

FUNERAL

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 When a member of The Church of Norway dies, contact should be established between the parish priest and relatives of the deceased as soon as possible.
The funeral shall normally take place within 8 days of death.
- 2 The Order of Funeral according to the rite of the church, is an act of worship. All aspects of the service, e. g. decorations, symbols and wreath laying must take this into account. Restraint should be exercised in the use of wreaths, flowers etc.
The priest should ensure that the funeral directors and others connected with the funeral, carry out their duties so that the funeral is conducted in a respectful and dignified way in accordance with church order.
- 3 Hymns and songs must be approved beforehand by the officiant. The same applies to honours and other things additional to the Order of Funeral.
All music must be approved beforehand by the organist.
- 4 At the laying of wreaths, speeches must only be made if the relatives of the deceased responsible for the funeral have given approval.
- 5 According to conditions and local customs, the priest shall officiate in the church/chapel and at the grave, or at the home and at the grave, or only at the grave.
The funeral service may also take place in the church when cremation follows.
When the priest officiates only at the home and at the grave, or only at the grave, the Service of Funeral in a church or crematorium may be used with adaptations. The same applies to a funeral where there is no congregation. The priest can not be involved in the committal alone. The Order of Funeral in a church or a crematorium can be used with necessary modifications for a memorial service in a church or chapel when the coffin is not present.
- 6 When parents who wished that their child should be baptized lose their child before baptism, the priest should remind them of comforting words, such as ... Matthew 18, 14 et al.
- 7 At the funeral of an infant, the same regulations apply as at a child's funeral, see page 138 of the Altar book volume 2. The same applies when parents want a funeral for a stillborn child. It is possible to make suitable adaptations in the liturgy but the Lord's Prayer must always be included.
- 8 When in contact with parents of a dead infant or a stillborn child, it may be helpful to encourage the parents to give the dead child a name.
- 9 The committal takes place at the grave. However the priest may make exceptions if circumstances or important personal reasons make this necessary. The committal may then take place in the church/chapel.

If there is a reasonable doubt that committal has taken place, for example when cremation has happened abroad, the committal may take place when the urn is interred.

10 When the priest is unable to officiate at the funeral service, a lay christian may officiate with the approval of the bishop.

11 The largest bell should be tolled approximately 5 minutes before being rung before the service.

It may be tolled during the procession to the grave, and at the lowering of the coffin. At the end of the ceremony it may be tolled 3 x 3.

The bell may ring as the procession leaves the grave.

FUNERAL in a church or crematorium chapel

1 Ringing of the bells

When the bells have been rung, the priest takes his place in the chancel.

2 Prelude

Appropriate choir or solo music may be performed with or instead of the prelude.

3 Hymn

4 Greeting and prayer

P from the lectern or elsewhere in the chancel

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are gathered here by the coffin of ...

Here may be added a few words about the deceased and/or a brief eulogy.

If the funeral service is for more than one person, appropriate adaptations should be made.

[If the coffin is not in the church during the ceremony, the following or similar words may be used:]

[P We are gathered here to remember ...]

Limited wreath laying may take place here.

Thereafter:

P God gives consolation to all who turn to him.

Therefore let this moment be hallowed by the Word of God and prayer.

Let us pray.

The priest says one of the following prayers:

Either A

Holy God, heavenly Father, you rule over life and death. As we now part from one whom we love, strengthen our faith so that even at the grave we may place our hope in you.

Lord Jesus Christ, faithful Saviour, you went through death and the grave for us, stay with us in our last hour. You are the resurrection and the life: wake us to life everlasting. Saviour and Lord of your faithful people, grant that we may gather with you and all your children in your Father's house.

Holy Spirit, greatest comforter in life and death, fill the hearts of all who mourn with your divine consolation. Deliver us from spiritual death, draw everyone to you, and grant that we may find our treasure in heaven.

Or B

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

Thou turnest man back to the dust,
and sayest, "Turn back, O children of men!"
For a thousand years in thy sight
are but as yesterday when it is past
or as a watch in the night.

So teach us to number our days
that we may get a heart of wisdom.
Psalm 90, 1-4. 12

Or C

Out of the depths I cry to thee, O Lord!
Lord hear my voice!
Let thy ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!

If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord,
who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with thee,
that thou mayest be feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope.
Psalm 130, 1-5

Or D

Nevertheless I am continually with thee,
thou dost hold my right hand.
Thou dost guide me with thy counsel,
and afterward thou wilt receive me to glory.

Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is nothing upon earth

that I desire besides thee.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my
heart and my portion for ever.
Psalm 73, 23-26

5 Scripture reading

The priest reads one reading from each of the following four textgroups:

Textgroup 1

P Let us hear the testimony of the Word of God about this transitory life, about death and judgement.

