

# CONTACTING FUNERAL



The Holy Seed Church



## **FUNERAL**

### **(a) A DIVERSITY OF TRADITION: –**

Because of the wide diversity of cultures represented in our churches around the world, there are many different customs observed following the death of a member. Every society creates a rite that gives expression to grief, shows respect for the deceased, and provides support for those who mourn. As a church leader, it is important that you honor these traditions and minister to those who grieve in a way that is meaningful to them. Some members of your congregation may come from very different backgrounds than yours and you must be sensitive to their grief traditions. However, you should move away from traditional customs that go contrary to Christian principles and biblical understandings on death, especially those customs that infer the immortality of the soul or the honoring of the spirits.

### **(b) VISIT THE FAMILY: –**

Visit the family as soon as possible after you hear of the death of a member. Show your sympathy and sorrow in a culturally acceptable way. You may share with them some of God's promises (John 11:25; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:16) and pray with them. Perhaps the most helpful thing that you can do is just to sit with them, even if you are unable to say anything. As an elder, you represent Christ and Christianity to them. Your mere presence will bring comfort and assurance. Take your spouse along. Women are usually superior to men in such circumstances, especially at consoling women and children.

### **(c) OFFER CHURCH SUPPORT: –**

There are many ways you and the church members can assist grieving families. Relations can be located and notified of the death, food can be prepared, telephones answered, small children cared for, and funeral details arranged. In some countries, there are funeral directors in the community who care for all aspects of a

**funeral. In such cases, you can assist the grieving family by contacting and negotiating with the funeral director. In areas where there are no funeral directors, you can offer the support of the church in preparing the body for the funeral. Never force the help of the church on a grieving family, but let them know that there is support that they can depend on if they wish.**

#### **(d) THE FUNERAL SERVICE – WHO OFFICIATES:–**

**Usually no license is required for conducting a funeral. In the absence of a minister, an elder may lead out. This should not be done, however, without the pastor’s approval. An elder or friend of the family may be called on to assist the minister in the service by giving the obituary, prayer. In some places the pastor or elder who conducts the funeral must make sure proper death certificates are obtained from civil authorities before interment.**

#### **(a) ORDER OF SERVICE: –**

**Despite the diversity of funeral rites, the ceremony should include certain Christian values and practices. Time should be given for prayer and for the reading of appropriate scriptural passages. Mourners should be encouraged to look to Jesus as the conqueror of death and the One who has the power to raise the dead. Words of comfort based on the sure promises of God’s Word should be shared. Help the mourners to leave the ceremony with hope rather than despair. The following suggested order of service may adapted to fit the customs of your community:**

**Music**

**Scripture reading**

**Prayer**

**Life story of the deceased (obituary)**

**Music**

**Testimonies**

**Photograph church, family and friends**

**Sermon (15-30 minutes)**

**Committal of the body (if the service is held at the graveside)**

**Music**

**Closing prayer**

### **HELPFUL BIBLE PASSAGES:**

**THE FOLLOWING MAY PROVE HELPFUL IN YOUR PREPARATION OF  
A SCRIPTURE READING OR SERMON:**

**(a) General:** Job 14:1-2, 14:15, Psalms 23:1-4, Psalms 27:4-5, 13-14; Psalms 46; Psalms 90; Psalms 91:1-2, 11-12; Psalms 121; Isaiah 35:3-10; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 43:1-2; John 14 1-6; Romans 8:14-39; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Hebrews 4:14-16; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Revelation 7:15-17 Revelation 14:13; Revelation 21:1-4; Revelation 22:1-5.

**(b) Funeral of a child:** 2 Samuel 12:16-23; Mark 10:13-16

**(c) Funeral of a young person:** Ecclesiastes 11:6-10; Ecclesiastes 12; Luke 7:11-15 **(d) Funeral of a godly woman:** Proverbs 31:10-31; Acts 9:36-42; Matthew 26:10-13.

