

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 her/him and now it hurts.

We bring to you our thanks for all that ..A.. meant to us,
all that (s)he shared with us and all that (s)he gave us of
herself/himself.

[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 (s)he is 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.

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 her/him;
for the values and standards (s)he set herself/himself and lived by;
for her/his sense of what was good and right and decent;
for her/his warmth and humour and sense of family;
for every life that (s)he enriched and all that (s)he invested of herself/himself in our lives;

for the faith by which (s)he lived and in which (s)he 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. (S)he has laid her/his burden down before you and is with you, safe, happy, whole, and welcomed by those for whom (s)he 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 (s)he 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.

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 (s)he was proud to call her/his family and her/his friends – living out our lives as (s)he wants us to live, and celebrating in them all that (s)he 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.

Amen

Alan Paterson

Prayers for A Funeral (2)

Introductory Prayer

Compassionate God, you have loved ..A.., and we have loved him/her 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 his/her

influence remain with us because he/she was 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 him/her what she was. We thank you for his/her life with all its achievements and for the love given and received by him/her among his/her family and friends.

We are content that whatever suffering and pain, sadness and sorrow there was in his/her life has now passed and ended and that he/she has entered into a life which is eternal.

We are grateful that he/she was such a person that our grief and sorrow is real and pray for your comfort in healing the absence of his/her 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.

The spirit of ...A... has departed and she/he now rests with those who have gone before. What she/he has been and what she/he has given now rests with the God whom she/he worshipped and to whom she/he gave her/his life through Jesus, the Christ.

We thank God for who and what she/he was; for the love and concern she/he showed and was experienced by her/him and given by her/him. May her/his rest be in the peace and love of God, and our memory of her/him be blessed and loving, gracious and accepting. She/he has lived her/his life, and has departed to be with those who went before.

May we continue to be content to release her/him to you, and to be assured that in your keeping she/he is 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 her/him graciously as we say goodbye to her/him 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 her/his 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 she/he is with her/his loved ones and cared for by God, and that we who are left will think of her/him 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,

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

- *The alternative prayers of approach make provision both for the violent grief of those who are bereaved by accidental death and also for a more collected sense of grief.*
- *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 11:28*)

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.

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 *him*,
for the good times and the bad
for the love *he* gave
and the love *he* 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 than 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's sight.
These things we ask
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who taught his disciples to say:

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 illumined 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 him to your undying love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

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.

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.
(*Rev 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 *him* into God's merciful keeping;
we now commit *his* 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.

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 *him* into God's merciful keeping.

We now assign *his* 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.

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.

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 dead and now lives
forever.

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.

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.*

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.

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 her/his life – and for all the lives (s)he 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 (s)he painted and the ones (s)he was going to paint, for the music (s)he played and the music (s)he would have played, for the languages (s)he was keen to learn.

We give thanks for the swimming and the sports (s)he had found – for the open heart and the open mind, committed to the present and fascinated by the future, for her/his feet on the ground and her/his eye on fresh horizons. We remember her/his 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 her/his questions, her/his jokes, her/his enthusiasm and her/his 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 her/his limitless fresh enthusiasm.

On that first Easter, you helped Jesus' friends to discover 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 her/him 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 her/his 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 her/him honestly as we should, but spare us from the bitterness that corrodes and destroys. Help us not to turn her/him in our memories into a plaster saint, but let us take into our future her/his giggles, her/his shrieks her/his nonsense, her/his chatter, along with her/his laughter, her/his music and her/his 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 her/his 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.

Amen

Dismissal and Blessing

Go in peace. Take into your future the joy that ...A... gave you. Be glad that you were part of her/his happiness. Know that death has not separated her/him 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.

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 her/him and he/she 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 his/her 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 her/his 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 her/his presence.
We knew (s)he was there – on the way
and we celebrated her/his 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 (s)he bears.

Our lives can never be quite the same again.
We have no wish to forget her/him,
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,

Will be able to separate us from the love

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

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, *her* life is not destroyed by death. She now lies cradled in God's love, whose warmth gives life to the dead.

As we return her remaining organs to the earth, let us comfort one another with the assurance that one day we will be reunited with her 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:

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.

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.
(Numbers 6:24-26)

Amen

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 her/him 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 her/his successes and the sound of her/his 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 her/his 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