

GREEN ACRES BAPTIST CHURCH SENIOR ADULT
AND PASTORAL CARE MINISTRY

GUIDE TO PLANNING
**FUNERAL & MEMORIAL
SERVICES**





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Your church staff and church family are here to walk through this season with you. We understand the loss of a loved one is a difficult and emotional time. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

We know also that dealing with decisions that must be made after death can compound the emotions, stress and grief. This booklet will help guide you through the practical, personal and necessary steps as you work through your loss.

Remember, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear. . .” (Psalm 46:1-2)

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STEP 1: Breathe, Pray this Prayer and Remember these Scriptures

*Comfort me with Your love, O God;
Wrap me up in Your strong embrace.
Shelter me from the storm, O Lord;
Envelop me in Your tender care.
By day I pour out my heartbreak to You.
By night I give you my racing thoughts.
In You I take refuge,
In You I will not be afraid.
For you hold me strong, You hold me safe.
Calm my fearful heart, O God.
Still my anxious mind, O Lord.
For all my life is found in You,
All my being is given to You,
All my hope begins in You.*

*"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."
(Psalm 34:18)*

*"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."
(Psalm 147:3)*

*"I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too - your reassuring presence, coming and going. This is too much, too wonderful - I can't take it all in!"
(Psalm 139:5-6 MSG)*

*"In all . . . things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 8:37-39)*

*"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4:7)*

STEP 2: Care for Yourself and Rest

- Over the next few days, it will be very difficult to sleep and care for yourself. You will typically be asked a great deal of questions and are expected to handle funeral arrangements for your loved one.
- All the demands on you, as well as your grief, can cause many sleepless nights and make it difficult for you to begin the grieving process. It is extremely important that during this time you do everything possible to find rest and care for your emotional well-being.
- Having friends or family help with as many things as possible will be a great burden lifted off your shoulders. Others may offer to help. Do not hesitate to think of specific ways they can help and ask them. Let others help you.

STEP 3: Choose a Point Person

- There are a variety of things that will need to occur over the next few days. Having someone you know you can rely on will ease some of the burden for you.
- Your point person will help make phone calls, assist with visitors, make childcare arrangements if needed, and help with any other needs you have.
- If you need help with this or any other steps in this process, feel free to contact the Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office.

STEP 4: Contact a Funeral Home

- Connect with the funeral home of your choice to schedule an appointment with the funeral home director. We have included a brief list of funeral homes in this booklet to assist you in that search.
- Remember to ask what information or documents you need to bring with you to the appointment.
- Ask a close family member or friend to go with you to the funeral home. Should you desire us to accompany you to the funeral home, please contact the Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office.

STEP 5: Notify Family Members, Friends, and Connect Group Leaders

- Notify family members and friends regarding the death of your loved one. Make a list of family and friends (with phone numbers included) to be notified of the death of your loved one.
- Your point person will be able to help with this.

STEP 6: Contact the Pastoral Care Office

- If you want a minister from GABC contact the Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office. Set up an appointment to walk through the funeral/memorial/graveside service(s) planning.

STEP 7: Finalize any Outstanding Items

- Make sure to finalize all remaining details with the hospital, nursing home, life insurance, military or VA, social security, etc.
- Ask the funeral home or the GABC Staff for any final action items.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between a funeral and a memorial service?

- FUNERAL SERVICES

Typically, funeral services occur within the week (3-7days) of your loved one's passing. Funeral homes are often heavily involved in the handling of details surrounding your loved one's body, flowers, visitation, guest book, honorariums, burial, etc.

- MEMORIAL SERVICES

These services occur at a time that is best for the surviving loved ones. Most memorials occur within a few weeks after death. Typically there is no casket present at these services. Pictures, treasured memorabilia and flowers are often displayed at a memorial service.

- HOLDING A MEMORIAL SERVICE WITHOUT A FUNERAL HOME

At times, memorial services happen at GABC without the assistance of a funeral home. If this is the case, be aware that most decisions and logistics will require the input and assistance of the GABC staff.

How do we plan the service and who should officiate my loved one's service(s)?

If you are using a funeral home, they will help guide you through this process. If the service is held at Green Acres Baptist Church, typically the funeral directors will work with the church staff to schedule and coordinate all the details of the service.

GABC ministers are honored to help you through these steps and will meet with you whether or not a funeral director is involved.

Having a meaningful service is important. If there is a family member or close friend who is a minister, it is common to ask that individual to officiate the service.

In case you do not have a specific minister, a member of the GABC Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office will be glad to help officiate the service.

When can we have the service at GABC?

Services at GABC are typically scheduled during the work week. However, they must be scheduled around other prior scheduled ministry activities. Some holidays, Friday afternoons or weekends are not available due to previously scheduled activities, Sunday activities or staffing requirements. For scheduling information contact the Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office.