**(e) Funeral of the elderly:** Genesis 5:24; Genesis 15:15; Matthew 11:28; 1 Timothy 4:6-8.

### **NEW PARISH INDUCTION:**

The holy Seed Church tends to take for granted the acceptance of a new pastor in the parish and community. As a result, new pastors are left alone to work their way into the affection of church members. Not enough emphasis is placed on assisting the bonding process between new pastors and their congregations. Some special services only pastors can perform; elders cannot. A new parish induction is a special service only elders, assisted by conference/mission leaders, can perform; pastors cannot. If you do not emphasize this significant service, very possibly no one will.

### **(a) DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSITION:**

The transition of a pastoral family from one parish to another may engender anticipation and enthusiasm on the part of both family and parish. However, the change can be delicate and difficult. It is invariably accompanied by some degree of grief.

### **(b) CONGREGATIONAL GRIEF:**

In marriage, a loss through divorce may be more devastating than a loss through death, for in divorce the loved one chooses to leave. As a result one feels rejection leads to anger. Likewise, when a pastor chooses to move from one parish to another, the congregation feels some degree of grief, rejection, and anger: "What is wrong with us?" "Why would our pastor want to leave us?" "I got hurt loving the last pastor. I am not going to love the new one and get hurt again."

If the previous pastor did not choose to leave, but was arbitrarily reassigned by the conference/mission, the congregation may be angry at the conference and resent the replacement. If the previous pastor was not appreciated, the congregation may feel distrust of and anger toward all ministers. People tend to resent and resist change- especially conservative people, and these make up a large portion of most congregations. New pastors invariably represent change. Therefore, there may be some temptation to resent and resist the new pastor.

### **(c) PASTORAL FAMILY GRIEF:**

The pastoral family has much more to grieve over than the church family. They get uprooted- an experience especially devastating to spouse and children. They move into a new town and a strange house, with financial and social strains. The children have to start in a new school. The spouse may have to hunt for a new job. Most serious of all, the pastoral family has had to leave their friends. Where the congregation may be grieving the loss of one family, the new family is grieving the loss of all their friends in their previous

**parish. All of this adds up to potential problems during pastoral transitions.**

**(A)SMOOTHING THE TRANSITION:**

**Some suggestions for smoothing the bury the old. The old must be set aside before the new can be accepted. The congregation can express its appreciation and verbalize its grief over losing the outgoing pastor through a well-promoted and attended farewell. Do not replace too soon. Some may feel that new pastor must assume responsibilities immediately after the former pastor leaves. Research, however, indicates that it typically takes about three months before a congregation is ready to welcome a new pastor.**

**This interim period gives time for church members to separate themselves emotionally from the former pastoral family. It also provides a unique opportunity for the latent lay leadership of the parish to emerge. Meanwhile, the congregation rediscovers its need to be pastured. Celebrates the new.**

**Conference/missions and congregations should make the service of installing a new pastor as significant an event as possible. Just as a wedding is an important symbolic act publicly establishing a new home, an installation service for a pastor is an important symbolic act publicly establishing a new pastorate. One different, though, is that the bride can plan her own wedding. Pastors cannot plan their own installation.**

**Elders and conference/mission officials must take the responsibility. Elders or other congregational leaders should not do it by themselves, as pastors are employed and assigned by the conference. Conference officials must not do it by themselves, as though they are authoritatively imposing the pastor on the congregation. The congregation is a community, a church family. The conference representative is normally not a member of that family and thus can hardly welcome the new**

**pastor to it. Too often the conference/mission official makes only a brief introduction of the new pastoral family on morning Glory. The church then plans only a secular, social event as a welcome. It is far better to have a formal, spiritual installation service. In some situations pastors and members of other churches in the area may be invited.**

### **(e)PASTORAL INSTALLATION SERVICE:**

**Ideally the installation service should be part of the Sunday worship service, when most members are present. The suggested service below emphasizes introduction of the entire pastoral family. Certain pastoral families might not prefer this much public exposure, but some agreeable emphasis should be placed on welcoming the whole family. The pastor's family, not the pastor, is most likely to feel unwelcomed. Introduction of conference/mission representative - The head elder should introduce the conference representative as coming to present the new pastoral family.**

**Conference representative's remarks: – The conference representative should explain the purpose of the installation service: to help bond the church and pastoral family together and to dedicate the new pastor –church team to ministering in the community. The conference leader should also introduce each member of the pastor's family, presenting a brief biographical sketch of each. An additional option: the conference leader may present to the pastor a tray with a lighted candle for each church in the parish, and then a charge to keep the lights shining brightly and help them grow in number.**

**Welcome by local elder: – The elder speaks for the congregation in welcoming the pastor. The entire pastoral family may be invited to the platform, in which case the elder's spouse may well give a special welcome to the pastor's spouse. A child, youth leader, or church school teacher from the congregation could welcome the pastor's children.**



**Litany – Elders:** We come on this day to open a new chapter in the history of our church, the beginning of a new pastorate.

