

Planning Your Funeral

Introduction:

There are many different kinds of events we experience in life, some we like & some we don't – we try to avoid those.

Experiences in Life:

- A wedding is a wonderful thing to attend - even more special if it is your own.
- Going to work 5-6 days a week is an unhappy chore for some while others love their job.
- Attending school or college, vacation, a dentist, visiting relatives, shopping for groceries or shopping for other things, some experiences we look forward to & others we wish we didn't have to do it.
- The funeral - is one of the things we really don't want to have to experience. It is a common thing that we all share as disliking & hoping there are as few as possible. Worldwide, everyone hates, most fear, funerals.

The Funeral:

John 12:3,7; Mark 15:46; 16:1; Jn.11:44 customs of some. We associate certain common things with most funerals if we are to plan our own – most don't plan it though because they are even afraid to think about it let alone plan it in advance (flowers, music, guests, location of grave site, who will officiate over the ceremony, burn or rot, & of course costs).

Note: don't be offended with straight talk. The funeral is about handling the 'remains', a 'corpse'. The soul is long gone.

My mother & father came from a time when people were very concerned about what others thought about them – their reputation, integrity, which eventually led to 'the memory' of them after death. They were so concerned that they provided for their children in the inheritance, did good deeds & gained much respect from all.

Some today don't care how they act as long as selfishness permits them to get all they can. Who cares about others' feelings? Imagine someone talking about the Japan crisis, happy it happened & using religion as a reason) – a blatant disregard for human life & suffering because they see the coming of Jesus is nearer ... that is not Christian! That is selfishness. The Bible tells us Jesus is the Judge but as long as we are here, we love souls & care about them (we don't judge or hate) & we desire the return of Jesus to be held back to reach the last souls. We want Him to come but only after everyone is reached & we don't know when that happens so the inherent attitude of a Christian is help people make it, care & love their souls until God runs the time out. Yes I cried seeing the videos of destruction in Japan! Do you want it to happen to us? Be prepared – we may get something worse. Have priorities in place.

A mature Christian can control their emotions & spirit like this; like God, we can be excited about a wedding next Friday but during this same time, know when others suffer & be compassionate. The unstable person gets controlled by emotions – cannot turn them on & off. Priority is built into the Holy Ghost. Don't get unstable!!

Spiritual Priorities:

- God – I want God before all things & above all things. **Hb.11:38** I'll die for it, suffer for it, take ridicule & insults.
- The salvation of souls – 1st our own; then husband/wife; then kids; then other family; others - church/devotions.
- Providing for our daily living (basic food, clothing, shelter) nothing extravagant. Be thankful for all things.
- The extras: more things, better quality things – not necessary but just blessings. Be thankful & don't let them own you & control you. This world & 'the extras' are trying to take control of us. Identify the controls & kill them.

Job 1:1-3 reason for being greatest – vs. 1. **Vs.21-22** had it all taken even the basic needs. Yet God came 1st.

Gen.22:12 Abraham tested to kill his son to prove his love for God was #1.

My mom & dad had every detail of funeral plans ready & arranged before it happened. They didn't want to be a burden to anyone, even after death. It was just the training they received in their lives. Caring for others is needed in church starting at the top & moving down through the pews.

Heb.2:14-15 Jesus came to deliver us from bondage. He did it by destroying the one who had power over death by defeating death itself in the resurrection.

1 Cor.15:55-56 Don't get stung! Yes we all experience the 'fear of dying' at one time or another. But after we are born again, after we permit Jesus to live inside, God may permit you the experience to face death in the face & laugh at it!

Spiritual Living Requires Planning Your Death:

Rom.6:1-6 Prayer requires an attitude of putting the carnal self down, insulting self, decrease so He can increase, or 'a death'. **1 Cor.15:31** I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. We need to plan our own spiritual funeral every day. Where will it be? Chair in Living room/beside bed; who officiates – we do; no flowers, no music, only one guest – Jesus; we do the killing – don't ask Jesus to help do your part. **Rom.8:13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Conclusion:

Luke 7:11-15 we are all destined to die, which means a funeral of some kind, but Jesus promised us a resurrection. Have faith to believe Him & trust Him. It all starts with planning our own death in prayer. Die daily & then ask Jesus to resurrect you – refill with the Holy Ghost.