

Services for a Funeral – Two

A service of committal

When the committal precedes the service of thanksgiving and release.

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The Minister greets the mourners at the cemetery or crematorium and leads them into the chapel or to the graveside.

Scripture sentence

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.'

John 11:25-26

Words of introduction

We have come together in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen and ascended Lord.

Through him God has given us new birth into a living hope, which nothing can destroy, or spoil, or wither.

We come to commit our beloved ... N ... into God's hands where *they* will be safe and complete for ever.

We come to seek strength from God to face the unknown future without ... N ... 's presence and support.

We come to find a place of quiet calm, in which we may express private grief before facing in public the wider world of ... N ... 's circle of family, friends, and acquaintances.

Let us hear from the Scriptures the promises of God, and receive their comfort.

Readings from Scripture

Prayers and Lord's Prayer

Let us thank God for ... N ... 's life,
as we recall how much *they* meant to us;

let us commit ... N ... to God's sure keeping;

let us offer our grief to God
and ask for God's comfort in our sorrow;

let us remember others who also mourn loved ones today;

let us pray for grace and strength
to reach out to others in their need;

may we so live that we may not be afraid to die.
Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayers.

Let us gather up our prayers in the words which Jesus
taught us:

All Our Father ...

Words of committal

Now that the earthly life of ... N ... has come to an end,
we commit *their* mortal body to *the ground/the elements*,
(*earth to earth*), ashes to ashes, dust to dust,
trusting in the infinite mercy of God,
creator of all things, visible and invisible,
and the victory over death of Jesus Christ our Lord.
To God be glory for ever.

Affirmation of faith

God will swallow up death for ever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away
the tears from all faces.

It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him,
so that he might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 25:8a, 9

Prayer

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in every generation.
From everlasting to everlasting you are God.
You stand beside us
in every experience of joy or sorrow,
happiness or desolation.

As we walk through death's dark valley,
help us to trust in your steadfast love
until the day dawns,
the morning stars sing together,
and the whole creation shouts your praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The grace

This may be said by everyone.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, evermore.

All **Amen.**

A service of Thanksgiving and release

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If the service precedes the committal the Minister meets the coffin and the mourners at the entrance to the church or chapel. The following sentences may be read during the entry or when all have taken their places.

Call to worship

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124:8

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

Psalm 46:1

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to mourn and a time to dance.

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2a, 4b

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

The souls of the righteous are in God's hands;
no torment will touch them. They are at peace.

Wisdom 3:1, 3b

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy God has given us
a new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled
and unfading.

1 Peter 1:3-4b

Hymn or song

Approaching the mystery

Words of introduction

We have come together because ... N ... has died
and the life we shared with *them* has come to an end.
This is a time of parting, loss and sadness.

All of us who knew ... N ... had a unique relationship with *them*.
Death does not bring to an end *their* influence
nor the love and respect
in which *they* were held during *their* life.
They will continue to be powerful
for as long as *they* are remembered.

... N ... was made in the image of God
(and was baptised into the Christian family of faith.¹)
Every moment of *their* life *they*
were a dearly loved child of God.
Their death does not alter God's love for *them*.
They bear God's name
and is lovely in the eyes of God who created *them*.

At the heart of death there is mystery.
There is much we cannot know or understand.
Death marks for every person the boundary
between the life God gives in this world
and the new life God gives beyond death.
We stand on this boundary,
not knowing what lies beyond our seeing,
our hearing or our imagining.
Yet by faith we grasp God's promise,
declared in the resurrection of Jesus,
that we shall not die into oblivion but shall all be changed.

Even in sorrow,
we are empowered by the Holy Spirit
working in our hearts to say
'Thanks be to God who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

¹ The words in italics should be omitted where baptism has not taken place.

Prayer

Creator God,
Lord of life and conqueror of death,
our hearts are grieving because ... N ... , whom we love,
has died.

Their death reminds us that our lives are brief
and will one day come to an end.

As we stand on the boundary between life and death,
we praise you for your precious gift of life,
for giving ... N ... to be with us,
and for the journey which we have shared
with *them* on earth.

Help us to release *them* as *they* journey on,
confident that death is not an abyss of destruction
but a crossing over into new and richer experiences
of your love and grace.

In the midst of our grief and loss,
give us the peace of Christ,
who passed through the deep waters of death for us all,
and by your power was raised to glorious life.
Lord, hear our prayer.

All **Amen.**

Celebrating hope

Readings from Scripture

In times of loss,
God's people have always drawn strength
from the promises of God in the Bible.
Let us now listen for God's word of life
as the Scriptures are read to us.

