

Prayer Booklet

for those unable to attend a funeral service



**Coronavirus (Covid-19) booklet for those self isolating
Personal Copy - Please do not pass these around**

Useful information

Contact information

Church of England website

Sadness Grief and Being there

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/sadness-grief-and-being-there>

Coronavirus updates:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

This website has up-to-date information and live streaming links to services and prayers

Prayer for the day:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-daily-prayer/todays-prayer>

Worcester Diocese Website

<https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk>

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Sadness, Grief and Being there

This information can be found at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/sadness-grief-and-being-there>

If someone you love dies in the next few days, of whatever cause, it *may* still be possible to have a small funeral held at a graveside or a crematorium led by a Church of England minister.

What happens at a funeral

During a funeral there are five things that happen:

- 1) You give thanks for all that the person meant to you
- 2) You find hope for tomorrow, drawing strength from the presence of friends and from God
- 3) The person is commended into God's care
- 4) The body is committed to be buried or cremated.
- 5) You say your last farewell to a person's physical body.

If you are unable to go to a funeral which is still happening with others attending

If the funeral is live-streamed then you could watch online.

Why not take a few moments to think, write, or draw some of your memories of the person?

Later you may be able to share that with others at a special memorial service.

You can still pray at home – see p9

You could also read a poem or look at Psalm 23 or Psalm 121.

You can light a candle online: www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle

You could write a card to others who are missing the person you are grieving.

Remember that when this crisis is over [and it will pass] there will always be services for remembering organised by the church and anyone can go to these services.

It is possible for the local church to help you organise a formal or informal service to remember afterwards.

If you were unable to say goodbye

This is particularly hard, and the best thing to do is to talk to someone about your feelings. Many of the things above will also help, and there are prayers that might help see *p9*.

Again, lighting a candle online (www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle) might help, and if you can go out, then pop into an open church (when they can be open again) to pray and think.



Holding important conversations

This might be a moment when you begin to think about funerals and about death. It could be a time to think about what you would want at a funeral, so do take time to talk about these issues with your own family and friends. There are ways to do this which you can find here: www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/my-funeral-plans

And, if appropriate, make a note of your thoughts and ideas – even if there is no funeral service at the moment, you will be able to use these ideas to shape a special service in the future to give thanks for your special person.



Impact on bereavement

Not being present when someone dies, and not being able to be at a funeral can have a big impact on grief and bereavement. Grief is a long and painful journey, and you may need additional support.

Journey through grief

Can be found: www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/after-funeral/journey-through-grief

The funeral itself marks a particular moment as life changes after the death of someone you knew and love. As time goes on after the funeral, the experience of grief continues. Read on for some help and guidance about what grief might be like.

Journey through Grief

Going through grief is sometimes described as a journey. Like a journey, it is a process and so involves changes over time. But, unlike most journeys, it doesn't really have a clear end point. And even its starting point can sometimes be vague.

Each grief journey is unique, affected by many things, including: the circumstances of the death, the relationships of the people involved and the personality and past experiences of the person who has been bereaved.

The process of grief takes longer for some people than for others.

The grief journey may be longer if the death:

- occurred without warning
- involved a child
- was particularly horrifying or
- is not certain or has no clear focus e.g. if a person has gone missing.

Starting the journey

A sudden, unexpected death means that the start of the grief journey is clear. But, when death follows a long illness, the grieving process may begin gradually, before the person has died.

At the time of a bereavement, people often say they feel numb. They may 'feel in limbo' during the time between the death and the funeral. Ordinary life is put 'on hold' and they feel as if they are just 'going through the motions' of life.

Once friends and relatives have gone home after the funeral, bereaved people can feel especially lonely. Life seems very empty and they often wonder whether they will ever get to feel any better.

Gradually, they start doing ordinary things again, such as returning to work, tackling jobs in the home and dealing with paperwork. But life does not 'return to normal'. 'Normal' has changed forever.

Moving on through the journey

Most bereaved people go through a number of different emotions. But they do not go through them in neat stages. They may move back and forth between a range of feelings.

Grief is tiring and can feel like being frightened or involve feelings of shame or guilt or of irritability or downright anger.

