

FUNERAL TRAINING FOR MINISTERS

How To Serve With Excellence, Order & Sensitivity

ADAPTED FROM TEACHING OF PASTOR LEWIS HEMPHILL JR.

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GOAL

To equip ministers to participate in funerals with professionalism, pastoral sensitivity, and strict program discipline while honoring the grieving family, and the sacred moment.

THE FUNERAL GOLDEN RULE

Do only what you've been assigned to do on the program.

A funeral is not the place for improvisation, additions, or personal agenda. It is a structured service designed for a grieving family.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN PRACTICALLY?

- IF YOU ARE ASSIGNED PRAYER, DO THE PRAYER ONLY.
- IF YOU ARE ASSIGNED SCRIPTURE, READ THE SCRIPTURE ONLY.
- IF YOU ARE ASSIGNED REMARKS, GIVE REMARKS ONLY
- IF YOU ARE ASSIGNED THE EULOGY, PREACH THE EULOGY ONLY

WHAT NOT TO DO

- DO NOT ADD ANOTHER SERMON BEFORE OR AFTER YOUR PART
- DO NOT CALL PEOPLE TO THE ALTAR (UNLESS FAMILY REQUESTED)
- DO NOT CHANGE THE ORDER OF SERVICE
- DO NOT INSERT YOURSELF INTO UNASSIGNED MOMENTS
- DO NOT GRAB THE MIC OUTSIDE OF YOUR ROLE

WHY THIS MATTERS

- The family approved the program
- The officiant is responsible for the flow
- Going off-script creates emotional and logistical confusion
- Funerals are emotionally sensitive, not experimental services

