

PREPARE TO DIE

Help Sheet

This is a companion document for the Anchor U message, "Prepare to Die." It is an idea sheet to help you "prepare to die." A lot of people don't consider how many decisions need to be made when someone dies. Those in a state of grief are often preyed upon by those in the funeral industry. You can help your loved ones better cope with your death by expressing exactly what you want concerning your burial, service, and estate. This is just an outline of ideas, a tool, so you can decide what you want and then maybe put it in a more concise document with your will and/or trust.

I. MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE LORD

Listen to the *Biblical Assurance of Salvation* series on the Anchor Bible Church website.

II. MAKE PLANS TO DEAL WITH YOUR DUST

A. *What do you want done with your body?*

- ☐ In ground burial.
- ☐ Cremation.
- ☐ Burial in a crypt or mausoleum.
- ☐ Burial at sea.
- ☐ Composted.
- ☐ Donated to medical research.
- ☐ Donated to a forensic cadaver ranch.
- ☐ Cryonic stasis i.e., frozen in carbonite?
- ☐ Launched into space toward the sun for delayed cremation?

B. *Let's say you want an inground burial.*

- ☐ What type of casket and have you considered the cost?
- ☐ In ground vault open bottom or sealed?
- ☐ What type of gravestone, headstone, statuary, or stand-alone crypt?
- ☐ Where do you want to be buried?
- ☐ Have you purchased a burial plot, if so, where?
- ☐ What do you want on the epitaph of your gravestone, headstone, crypt, or mausoleum plaque?

C. *Let's say you want to be cremated.*

- ☐ Who do you want to cremate your remains?
- ☐ What do you want done with your ashes?
- ☐ Do you want your ashes buried in the ground with a headstone?
- ☐ Do you want your ashes put into a wall of a Mausoleum?
- ☐ Do you want your ashes sprinkled at sea, in a river, or on the top of Everest?
- ☐ Do you want your ashes placed on the fireplace mantel in an urn or old boot?
- ☐ Do you want your family to buy a very expensive urn for your ashes from the funeral home?

III. CONSIDER THE COST OF YOUR DEATH

It is okay to want things for your remains, service, and estate after you die, but you need to make sure you don't put your loved ones into debt or make them suffer hardship or feel guilty because they couldn't afford to honor your wishes after your death. The funeral industry preys on grieving family members like lions. Don't let your family members be devoured in their time of grief. Prepare to die!

A. *If you want your body or ashes buried at a gravesite.*

- ☐ Consider the cost of the burial plot and adjacent plots if required because of statuary, etc.
- ☐ Consider the cost of your casket.
 - ☐ Cardboard box.
 - ☐ Basic pine box.
 - ☐ Make your own.
 - ☐ Whatever is least expensive.
 - ☐ Whatever is most expensive.
 - ☐ Painted metal with padding and lace.
 - ☐ Solid mahogany with BeautyRest mattress and pillow.
 - ☐ Welded bronze, stainless steel, art deco, . . .
 - ☐ Will it be prepaid or will your estate cover the cost? How much?
- ☐ Consider the kind and cost of your gravestone, headstone, etc.
 - ☐ Simple headstone, concrete, granite, stainless steel.
 - ☐ Gravestone, size, shape, material, epitaph.
 - ☐ Crypt, where, how, in what way?
 - ☐ Mausoleum where, what specific spot in the mausoleum, plaque. . .
 - ☐ Statuary, what kind, size, shape, location, material.
 - ☐ Prepaid or will estate cover the costs? How much?
- ☐ Consider costs from a funeral home.
 - ☐ The hearse for body transport from place of death to funeral home, cremation location, Neptune society, then from funeral home to gravesite.
 - ☐ Embalming costs for open casket or delayed burial.
 - ☐ Flowers, if so, how much, what kind?
 - ☐ Guest book.
 - ☐ Bi-fold handout for service.
 - ☐ Make-up, hair styling, clothes for open casket.
 - ☐ Graveside service preparations.
 - ☐ Funeral home chapel rental.
 - ☐ Urn, head stone, gravestone, statuary, burial plot costs.