Grief is natural and many people go through the grief journey with just the support of family and friends. Others value the support of trained counsellors or listeners.

There are many organisations which can help with grief, these are just a few:

- Cruse
- Care for the Family
- NHS
- Bereavement UK
- Child Bereavement Charity
- Child Death Helpline – there to listen to and support anyone affected by the death of a child.
- Grief Encounter – which supports children who have lost someone they love
- SANDS – Still Birth & Neonatal Death charity
- Winston's Wish – a charity for bereaved children
- Some churches have counsellors who specialise in supporting people after a bereavement. Churches can also point people towards other local bereavement services.

The journey's end

As time goes on, bereaved people find they can speak of the person who died without tears or deep emotion. They notice their interest in hobbies returning and can look outwards to the world and its possibilities.

Eventually, they can laugh and love and find reasons to live again.



Afterglow

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.
I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,
of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun
of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

by Helen Lowrie Marshall

Praying at Home

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/prayers>

We can pray in many different ways – in silence, in our own words or by lighting a candle. But sometimes we need help to pull our thoughts together, especially in these difficult and uncertain times. This page has a selection of prayers which you may find helpful, whether you are planning a funeral, going to a funeral, unable to attend a funeral, or beginning the journey of grief.

Prayer for when you can't go to a funeral

Dear God,
thank you for x, for all that they meant to me and to others.
I so wanted to say goodbye, to be alongside my friends and family.
Help me to know you are there,
holding all my hopes,
holding all those I Love, especially x,
and holding me this day.
Be close with your peace and hope.
Amen.

Loving God,
life is so strange just now – I don't know what to do.
Comfort me with your presence,
be with all who grieve
and give us strength and courage to face this and all the days ahead.
Amen.

God of love,
surround all those I love,
especially those I can no longer meet.
Be light in my darkness,
be hope in my fear,
be love in every moment,
and give me grace to face each
day ahead.
Amen.



The Lord's Prayer in contemporary language

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer in traditional language

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayers in the days when waiting for a funeral

God of love,
surround all those I love, especially xx
whom I can no longer see.
Be light in my darkness,
be hope in my fear,
be love in every moment,
and give me grace to face each day ahead. Amen

Loving God,
the shadow of death has fallen over me
because someone I love has died.
Be with me through this time,
comfort me with your presence,
and let me see the light of hope,
for you promise eternal life
through Jesus Christ your son,
who died and rose again. Amen.

For a grieving friend

Dear Lord,
as Jesus' followers asked him to help their friends,
so I ask you today to help my friends
struggling in the darkness of grief.
May they know moments of peace in their pain,
moments of joy in their memories,
and moments of hope in your love. Amen.

Knowing what to do

Dear God,
shall I bake a cake or take a casserole,
drop by with a card or flowers?
Give me wisdom as I visit my friend,
help me to listen well,
to share good memories
and offer the right words of hope.
In Jesus name I pray. Amen



Going to a friend's funeral

Lord of all love,
be with me today in the stillness
and comfort me as I remember my friend.
Be with me as I look back,
remembering all whom I mourn,
and be with me as I look forward
to the journey that lies ahead.
Give me the strength to talk of hope
and the courage to show love.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

For those unable to be present at a funeral

Some sentences may be read from scripture

'I am the resurrection and the life,' says the Lord. 'Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'

John 11.25,26

We brought nothing into the world, and we take nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

1 Timothy 6.7; Job 1.21b

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is his faithfulness.

Lamentations 3.22,23

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5.4

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3.16

The Gathering

We meet in the name of Jesus Christ,
who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father.

We join with those in (*place*)

in remembering before God *N*;

to give thanks for *his/her* life;

to commend *him/her* to God our merciful redeemer and judge;

to commit *his/her* body to be *buried/cremated*,

and to comfort one another in our grief.

God of all consolation,

your Son Jesus Christ was moved to tears

at the grave of Lazarus his friend.

Look with compassion on your children in their loss;

give to troubled hearts the light of hope

and strengthen in us the gift of faith,

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Almighty God,
you judge us with infinite mercy and justice
and love everything you have made.
In your mercy
turn the darkness of death into the dawn of new life,
and the sorrow of parting into the joy of heaven;
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Those present may be encouraged to share briefly their memories of the one who has died.