**Congregation:** We have received gifts from God, who has equipped us for ministry, and provided a new pastor to lead, train, and encourage us.

**Pastoral Family:** We come seeking to serve you in lifting up Jesus Christ that together we might grow.

**Congregation:** We invite you to lead us in our walking with God.

**Pastoral Family:** We seek your love as we become part of this church family.

**Congregation:** We wish to have you as part of our family, and we open our hearts to you.

**Conference Representative (to pastor):** God has given to you the challenge of leading these people in their preparation for the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Pastor:** I accept this challenge. Under God, I pledge to do my best always to lift Him up.

**Conference representative:** As a church, you face the challenge of presenting the gospel to your community.

**Congregation and Pastor:** We accept this challenge to present the living Christ through our lives and our ministries.

**All:** We covenant, before Christ and each other this day, to place Christ first, to seek the guidance of His Spirit, and to work together for the hastening of his coming.

**Installation Prayer:** The pastoral family might face the congregation with the conference representative on one side of them and the head elder on the other. Other elders or church leaders may be invited forward to form a human chain from the pastor and elder on the platform to the first pew. Everyone, including the congregation, is then invited to join hands and kneel together for the installation prayer. This act symbolizes a uniting of pastor and people.



**The head elder prays, inviting the congregation's commitment in supporting the new pastor. The conference/mission representative prays, officially installing the pastor as congregation leader. The conference representative then leads the elders in welcoming the new pastoral family with a handshake. Pastor's Sermon / Church welcome after the service closes, as the congregation leaves the sanctuary, members welcome the pastoral family. A fellowship meal provides an excellent closing to the installation.**

### **PRAYER FOR SICK:**

**The book of James tells us that if any member is sick. "Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15). Here is another form of ministry available to elders that can bring great blessing to your people.**

**Prayer ought to be at the heart of every elder's ministry, and prayer for the sick is a significant part of such a prayer ministry. When you visit the sick, you should be mindful, not only of their physical condition, but of their spiritual condition as well. Often during illness, people feel helpless and discouraged. Sometimes their faith wanes and they need your encouragement and reminder that God loves them.**

**The formal anointing service is reserved for those with significant physical illness. However, the text asks, "Is anyone among you sick?" I do not ask, "Is anyone among you doing?" The anointing service ought not to be used for every frivolous physical complaint. It should be reserved for serious illness, but not just for fatal illness. In some places, anointing has become almost a lost rite because of the traditions of some non-the holy seed church denominations that have used anointing as though it were a last rite.**

**(a)WHO OFFICIATES:** The sick should call for the elders of the church. Local elders may officiate at an anointing service in the absence of a minister, but should do so with the pastor's approval. Ideally a minister leads out, assisted by the presence and prayers of available elders.

**(b) PREPARING FOR THE SERVICE:** Where held. An anointing service may be held in church, home, nursing home, or hospital. If in a hospital, it should be conducted so as not to interfere with the physician and hospital staff. Length and formality of the service depend on the place it is held and the condition of the recipient. Who attends? In addition to the minister and the elders, it may be well for others having a special gift of prayer to be present. The recipient might wish to invite praying friends. Non- Christian family or friends are usually not invited, but need not be asked to leave if present. Those who lead out should have a serious commitment to Christ, believe firmly in divine healing, and have prepared their hearts for the occasion.

**Preparing the recipient.** "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalms 66:18). Encourage the sick person to examine his/her life before the anointing. An excellent way to prepare for the service is for the individual to study the chapter "Prayer for the sick" in The Ministry of Healing. Respect the privacy of persons not waiting to speak too specifically about their ailment. On the other hand, you should learn as much as the recipient is comfortable in sharing so your prayer can be specific.