Where can the service be held at GABC?

Funerals (service with a casket present) are held in the GABC Chapel. Other room options are available for memorial services (without a casket). The GABC Worship Center is only used for funeral services if attendance is expected to exceed 1,500.

Can a pastor from another church and/or denomination officiate my loved one's service(s)?

If a service is held at Green Acres Baptist Church, the minister must be approved by the GABC Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office.

Is it okay to have family members/friends speak at a service?

Not only is it appropriate, but it is encouraged. A family member or friend sharing personal remembrances adds a meaningful and a memorable touch to a service. However, speaking at a funeral or memorial service can be emotional and overwhelming for some people. Most ministers require the person speaking to limit their time to three minutes. The person speaking should write out their thoughts to stay on topic and help control emotions. If they feel, at the last minute, they can't share their thoughts, someone else can take the written notes and share on their behalf.

Do I need live musicians for the service?

Live musicians can add a wonderful touch to the service. However, you do not need to use live musicians to make the service personal or special. If you have a friend or family member that can help with the music, feel free to reach out to them. The Pastoral Care office works hand in hand with the GABC Worship Ministry and is happy to help coordinate the music needs for the service. Using live musicians may incur extra expenses due to rehearsal time and sound/audio needs.

Can I use recorded music at the service?

Yes. However, the family must provide a copy of the music to the Broadcast staff member at least 48 hours in advance of the service. Due to copyright laws GABC cannot secure copies of the music. The music must be submitted on a CD or thumb drive. We cannot use phones, tablets, or other personal digital devices from which to play the music.

If I choose to use live musicians, how do I secure a soloist and/or instrumentalists for the service?

If you know a friend or family member that can help with any music requests, feel free to reach out to them. The Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office works hand in hand with the GABC Worship Ministry and is happy to help coordinate the music needs for your loved one's service. Make sure the Pastor leading the service knows the details of the music and musicians. A large number of musicians (such as a band) may incur extra expenses due to the sound/audio needs.

What about the printed memorial flyer or service program?

The funeral home will help you create and produce these printed pieces for the service.

If you are not using a funeral home, you would be responsible for creating the printed piece. GABC could assist by printing in our office if needed, on regular copy paper, from the final copy your family has created. It will be printed on 11 x 8.5 paper in landscape with one-fold. Your final copy would be needed by the GABC office 24 hours prior to the service, either hard copy or a file (PDF, Microsoft Word). GABC will provide up to 150 color copies at no cost.

Can we play a DVD video with photos of our loved one at the funeral/memorial service?

Yes, as long as the music and content would be appropriate for any worship service held at GABC. Funeral homes can help you with the production of a video. If you are not using a funeral home, we would need a completed video 48 hours prior to your loved one's service so our technical team can insure it will play properly. If needed, there are places in the Tyler area that can produce this for you. The video can be submitted on a DVD or a USB portable drive in MP4 file format.

What about technical and A/V needs for my loved one's service?

GABC will provide a member of our Broadcast Ministry staff to help with any technical and A/V needs for the service. If you are using a funeral home, they will help coordinate these details. If no funeral home is involved, you will be given the name and contact information of the staff member who can assist you with these details. You will need to contact this person as soon as you have information about the service. The Broadcast Ministry contact number is 903-525-1106.

What about Flowers and Plants for the service?

Flowers and plants from florists can only be received on the day of the service; they cannot be accepted the day before. All flowers/plants must be removed from the church at the close of the service or reception. The family or funeral director will be responsible to remove flowers. Any flowers left will be discarded.

Who handles details of the obituary?

If you are using a funeral home, they will typically help you prepare and publish the obituary. If you are not using a funeral home, you will be responsible for the obituary.

Many newspapers typically charge to publish an obituary. You can contact your local paper to get these details. Many funeral homes will publish them on their website at no charge. There are other websites that will help you write and publish obituaries and create memorial pages. Some websites are free, and others charge a fee. Examples are Legacy.com or EverLoved.com.

Can I video the funeral/memorial service?

Recording video of a service is very common. You may work with someone you know or ask the funeral home to assist you with this process. Funeral homes often offer video services as part of their funeral options. You may also ask someone to video the service for you. The videographer can set up at the back of the room with a single stationary camera and record from that location.

Does GABC provide childcare?

GABC does not provide childcare for funerals or memorial services.

What is a customary honorarium for those who help with the service?

An honorarium is never required but is very much appreciated. The people who help lead and coordinate your loved one's service work diligently to make the service special, memorable and personal.

The amounts listed below are common. If you wish to express your appreciation with an honorarium, you may personally give it directly to the individuals.

- Minister \$200-\$250
- Instrumentalists (pianist/organist) \$100-\$150
- Soloists \$100-\$150
- Media tech \$100

Does Green Acres Baptist Church provide a meal the day of the service?