IV. DECIDE IF YOU WANT A SERVICE

- A. *Funeral or Memorial Service (See attached sheet for ideas)*
 - ☐ At what location do you want your service?
 - ☐ What background music, special music, hymns, songs, instrumentals, or congregational music do you want?
 - ☐ What background music before and after the service?
 - ☐ What special music?
 - ☐ What congregational hymns or songs?
 - ☐ What instruments or instrumentals?
 - ☐ Do you want a slide show at your service?
 - ☐ If so, have you put it together already?
 - ☐ Do you have a collection of pictures?
 - ☐ Who will make the slide show for you?
 - ☐ What music will accompany the slide show?
 - ☐ What Scripture reading/s do you want?
 - ☐ Who do you want to read Scripture?
 - ☐ Who should give the opening prayer?
 - ☐ Who should write the eulogy?
 - ☐ Who should read the eulogy?
 - ☐ Who should preach and/or close in prayer?
 - ☐ What kind of sermon do you want?
 - ☐ Short and sweet?
 - ☐ Gospel bomb?

- ☐ How long?
- ☐ What focus?
- ☐ What text?
- ☐ What preacher?
- ☐ Do you want one or more people to speak and share memories at your service? If so, who do you want to speak?
- ☐ Open casket at your funeral?
- ☐ Closed Casket at your funeral?
- ☐ Memorial service.
- ☐ Delayed memorial service.
- ☐ Reception following?
 - ☐ Where?
 - ☐ Food? If so, how much, what kind?
 - ☐ Who prepares the food?
 - ☐ Who sets up and cleans up?
 - ☐ Who pays?

B. *Graveside Service*

- ☐ Do you want a graveside service?
- ☐ Do you want the graveside service to follow the funeral?
- ☐ Do you want the graveside service to precede a memorial service?
- ☐ Do you want the graveside service to follow a memorial service?
- ☐ Do you want everyone to come to the graveside service?
- ☐ Do you want only close family members to come to the graveside service?
- ☐ Who do you want to perform your graveside service?
- ☐ Roses on casket before or after being lowered into the grave.
- ☐ Casket lowered down with handfuls of dirt thrown on top.
- ☐ Casket lowered, buried, soil packed, and sod replaced.
- ☐ Casket remain above ground until after people leave.
- ☐ Casket remain above ground until people leave but family remains.
- ☐ Reception following.
 - ☐ Where?
 - ☐ Food? If so, how much, what kind?
 - ☐ Who prepares the food?
 - ☐ Who sets up and cleans up?
 - ☐ Who pays?

C. *Consider writing a letter or document explaining your faith in the Lord and the hope of the resurrection, sharing the gospel, and include it with your will or maybe have it read at your service.*

D. *Or write your own eulogy or a document that will help whoever you want to write your eulogy. Include basic summary of your life, key dates, places, people, hobbies, accomplishments, spiritual highlights of your life and what is most important to you. Speak frankly to the living about eternity.*

E. *Consider using a thumb drive, computer folder, or online location with digital pictures of your life that can be turned into a slide show or create your own slide show before you die.*

F. *Consider writing your own epitaph if you want a gravestone or head stone or mausoleum wall tile, or whatever.*

G. *Maybe write summary letter to your loved ones stating your general desires and wishes.*

V. MAKE PLANS FOR YOUR ESTATE

If you don't have any assets that you will leave behind, a simple will is fine. But if you have some assets, house, monies, investments, business, etc., it is wise to have a trust. If you don't have a lawyer

and you aren't doing anything complicated, www.trustandwill.com is decent and might cost you about \$1,500 or so to get a trust set up and funded with all your assets. If you have a larger estate you might want to find a local lawyer that specializes in estate planning. Yes, it will cost more, but if you don't have a will and trust, the government will take a huge portion of your estate in probate.

- A. Do you have a will/ trust that is up to date?
- B. Have you spoken to your children or loved ones about what you want when you die, given them a copy of your trust/will or told them where to find it?
- C. Have you considered what you want to do with your assets in relation to ministry, the church, missionaries, etc.? If so, how much and to whom or what entity or with what criteria?
- D. Do you want to leave your estate to your children even if they are young? In one lump sum? Distributed over time or at a certain age, or in proportion to their diligence. . .?
- E. Have you been specific about exactly what you want done with your estate?
- F. Have you made sure that you haven't put believers into a partnership with unbelievers?