**(c) ORDER OF SERVICE:** Preliminary remarks. As leader, you should explain to the group the purpose of anointing and how it takes place. The recipient might be invited to testify to his/her faith and give the reason for requesting healing. If the sick person is not too critical to warrant a brief service, take time to read from the scriptures the prerequisites to divine healing. These include:

**1. Belief that God can and does heal.**

**2. Confession of sin.**

**3. Commitment to healthful living:** Much illness results from habits of living. Assure the sick that God freely forgives our sins of the past, but it is presumptuous to ask Him to heal our bodies if we intend to go on abusing them.

**4. Willingness to use human means:** “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (James 1:17). God may already have engifted some physician to who He will lead the sick person for healing. God works miracles, but He often chooses to work them through gifts He places in human hands.

**5. Trust God’s answer. Sometimes God heals immediately,** sometimes slowly, sometimes not until Christ’s Second Coming. If the afflicted person is not healed immediately, it ought not to be interpreted as a sign either of the individual’s spiritual weakness or of God’s unwillingness to heal. The service should climax with the certainty that everything has been placed in God’s hands and that God can be trusted.

Scripture to be read or excerpted could include: James 5:14-16; Numbers 21:8-9; psalms 103:1-5; Psalms 107: 19-20; Mark 16:15-20. **There anointing prayer.** If you are leading out you should have a small vial of olive oil. Everyone kneels. The recipient may wish to pray. If so, he/she should probably pray first. Other designated leaders pray in turn. You pray last. As you begin to pray, place a little oil on the fingertips of your hand. Near the close of your prayer, apply the oil to the forehead of the one you are anointing. This symbolizes the Holy Spirit’s touching the afflicted in a specific and special way.

The Holy Seed Church do not follow or support the practice of some who apply oil to the part of the body in which the infirmity exists.

**Concluding the service. As soon as the prayer season ends, say your goodbyes and leave. A little time for getting acquainted and social; fellowship might precede the anointing, but should not follow it. Leave while a spirit of reverence prevails and the presence of God permeates the room.**

### **CONCLUSION**

**We end this Constitution and Rules where we began, with an appeal for all elders to take up the challenge of vibrant, spiritual church leadership. Your ministry is vital to the ongoing growth and development of the church. Because of the unique leadership talents the Holy Spirit has given you, you can make a tremendous difference. Consecrate yourself to Christ daily and learn on Him for grace and guidance. "The elders who are among you I exhort,....Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away" (1 Peter 5:1-4). The Bible says "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." God is perfect and holy and our sins separate us from God forever. The Bible says "The wages of sin is death," {Romans 3:1-31}.**

***The good news is that, about 2,015 years ago***

**God sent His only Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins. Jesus is the Son of God. He lived a sinless life and then died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. "God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," {John1:1-13}. Jesus rose from the dead and now He lives in heaven with God His Father. He offers us the gift of eternal life -- of living forever with Him in heaven if we accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me." God**

### **53. THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM {[Luke Chapter 17](#)}.**

**{a} 20 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: <sup>21</sup> Neither shall they**

say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.<sup>22</sup> And he said unto the disciples, The days wilcome, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see [it].

<sup>23</sup> And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after [them], nor follow [them].

<sup>24</sup> For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one [part] under heaven, shineth unto the other [part] under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

<sup>25</sup> But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

<sup>26</sup> And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

<sup>27</sup> They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

<sup>28</sup> Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

<sup>29</sup> But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed [them] all.

<sup>30</sup> Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

**{B}The cross of Jesus Christ {1 Corinthians 1:18-21}** Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephan's: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. **For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.** For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by **wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**

**{c} Matthew 24:35-38 Context:** Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things are fulfilled.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark

**{D} Proverbs 30:5-6 Contexts:**

5. Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.

6. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

**NOTE:** This verse affirms tree propositions: (1) The heavens and earth will pass away. (2) Christ's words will not pass away and the word of God shall stand forever." {3} Everyone who believes the word of will receive internal life.

*"Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Son of God. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Please forgive my sins and give me the gift of eternal life. I ask you in to my life and heart to be my Lord and Savior. I want to serve you always ever and ever Amen."*

