

Upon My Death

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My Desires & Wishes

Providing guidance in planning the funeral events upon one's death

"I experienced a tremendous sense of relief once I wrote down my final desires and wishes."

"The conversation regarding my final desires and wishes with my family brought a surprise gift of reconciliation to some family members who had been at odds with each other for decades."

"By far one of the greatest gifts my wife and I have given one another and our children."

***This document may be shared and edited without permission.
It is a gift.***

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Upon My Death
Rev. Grady Mosley

Prologue

In reading the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13), the question that I ask myself is, "How do I know if I have been a good sower?" I have found the answer is not based upon sowing the seed in good soil but rather in having an empty sack. Therefore, I share these instructions/guidelines gathered over my years of ministry with anyone and everyone so that they might share it with anyone and everyone.

As a pastor for 40 years, too numerous are the extremely painful, difficult, and sometimes bitter conversations that take place regarding "making arrangements" upon a loved one's death. Without question, those families and individuals who have had healthy discussions and have had some type of documentation regarding their loved one's "final wishes" more readily move to healing and wholeness having a sense of peaceful contentment with themselves and one another.

I have many friends who are single, do not have children, or who only have occasional visits with relatives; they, too, are extremely thankful for these criteria. Please join me in sharing a hidden treasure in "Upon My Death."

I welcome any feedback regarding your story using this tool as well as any editorial suggestions. You may email me at gmosley2@bellsouth.net

Grace and Peace,
Grady Mosley
2 Peter 3:18

Introduction

The prophet Isaiah said to King Hezekiah, “This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order because you are going to die; you will not recover.” Best said, preparation for death should be handled as we have time to take care of it.

“Upon My Death” is a simple guideline for discerning and recording information to help others as we approach life eternal. Once the conversation occurs and the information is recorded, there will be additional opportunities to follow up on the conversation. Most often these occasions arise upon the untimely death of a person near to us. Think of updating every four years; the presidential election is an easy timeline.

“Upon My Death” will be a tremendous gift to your family; as an added benefit, it will save time and money. ***This guide is solely for conversations regarding the arrangements for one’s body upon death.*** Other matters, such as Wills and Power of Attorney, should be given equally proper attention. Once you complete this simple task, it may seem that what you have done is inadequate; I promise, there is a hidden treasure that your family will deeply appreciate in this gift you give them.

2022 Note: COVID-19 restrictions for public gatherings significantly impacted funeral/memorial service traditions and precedent. The mandate to limit the number of people attending such services, in my opinion, has been a positive and healthy change making them more intimate and private. In light of these recent changes, please consider updating your conversations “Upon My Death.”

One added caveat: If you have adult children (over 18) who are single, ask them to sign a durable power of attorney and a health care proxy to keep in your possession. You can find these documents in a website search. If there is no such documentation prior to the event, it is extremely costly and troublesome in the untimely death or debilitating accident of your adult child to make decisions on the child’s behalf.

<https://eforms.com/power-of-attorney/durable/>

Advance Directive Individual State link

Also note, with the advancement of medicine, devices such as pacemakers may continue to function and may conflict with POA directives and Living wills. It is best to be prepared for this and make arrangements that address this situation where applicable and possible.

Why give this gift of my wishes upon my death?

First, it is very difficult and awkward to think about preparing for one's death. That is the main reason we avoid discussing this topic with loved ones. The fact is someone must deal with it. Those you leave behind will need specific information so they might carry out your wishes and needs.

Second, if an accident or sudden illness occurs, a relative or close friend will know where to go quickly to find the pertinent information regarding your wishes.

It is simple, but it is not easy.

Answering these questions will guide you in determining your course of action in communicating your wishes and desires.

***Have you communicated with these people?**

Upon your (or others) death:

- Do you wish to have your organs harvested for others in need of transplant?
- Will this disqualify your body from being given for medical research?
- Do you wish your body (or others for whom you are the POA) to be donated for medical or scientific research? If so, have you secured the proper documentation from the medical/research facility? Provide this information.

If you wish to be buried,

- Have you purchased funeral plots (for self and others)? Provide this information.
- Do you have a policy to cover funeral costs? How will the funeral be paid for? Provide this information.
- What funeral home do you wish to use?
- Have you met with a funeral director and picked out a casket?
- Who do you wish to be pall bearers?

If you wish to be cremated,

- Have you met with the funeral director?
- Have you set aside funds/policy to cover these costs?
- Have you a vessel (urn or box) you desire to hold the ashes?
- Do you wish to have your ashes scattered, joined with another, or buried?
- Where would you like your ashes scattered or buried? Have you purchased a plot? Provide this information.
- Do you wish for someone to keep your ashes? Who is this and have you told them?