Reading

An appropriate reading from the selection here is read.

Isaiah 61.1-3 *To comfort all who mourn*
John 14.1-6 *In my Father's house are many rooms*
John 20.1-11 *The Resurrection of Christ*
Romans 8.31-end *Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ*
Romans 14.7-12 *Christ the Lord of the living and the dead*
1 Corinthians 13.1-end—*Description of love*
1 Corinthians 15.1-26,35-38,42-44a,53-end *The resurrection of the dead*
1 Corinthians 15.20-end *The resurrection of the dead*
1 John 3.1-3 *We shall be like him*
Revelation 21.1-7 *Behold I make all things new*

Prayers

God of mercy, Lord of life,
you have made us in your image
to reflect your truth and light:
we give you thanks for *N*,
for the grace and mercy *he/she*
received from you,
for all that was good in *his/her* life,
for the memories we treasure today.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer

Your mighty power brings joy out of grief
and life out of death.
Look in mercy on [... *and*] all who mourn.
Give them patient faith in times of darkness.
Strengthen them with the knowledge of your love.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer



God our Father,
we thank you that you have made each of us in your own image,
and given us gifts and talents with which to serve you.
We thank you for *N*,
the years we shared with *him/her*,
the good we saw in *him/her*,
the love we received from *him/her*.
Now give us strength and courage
to leave *him/her* in your care,
confident in your promise of eternal life.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer

Support us, O Lord,
all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over
and our work is done.
Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last.

Let us conclude our prayers
as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Commendation and Farewell

We commend *N* to the mercy of God,
our maker and redeemer.

Silence is kept.

God our creator and redeemer,
by your power Christ conquered death
and entered into glory.
Confident of his victory
and claiming his promises,
with those in (*place*) we entrust *N* to your mercy
in the name of Jesus our Lord,
who died and is alive
and reigns with you,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Conclusion

The Lord God almighty is our Father:
he loves us and tenderly cares for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:
he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end.

The Lord, the Holy Spirit is among us:
he will lead us in God's holy way.

To God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory today and for ever. Amen.

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A simple reflection at home on the day of a funeral you can't attend

It's so difficult when you can't go to a funeral, whether for family, friend or neighbour. Many are facing this in the current crisis, so this short reflection has been specially written by a vicar for you to do at home, alone or with those who share your home. You might ask others to take part at the same time from their home.

When this time of social distancing is over, there may well be an opportunity to meet together at a special time of remembering and thankfulness. Your memories now can be part of that experience when the time comes.



Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8.38-39

Before you find a place to sit quietly, you might like to find a photograph of the person who has died, write down some special memories, or play a special piece of music that connects you with the person you are remembering today. Think about those who are at the funeral and pray for them.

[Where it says 'N' in a prayer, just say the name of your person].

You might like to light a candle. Then pray:

Be with us, loving God.

Hear our prayers and comfort us in our loss, and help us to trust in your Son Jesus, whom you raised from the dead.

Strengthen our faith and renew our hope that N and all those we love will share in his resurrection.

Amen.

Read Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.

- 3 He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall
follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
for ever.



Reflect on your memories.

- What stands out in your memory about N?
- What will you always remember about them?
- What things did you learn through their life and death, including about God?

Now give thanks to God for their life and ask for strength for yourself and those who grieve.

Dear God,
thank you for N,
and for all that *he/she* meant to me and to others.
I so wanted to say goodbye.
Help me to know you are there,
holding all my hopes,
holding all those I love, especially N,
and holding me this day too.
Be close to us all this day with your peace and hope.
Amen.

Heavenly Father,
you have not made us for darkness and death,
but for life with you for ever.
Without you we have nothing to hope for;
with you we have nothing to fear.
Speak to us now your words of eternal life.
Lift us to the light and peace of your presence,
and set the glory of your love before us today:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Now say the Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

(or)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Now pray this prayer, which is used at the end of the funeral service to say goodbye.

God our creator and redeemer,
by your power Christ conquered death
and entered into glory.
Confident of his victory
and claiming his promises,
we entrust N to your mercy
in the name of Jesus our Lord,
who died and is alive
and reigns with you,
now and for ever.
Amen.