The prayer verse 'Nothing in all creation' (*Rejoice and Sing* 397) may be sung between each reading.

Sermon on Christian hope

Hymn or song

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Remembering with Thanksgiving

Lighting of Thanksgiving candles

The Minister or another representative person may light a central thanksgiving candle, saying:

‘I light this candle in thanksgiving for ... N ... as ... ‘

Members of the family, church members, representatives of the community, work colleagues or friends may also light candles. At the end the Minister may say:

Thanks be to God for the light which ... N ... has brought into our lives.

Tribute

A tribute may be given.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Eternal God,
we thank you for the light
that has come into the world
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
and for his promise that whoever follows him
will have the light of life.
Hear us as we remember and give thanks for ... N ...
and for everything *they* meant to us.

Silent prayer

Thank you for giving *them* to us,
for everything *they* achieved
by your grace during *their* life,
for the gracefulness, warmth and tenderness
which *they* embodied.
Thank you for ...

Silent prayer

Eternal God,
giver of life and conqueror of death,
we praise you that for ... N ...
all suffering and sorrow are ended,
death itself is past,
and *they* live for ever in your love and care.
In the midst of our sorrow
we boldly affirm our faith
that there is nothing in all creation
that can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We pray for those among us whose loss is greatest,
especially ... A ... and ... B ... and ... C
We remember those who lovingly cared for ... N ...
and ministered to *their* needs.
Give courage to all who mourn.
Comfort them when their pain seems unrelenting
and no light shines in their darkness.
Help us as a community to offer support and comfort,
to know when to speak and when to be silent.

Silent prayer

Lord, remembering ... N ... with gratitude,
and celebrating *their* life and deeds,
we also give thanks for all whom we love
who have passed from our sight
into the joy of your heavenly kingdom.
Keep us united in one holy and joyful fellowship
until, at the last, all shall be gathered up in Christ,
and the whole universe shall praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Hymn or song

Releasing in hope

The commendation

The congregation is invited to stand.

Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
who have died in the faith of Christ,
and with whom we lift up our hearts to God,
we now commend ... N ...
to God's eternal care and keeping.

Let us find wisdom, safety and delight
within the communion of saints.

Let us know that those we love are not lost,
but remain with us in the same family,
led by the same Spirit,
and sustained by the same faith.
Let us rejoice in Jesus our Lord,
who died in weakness,
but was raised by the power of God
to whom be glory and praise, for ever and ever.

God of peace,
you brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant.
Show us the peace we should seek,
show us the peace we must try to give,
show us the peace we may keep,
show us the peace you have given,
and make us what you want us to be:
through Jesus Christ,
to whom be glory for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

or

Deep peace of the running wave to you,
deep peace of the flowing air to you,
deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
deep peace of the shining stars to you,
deep peace of the gentle night to you,
moon and stars put their healing light on you,
deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you.

The Lord's Prayer

If the committal is to take place elsewhere, this part of the service concludes with the blessing. If the whole service takes place in the crematorium chapel the committal follows.

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

Committal

When the committal follows the service of thanksgiving and release.

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Committal

When all have gathered at the graveside or crematorium the Minister says:

Scripture sentences

The Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

We are not our own.
Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit
and through them we glorify God.

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

Words of committal

... N ... 's body has been a temple of God's Spirit,
through which *they* have served God
and given support and comfort to those whom they loved.
We now commit *their* mortal body
to *the elements/to the ground*,
trusting that by the power of God
this perishable body will be clothed with the imperishable,
and death will be swallowed up in victory;
through Jesus Christ,
our risen and ascended Lord,
to whom be glory for ever.

All **Amen.**

I heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Write this:
Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord.'
'Yes', says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labours,
for their deeds follow them.'

Revelation 14:13

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed,
we have a building from God, a house not made with hands,
eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:1

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding;
pour into our hearts such love towards you,
that we, loving you above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

or

O Lord, support us by your grace
through all the hours of life's day;
until the shadows lengthen,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over,
and the evening comes.
Then, Lord, in your mercy,
grant us safe lodging, a holy rest,
and peace at the last;
through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Ascription of glory

Now to the One who is able to keep us from falling,
and set us in the presence of his glory,
jubilant and above reproach,
to the only God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty,
power and authority,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
before all time, now, and for evermore.

Jude: 24-25 (adapted)

Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak;
help the afflicted;
honour all people;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The blessing of God be with you;
the blessing of the Creator;
the blessing of the Son;
the blessing of the Spirit,
now and always.

All **Amen.**