Either A
As a father pities his children,
so the Lord pities those who fear him.
For he knows our frame,
he remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass,
he flourishes like a flower of the field,
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from
everlasting to everlasting.
Psalm 103, 13-17

Or B
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand for ever.
Isaiah 40, 6-8

Textgroup 2

Either A
Our Lord Jesus Christ says:
Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself, and has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man.
John 5, 24-27

Or B

The Lord's apostle says:

None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord, so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God, for it is written,

"As I live, says the Lord,
every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God".

So each of us shall give account of himself to God.

Rom 14, 7-9. 10-12

Textgroup 3

P Let us hear how Jesus Christ exhorts us to be prepared, so that we may meet him with joy.

Either A

Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.

Watch therefore - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning - lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch.

Mark 13, 33-37

Or B

Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast, so that they may open to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those servants!

But know this, that if the householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour.

Luke 12, 35-40

Textgroup 4

P Finally, let us hear the word about the resurrection and the life everlasting through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Either A

The Lord says:

All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6, 37-40

This is the word of the Lord.

Or B

The Lord's apostle says:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away the every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."

Rev. 21, 1-4

This is the word of the Lord.

[At the funeral of a child, this is the preferred version of paragraph 5:]

[P Let us hear how Jesus opens the Kingdom of God to children.]

[The following three texts are read consecutively:]

[And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.]

[Mark 10, 13-16]

[Jesus says:]

[I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.]

[John 10, 14. 28-29]

[The Lord's apostle says:]

[Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away the every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."]

[Rev 21, 1-4]

[This is the word of the Lord.]

[At the funeral of a baby or a stillborn child, texts other than the above may be chosen; e. g. Psalm 39, 5-8 or Psalm 139, 1-6. 13-18 or texts that express the suffering, the pain and the incomprehensible.]

[The rest of the service to be as for adults.]

Here may follow

6 Hymn

7 Short address based on one of the scripture readings or another suitable text - from the pulpit if necessary.

The address may be omitted only if there is no eulogy.

8 Prayer

P Eternal God, heavenly Father, through your Son Jesus Christ you have given us the victory over death. Lead us by your Holy Spirit, that we may never be parted from you, but may live our life through faith in your Son and come to eternal life in your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This prayer may be omitted and replaced by free prayer.

P Let us pray the Lord's prayer together.

Either A

A 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.

Or B

A 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 C

A 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.

Paras 9-11 are omitted when the casting of earth immediately follows - at the crematorium or in exceptional cases when the casting of earth takes place in church or chapel, see General instructions, para 9 page 130 in the Altar Book volume II.

9 Hymn

In addition to this hymn, the Nunc Dimittis may be sung (Luke 2, 29-32, see Norwegian Hymn Book 909 - 910) or as an antiphon "Into your hands" (see Norwegian Hymn Book 936) or suitable music for choir or solo.

10 Postlude

The coffin is carried out during the postlude.

THE CASTING OF EARTH (The Committal)

A At the grave

Before part 11 Hymn, the coffin is placed on the lowering equipment or on wooden bearers over the open grave and remains there until part 14 takes place.

Where it is the custom, the coffin may be lowered into the grave at once and before the hymn (part 11) is sung.

11 Hymn

12 The casting of earth (The Committal)

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The priest casts earth three times on the coffin saying:
First: From earth you have come.

Second: To earth you shall return.
Third: From earth you shall rise again.

Thereafter he continues immediately:

Either A

P I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.
John 11, 25-26

Or B

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
1 Pet 1, 3

[After the scripture reading, the Lord's prayer follows if it has not already been used.]

[P Let us pray the Lord's prayer.]

[Either A]

[A 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.]

[Or B]

[A 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 C]

[A 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.]

13 The Blessing

Either A
P facing the mourners
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. +

Or B
P facing the mourners
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace. +
Amen.

14 Lowering of the coffin

Usually the coffin is lowered completely.

15 Hymn

B At the crematorium

The funeral service above (parts 1-8) ends with the casting of earth (parts 12-16).

In exceptional circumstances the same service may be used in church or chapel, see General instructions para 9, page 130.

12 Casting of earth (The committal)

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The priest casts earth three times on the coffin saying:

First: From earth you have come.
Second: To earth you shall return.
Third: From earth you shall rise again.

Thereafter he continues immediately:

Either A

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

John 11, 25-26

Or B

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Pet 1, 3

After the scripture reading follows the Lord's prayer if it has not already been used.

[P Let us pray the Lord's prayer.]

[Either A]

[A 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.]

[Or B]

[A 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 C]

[A 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.]

13 The Blessing

Either A

P facing the mourners
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. +

Or B

P facing the mourners
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace. +
Amen.

14 Lowering of the coffin

Usually the coffin is lowered completely.

15 Hymn

16 Postlude

Where lowering of the coffin is not possible, the coffin should be carried out during the postlude.