To finish you might like to light a candle online at www.churchofengland.org/funeral-candle

Help and support are available for you during this time, and in the future.

Go to www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals for details of how to contact your local church, find help in your bereavement and remembering.

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Relevant Prayers / Scripture

suggested by the Church of England website

A prayer about the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

For those in isolation

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For those who are worried/social cohesion

Loving Jesus, you are compassionate to those in need
and heal the sick in body and mind.
Look kindly on those who are fearful at this time.
Help us all to put away all thoughts and actions
that separate us from you and from one another.
Give us grace to live our lives
confident in your promise that you are with us always.
Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to care for the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake. Amen.

For those who are ill

Merciful God,
we entrust to your unfailing and tender care,
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold us safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

From one who is ill or isolated

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing can separate me
from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayers for when you can't get to church

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.
Hear my prayers for others and for myself,
and keep me in your care.
Amen.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

From St Patrick's Breastplate

I am giving you worship with all my life,
I am giving you obedience with all my power,
I am giving you praise with all my strength,
I am giving you honour with all my speech.
I am giving you love with all my heart,
I am giving you affection with all my sense,
I am giving you my being with all my mind,
I am giving you my soul, O most high and holy God.
Praise to the Father,
Praise to the Son,
Praise to the Spirit,
The Three in One.

*adapted from Alexander Carmichael,
Carmina Gadelica (1900)*

Lord Jesus Christ,
son of the living God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.

The 'Jesus Prayer'

After a time of prayer:

Be with us, Lord, in all our prayers,
and direct our way toward the attainment of salvation,
that among the changes and chances of this mortal life,
we may always be defended by your gracious help,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Endings for Intercession

O gracious and holy Father,
give us wisdom to perceive you,
diligence to seek you,
patience to wait for you,
eyes to behold you,
a heart to meditate upon you,
and a life to proclaim you,
through the power of the spirit
of Jesus Christ our Lord.

St Benedict

Soul of Christ, sanctify me,
body of Christ, save me,
blood of Christ, inebriate me,
water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me:
hide me within your wounds
and never let me be separated from you.
From the wicked enemy defend me,
in the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you,
so that with your saints I may praise you
for ever and ever.

Anima Christi



Short passages of Scripture for reading and contemplation

Psalm 27 *The Lord is my light and my salvation*

Psalm 46 *Be still, and know that I am God.*

Psalm 91 *He shall cover you with his wings*

Psalm 139 *O Lord, you have searched me out and known me*

Isaiah 43 (esp vv.1-7) *Do not fear, for I am with you*

John 14 *Do not let your hearts be troubled*

A child's prayer for when a friend is ill

Dear God, (*name of friend*) is ill.
They are not allowed to go to school or come over to play.
I'm sad because I miss them.
They must be feeling miserable and lonely as well.
Please be close to them.
Please be with the people who are looking after them.
Please help them to get better and to know that you love them.
Amen.

A prayer for the world

God of love and hope,
you made the world and care for all creation.
But the world feels strange right now.
The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.
Many people are anxious because of it.
Many people are anxious that they might get ill.
Many people are anxious about their family and friends.
Be with them in their worries and help them to find some peace.
We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists who are working to
discover the right medicines to give hope to those who are ill.
Thank you that even in these strange and worrying times, you are
with us.
Help us to look for the signs of your goodness and love towards us.
Amen.

A prayer at bedtime

Before the ending of the day,
Creator of the World, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep
your watch around us while we sleep.
Tonight we pray especially for *(names family or friends who are
affected by Coronavirus)* and the people of *(country or place which is
affected by Coronavirus)*.
Give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them.
Amen.

A prayer remembering God is with us

Lord God, you are always with me.
You are with me in the day and in the night.
You are with me when I'm happy and when I'm sad.
You are with me when I'm healthy and when I am ill.
You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am anxious.
Today I am feeling *(name how you are feeling)* because *(reasons you
are feeling this way)*.
Help me to remember that you love me and are with me in everything
today. Amen.



Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest
and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most,
You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child,
I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."