IDEAS FOR FUNERAL, MEMORIAL, OR GRAVESIDE SERVICE

Below are general ideas for the average funeral, memorial, or grave-side service.

- ☐ Intro Background Music: Any music you would like to have playing as people come in and are seated.
- ☐ Special Music: Sometimes people select favorite hymns or songs to be sung at the beginning of the service.
- ☐ Scripture reading: Usually there is a Scripture reading at the beginning of the service. This can be done by the Pastor officiating or anyone the family chooses to read.
- ☐ Prayer: Usually the person who does the Scripture reading prays for friends and family.
- ☐ Eulogy: "Eulogy" means "Praise." The eulogy generally contains biographical information, achievements, key events in deceased the person's life, and is usually read by the Pastor or an emotionally composed family member or friend.
- ☐ Remarks by Family or friends: Often, after the eulogy is read, the Pastor officiating may ask the congregation to share any memories they might have. Sometimes the family will select certain people beforehand to come forward and share something they have prepared. If a family member wants to say something person but is too emotional, they can type out what they want to have said and have the Pastor officiating read it.
- ☐ Message: Pastor usually preaches short 15-to-20-minute sermon of encouragement and hope for those who are grieving.
- ☐ Closing Prayer: Usually done at the close of the message by the Pastor.

- ☐ Exit Music: Can be the same music played earlier at the beginning of the service or the family can have something else played.
- ☐ Graveside Instructions: If there is to be a Graveside service, the funeral service director will give instructions to the congregation at the end of the memorial service. Then everyone will exit the church/funeral home and follow in procession to the graveside. At the graveside, the pastor usually speaks about 5 to 10 minutes e.g., a Scripture reading, and prayer which concludes the services. In some instances, the only service is a graveside service, and if that is the case, the graveside message might be 15 minutes or so. See above for many graveside service options.
- ☐ Relax, there is no “right way” of doing a funeral, memorial, or graveside service. Songs, prayers, readings, testimonies, or whatever can be added as desired.

Prepare to die! Plan, get ready, write everything down, talk to your loved ones, and be a blessing to them by letting them know your wishes exactly.

EXTRA HELPS

- ☐ When someone dies, you will usually need eight or more copies of the death certificate so you can cancel credit cards, bank accounts, collect life insurance, cancel memberships, etc. It is wise to get at least eight copies to begin with.
- ☐ If you are married and have your home, accounts, vehicles, etc., under one name, you might consider putting them under both your names “husband or wife.”
- ☐ It is a good idea to ask children at a family gathering before you die, if there are any particular possessions they want. If two or more children want the same thing, then draw straws or whatever, but get details expressed and settled with all present as a family. Then write it down, and be specific. Avoid ambiguity in your instructions in your will and trust.
- ☐ Make sure you have a designated trustee, backup trustee, etc. Make sure you talk about this with whoever you select for it is often a burden to be an estate trustee that some do not want to carry. If the estate is large, it is often better to pay an attorney deal with the estate distribution.
- ☐ Make sure you have power of attorney and medical power of attorney for loved ones who are sick and infirm. If you don’t have power of attorney, you may have to let secular courts decide legal issues for you. If you don’t have medical power of attorney, and a loved one is admitted to the hospital and can’t make medical decisions, you may have no say in their treatment. The hospital will treat them so as to make the most profit.
- ☐ Married couples, make sure you both understand all your finances, investments, etc., so that if one of you dies, the other knows what is happening and what to do.
- ☐ Talk about expectations after death with your spouse and children.
- ☐ Make sure that family members know critical passwords or where to find them.
- ☐ Keep eternity and the gospel in mind before you die. If you have a sizeable estate, consider using your money for kingdom purposes while you are still living so you can see how it blesses people before you die.
- ☐ Some people have unbelieving children, who are unbelievers who are hostile to God, irresponsible with money, massively in debt, addicted to gambling, etc. Do you want to leave them your estate or a large chunk of it? All you have has been given to you by God as a

stewardship. Use it to the glory of God. Solomon speaks of the man who labors his whole life to accumulate wealth, only to die and leave it to a son who is a fool.