If the deceased is a member of GABC and part of a Connect Group, that Group may provide the meal. If the deceased is not part of a Connect Group, GABC will provide a meal for up to 25 family members. If more than 25 people are expected, the family will coordinate with the church to cover the costs of the additional food/beverages. This meal is reserved for family only. GABC will need the number of family members expected at this meal 36 hours prior to the service to allow time to prepare. GABC can also provide the paper goods, plastic ware, cups and ice for the meal.

Should we have a reception after a service?

If you do not have a graveside service immediately after the funeral, you may elect to have a simple reception. Receptions can be a time for everyone who attended the service to offer condolences to the family and share precious memories

You are welcome to use our facilities (if available) for a reception following the memorial service. If you have a reception, it could be as simple as visiting with family and friends in the lobby or a large room by the GABC Chapel (like the GABC Parlor). The family would be responsible for any drinks or food items served at the reception.

Is it ok for a Christian to be cremated?

More and more believers are choosing cremation. While Christian tradition clearly favors burial, the Bible nowhere explicitly condemns cremation. Former GABC Pastor David Dykes offers this explanation:

There is nothing in the Bible that would prohibit a Christian from being cremated. Once a Christian dies, their spirit and soul immediately go to be with Jesus. What's left is a body, not the person. A body that is buried without a coffin will completely decay in about six years. Even Christian bodies that have been embalmed, placed in an expensive coffin, and a steel burial vault will experience total decay in 50 years.

There have been thousands of Christians who were burned in tragedies or were lost at sea. When Jesus returns to resurrect the remains of our bodies, He will have no problem bringing together the molecules of what is left of any body to restore it. So, cremation or burial is up to the desires and choices of families. But there is no spiritual reason that mandates that bodies should be buried.

LOCAL FUNERAL HOME INFORMATION

Each of the funeral homes listed are available to assist you with funeral planning. Although we have worked with a variety funeral homes, GABC does not endorse or promote a specific funeral home over others. You may use any fully licensed funeral home you like. These are listed as a resource because they are local and have directed many funerals at GABC.

Jackson's Burks, Walker, Tippit Funeral Home , Tyler	903-592-6553
Lloyd James Funeral Home , Tyler.....	903-597-6611
Stewart Family Funeral Home , Tyler	903-581-2008
Brosang Family Funeral Home & Cremation Services , Tyler	903-597-3333
Tyler Memorial Funeral Home , Tyler.....	903-597-1396
Boren-Conner Funeral Home , Bullard	903-894-7777
Caudle-Rutledge-Daugherty Funeral Home , Lindale	903-882-3141

POTENTIAL COSTS

This information is to help you anticipate costs of funeral home services

While GABC does not charge for the facility usage when a church member passes away, there could be costs associated with Audio/Visual needs, musicians, and other honorariums as listed in this publication. GABC does have a facility usage fee for services of non-church members. You may contact the Senior Adult & Pastoral Care Ministry office for a current list of costs.

The following list can serve as a general idea of what you may experience with local pricing:

TRADITIONAL FUNERAL SERVICE

A traditional funeral service requires the use of a funeral home. A visitation is offered followed by a service which typically includes music, personal reflections, a message, and a DVD/slideshow. The traditional service is often followed by a brief graveside burial service. Some families choose to have a private burial before the funeral with a reception following the service.

Estimated costs: \$8,000 - \$15,000+

CREMATION MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service is held for a person after their remains have been cremated. This service is set up much like the traditional funeral service and follows the same general flow. A family visitation can be offered before or after a memorial service.

Estimated costs: \$1,500 - \$8,000

DIRECT CREMATION

A direct cremation occurs very quickly after a death and the remains are given to the family. There is no viewing, visitation, or wake before the cremation. The option of having a memorial service honoring the lost loved one is still available and can be scheduled at any time.

Estimated costs: \$800 - \$1,500

(with no assistance from a funeral home)

DONATING A BODY TO SCIENCE

When a body is donated to science, it provides a unique gift to medical researchers, educators, doctors, scientists, emergency services personnel, and university medical students for research on new life-saving medical and surgical procedures and techniques. Your physician, hospital or hospice can provide information on this process.

Cost: \$0

INFORMATION CHECKLIST

Information GABC will need while planning with your family:

Name of Deceased:

Date of Passing:

Location of Service:

Type of Service:

Date of Service:

Time of Service:

Funeral Home:

Visitation Times:

Interment Location:

Name/Phone # of Family Contact Person:

Pastor to Lead Service:

Other Minister(s) involved:

Musicians/Soloists:

GABC Connect Group:

Time of Family Meal:

Number Expected at Family Meal:

Connect Group Food Coordinator/Phone #

Memorial Gifts directed to:

FUNERAL ORDER OF SERVICE - EXAMPLE

*The service is generally best received by the guests if it does not exceed one hour.