If you wish to have a celebration of life or memorial service,

- Do you wish to have only a graveside service?
- Do you wish to have a funeral/memorial service?
- Do you wish for it to be in a church, funeral home, or specific location?
- Do you desire the format to be a traditional litany or casual gathering?
- Do you have an order of service you wish to follow?
- Do you wish to hold visitation for the family the same day or prior to the service?
- Do you wish for the body to be "viewed" for visitation?

- Do you wish for your casket/ashes to be present in the service?
- Do you have certain clergy* you would like to preside over the service?
- Do you have a particular order of service you wish to follow?
- Are there individuals* you would like to speak at the service?
- Are there individuals you would request NOT to speak?
- If you desire music, are there certain songs or hymns you desire to be incorporated in the service? Would you like certain individuals* to perform them?
- Do you wish to have the interment prior to or following the service?
- Do you wish for the interment to be a private/family event or open to all?
- In lieu of flowers, how would you like gifts to be made in your memory?

Preceding or following any type of service,

- Do you want a fellowship event to take place?
- Do you wish the fellowship event to be corporate or just immediate family?
- Is there a specific place you would like for this to be held?
- Will this be coordinated through the church or family members?
- Are there specific foods and/or beverages you want to be served at this event?

If you have special commemorations,

- If you have served in the military or as a first responder, is there a ceremony you wish to include? (Take steps to obtain those details.)
- If you are a Mason, would you like the Masonic rites to be performed at your service?

Appendix

Body Donation: there are strict requirements for bodies to be accepted and to avoid rejection. Be aware of these ahead of time and be prepared by having an alternative plan in place regarding your body. Use the links below as contact information for MCG, Emory, Mayo:

<http://cellbio.emory.edu/research/body-donor-program.html>

<https://www.augusta.edu/mcg/cba/bodydonation/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/body-donation/making-donation>

The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) estimates the median cost of a funeral and burial at about \$9420. Specific costs may be found by searching “2021 NFDA General Pricelist Study.” *This price does not include the burial plot, headstone, flowers, musicians, vocalists, or honorariums.*

The average cost of a funeral with cremation is around \$6971. Cremation services can range from \$1,000 – \$3,000 on the low end of the spectrum but can cost as much as \$6,000 – \$8,000 depending on the options you select.

State and local laws differ regarding the **scattering of ashes**; therefore, you should consult the city and state regulations where the scattering will take place.

According to the 2021 NFDA Cremation & Burial Report, the 2021 cremation rate is 57.5% and burial rate is 36.6%. As more consumers choose cremation, prices will continue to increase.

Green (or natural) burial emphasizes simplicity and environmental sustainability. The body is neither cremated nor prepared with chemicals such as embalming fluids. It is simply placed in a biodegradable coffin or shroud and interred without a concrete burial vault. The grave site is allowed to return to nature. Typically, green burials cost \$1,000 – \$4,000 and usually include a burial plot, fees to open and close the grave, a plot marker, and a one-time endowment to a perpetual care fund to maintain the property as a natural burial site.

The average cost of a single burial plot in a private cemetery is \$2,000 to \$5,000, depending on where the cemetery is located, the cemetery’s amenities, and whether the plot is in a more desirable section within the cemetery. The average cost of a *headstone* is \$1500-\$2000.

The average cost of a burial insurance policy is approximately \$50 per month, and the most common face amount purchased is \$10,000.

My Desires and Wishes

Name: _____ Date: _____

After having given some thought, here are “My Final Wishes” that I need to share with those who will make some important decisions on my behalf:

Non-wishes

And after having given thought to all that may be involved in making decisions, here are my concerns, non-wishes and desires I choose to communicate:

Once completed: A Most Important Step

Along with a printed copy to be kept with important documents in a folder at your home, inform certain significant people of the whereabouts of these documents or, better yet, place a copy in their possession. Send this document electronically to several people so at a moment's notice they may be able to retrieve it from their personal files. If you are not a computer person, a friend or family member could easily create or scan this document for you. Also consider sending a copy to your church to have on file.

Name & Email _____

Name & Email _____

Name & Email _____

Basic Order of Services

Below are simple orders of services that may be used as a starting point for planning the service. Denominational pastors and religious leaders often have specific or common orders they work from with the family. Many of these details should be coordinated with the funeral director.

Facility Service Order

Seating of Family	Instrumental Music
Welcome and Prayer	Officiant
Scripture and Message	Officiant
Family/Friend Speak	
Song	Solo or Congregation
Eulogy	Officiant
Closing Prayer	Officiant
Postlude	Family Exits

Graveside Service Order

Scripture and Prayer	Officiant
Eulogy	Officiant or Family
Words of Committal	Officiant
Closing Prayer	Officiant

Presentation of the Flag*	Honor Guard
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*If the person served in the military.