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FUNERAL AND SUNDAY SERVICE

FUNERAL TONE

Pastoral

Comforting

Respectful

Controlled

Compassionate

SUNDAY SERVICE TONE

What To Avoid At Funerals

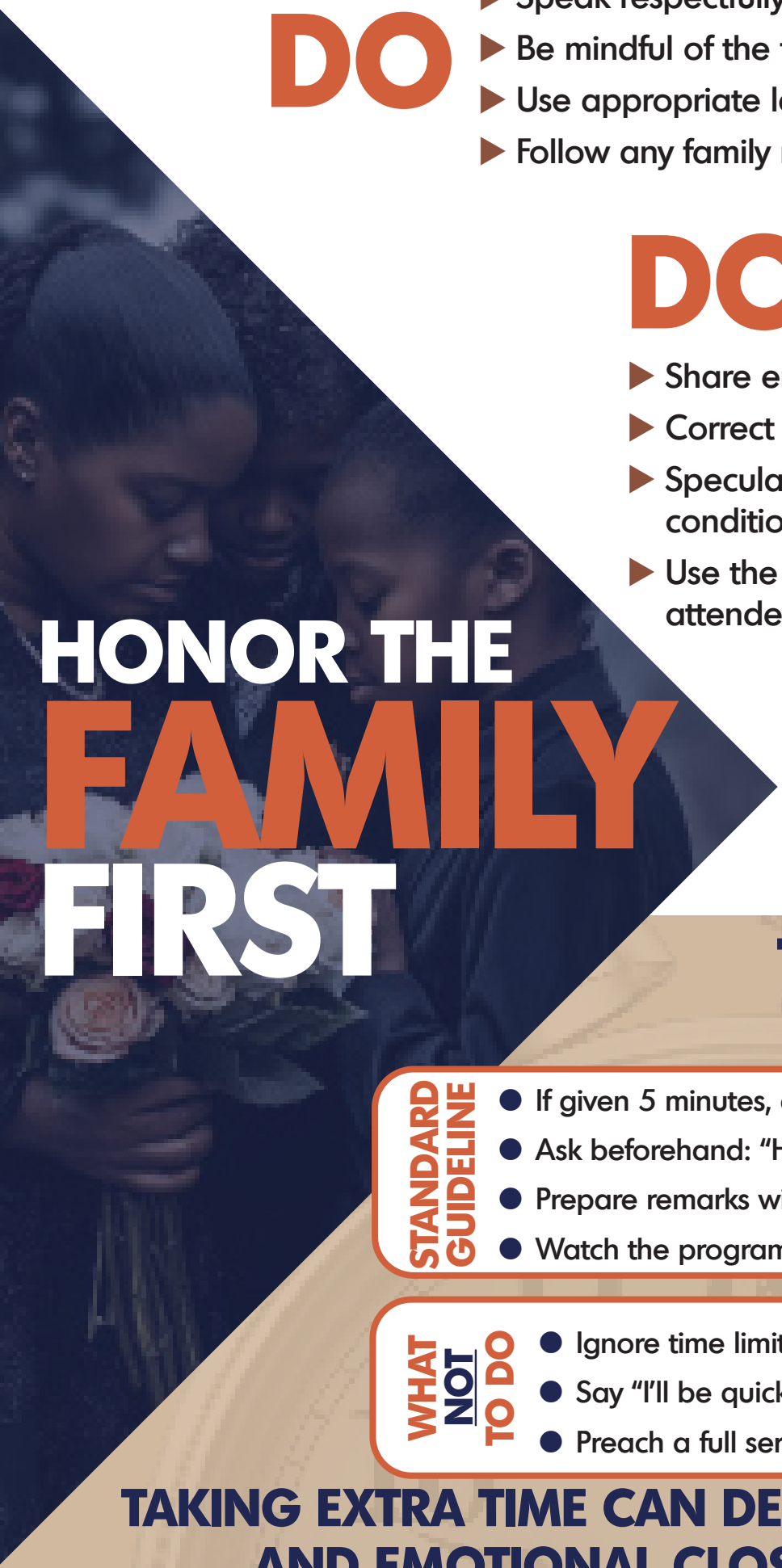
High hype delivery

Long prophetic moments

Crowd manipulation

Extended preaching beyond assignment

A funeral is about ministry to the grieving, not showcasing preaching ability.



DO

- Speak respectfully about the deceased
- Be mindful of the family's emotions
- Use appropriate language
- Follow any family requests

DON'T

- Share embarrassing stories
- Correct the family publicly
- Speculate about the deceased's spiritual condition
- Use the funeral to rebuke or lecture attendees

HONOR THE FAMILY FIRST

Never turn a funeral into a platform for personal opinions.

TIME DISCIPLINE IS MINISTRY

STANDARD GUIDELINE

- If given 5 minutes, do not take 15.
- Ask beforehand: "How much time do I have?"
- Prepare remarks within the assigned timeframe
- Watch the program flow and cues

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Ignore time limits
- Say "I'll be quick" and then extend
- Preach a full sermon when assigned remarks

TAKING EXTRA TIME CAN DELAY BURIAL, REPASTS, AND EMOTIONAL CLOSURE FOR THE FAMILY.



HOW TO PROPERLY DELIVER A EULOGY

A EULOGY SHOULD...

- Honor the life lived
- Comfort the family
- Point to hope in Christ (when appropriate)
- Be truthful & dignified moments

STRUCTURE FOR A STRONG EULOGY

1. Acknowledge grief
2. Honor the life
3. Share meaningful highlights (not exaggerations)
4. Offer hope and encouragement
5. Close with an invitation to salvation

WHAT NOT TO DO IN A EULOGY

- Preach a full revival sermon
- Speculate about heaven or hell
- Use cliches with no substance
- Make it about yourself
- Exaggerate facts about deceased

PROPER PLATFORM ETIQUETTE



BEFORE THE SERVICE

- Arrive early
- Dress appropriately *(dark, conservative, respectful)*
- Check in with the officiant or funeral director
- Sit where instructed

DURING THE SERVICE

- Stay attentive
- Silence your phone
- Follow the program order
- Be ready when your name is called





WHAT NOT TO DO

- Walk in late and go straight to the pulpit
- Have side conversation of the platform
- Use your phone visibly
- Leave the service

SENSITIVITY IN GRIEF MOMENTS

People in the room may be...

- Crying
- Shocked
- Angry
- Spiritually conflicted

Proper Language Examples...

- *"We are here to honor a life and support a family."*
- *"God's grace meets us even in grief."*

Avoid Statements Like...

- *"God needed another angel"*
- *"This was God's plan" (without sensitivity)*
- *"You shouldn't be crying"*

RESPECT THE OFFICIANT & FUNERAL DIRECTOR

CHAIN OF ORDER	DO	DO NOT
Family	Follow instructions given	Compete for control of the service
Officiant/Pastor in charge	Defer to the officiant's direction	Change instructions publicly
Funeral Director	Ask questions privately	Correct leadership on the mic
Participating Ministers		

CLOSE WITH EXCELLENCE

When Your Assignment is Finished

- End gracefully
- Transition respectfully
- Return to your seat
- Do not linger at the mic

A funeral is one of the most sacred and emotionally delicate services you will ever handle. Excellence is shown through humility, order, restraint, and compassion!



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