Name of Deceased

Date/Time

Location

Pre-service Music

Instrumentalist or recorded music

(optional with slide show)

Welcome/Scripture/Prayer

Pastor

Song #1

Reading of Obituary and Personal Thoughts

3 minutes per person

Song #2 or Slide Show

7 minutes max for slide show

Message

Pastor

Song #3

Closing Comments/Prayer

Pastor

CARING RESOURCES

At GABC, you do not have to go through the grieving process alone. Healing from your grief is not easy. It is a long, sometimes strenuous process. Next, you will find a list of avenues we provide to help you move forward after a difficult loss.

During the first year after the loss of a loved one, GABC will provide you with resources from the Stephen Ministry to help guide you through the grieving process. These resources will automatically be sent to the immediate family. Feel free to share these with other members of your family.

GraceWorks Counseling Ministry

The counseling ministry of Green Acres was named GraceWorks simply because it is what we claim to be true in times of our deepest sorrows. This on-campus ministry is staffed by Licensed Professional Counselors who are faith based in all their counsel. The healing of grief is greatly enhanced by a person's willingness to talk about their thoughts and feelings. Our counselors are trained "listeners." They have been trained to deal with the trauma of loss and will share tools to help in the grieving process. Contact GraceWorks at 903-533-1817.

GriefShare

GriefShare is a free, practical, and interactive ministry that features biblical teaching on grief and recovery topics related to the loss of a loved one. This ministry offers a 12-week group studies (twice a year) as well as shorter opportunities based on seasonal needs. To discover more about GriefShare contact the GraceWorks (GABC's Counseling Ministry) at 903-533-1817.

Pastoral Counseling

The GABC Pastoral Care Ministry provides a safe, warm, and comforting environment for hearts that are hurting and in need of encouragement, biblical direction, and Christ's love. GABC ministers stand ready to care for you. Our staff is honored to walk alongside you as you seek to adjust to life after loss and emerge from the numbness of grief, shock, and sometimes overwhelming emotions.

Widows In Need (WIN) Ministry

The GABC Widows In Need Ministry brings encouragement, comfort and practical help to widows and widowers experiencing difficult times following the death of their spouse. This ministry offers Car Care Days, social events and special attention on holidays throughout the year.

GABC Widow/Deacon Ministry

This ministry, facilitated by our GABC Deacon Ministry, connects each widow with a Deacon of the church. This Deacon will be there to encourage, check on and help you when needed. The Widow/Deacon Ministry offers an annual banquet specifically for GABC widows.

Financial Peace

Financial Peace University is a life-changing program that teaches you how to make the right decisions with your money. As a surviving loved one, you will gain confidence in learning how to save money, live on a budget, eliminate debt, and experience the joy of giving.

We invite you to join us in any of these ministries as you begin your journey towards healing and hope. You can get more details by calling GABC at 903-525-1100 or at www.GABC.org

A WORD ABOUT GRIEF

They say one of the hardest things about life is death, and it's true. The pain of losing a friend or loved one is immense. Unrealistic expectations about how we should feel, think, or act often complicate our grieving process. Here are some universal truths about grieving.

The first is that we all grieve differently. Why? Because we all have different depths of love for the one who has passed. A next-door neighbor or a co-worker will not grieve as a parent or spouse will grieve. Those who have had the privilege of sharing life experiences and mutual memories and those who have felt as if they were loved by the one who has passed, will grieve the most.

The next thing we need to remember is that there is no timeline for grief. True grief is not something you get over, get past, get beyond, or get around. It is something that you learn to live with. It is a process of healing. It is a journey of adapting, recovery, and remapping our lives without them.

When we lose someone we love, a void of love is left behind in our hearts. That void still holds a life of memories, times of joy, and forever remembered experiences of love. The healing process is not about replacing that person or attempting to fill that void. That only leads to denial, which only increases our pain over time. If you are a parent, then the illustration is that a parent does not have to stop loving one child in order to love another child. God has always been in the process of expanding the capacity of our hearts to love more.

We must remember that our deep abiding grief is a reflection of our deep abiding love. Your pain is a revelation of the love you have for them. Someone once said, "Grief is the price you pay for love."

Your journey of healing can be fraught with feelings of shame or guilt. Some might feel shame if they have a good day, a day of peace, or a day of smiles and laughter. The days or moments of healing will come in bits and pieces. Give yourself permission to remember. Permit yourself to have days of thanksgiving and laughter because of the gift of their life in yours.

"The LORD's unfailing love and mercy still continue, Fresh as the morning, as sure as the sunrise. The LORD is all I have, and so in him I put my hope." Lamentations 3:22-24 (Good News Bible)



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