the life which ... A ... lived. We remember their successes and the sound of their laughter and give thanks for the moments of joy we shared. Thank you for the times we shared which we shall always treasure. Unfulfilled potential is not your will, and we feel anger that we have to deal with so many unanswered questions and unfulfilled hopes. Help us to remember what it is that is good in life and to celebrate it with all our being. We believe that ... A ... is now with you, released from this life and the pain we could not take away. For their sake help us to live in the power of your love, and when we do not have the answers to our questions, to accept the silence with anticipation and the assurance of your love.

Elizabeth Kemp

Look down from the cross

(A prayer following a suicide)

Look down from the cross, Lord In the darkest of hours; As the shock of what's happened Hits as hard as the nails. As the fear of desertion Leaves us empty, betrayed. Look down from the cross, Lord Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord In the bleakest of days; As the loss we are suffering Tears a hole in our ways. As our fear for the future Leaves us angry and dazed. Look down from the cross, Lord Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord
And see us here, now;
As we try to forgive
When we feel so dismayed.
As our lives must move on
With our hearts torn in two.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord At our future lives; As time passes slowly And nights last for days. As you suffer with us And carry us on. Look down from the cross, Lord Be with us we pray.

Melanie Frew

O Lord through all our days

O Lord, through all our days you held us in your care, and though we wandered from your ways, surprised, we found you there; wherever we have been, though strange the paths we trod, there's nothing that could come between your children and their God.

If such a love as this has followed us from birth, has blessed our lives and guided us through all our time on earth, then surely you will keep our spirits in your care, and bring us safely through death's sleep to know and find you there.

And this we dare believe through Jesus Christ your Son, who promised that he would receive us there, where he has gone; he died and rose again: and all he came to give we know has not been given in vain; he lives, and we shall live.

> Tune: Diademata Basil Bridge