



# *Funeral Planning Handbook*

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# Northside Baptist Church Funeral Planning Handbook

“Even 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.” (Psalm 23:4)

Northside Baptist Church wants to minister to those who have lost a loved one. This handbook explains the process involved in planning and coordinating a funeral service at the church. The worksheet at the end of the handbook will guide your preparations as you review it with the pastor who is officiating the service.

Death is an inevitable part of life in a fallen world. It's a strong indication that something is not right in the world, and it separates people from those they love. In Psalm 89:48, David tells us to prepare ourselves, because we will all face death someday.

Funerals provide an opportunity to celebrate the life of the one who has passed away and to comfort those who are left behind. For the Christian believer, funerals offer a sense of hope in a time of intense grief. Hebrews 2:1-15 explains that we don't have to fear death because Jesus Christ defeated it through His resurrection on the third day.

A funeral service is different than a memorial service. The body of the deceased is present at funeral service but is absent from a memorial service. Both types of services provide an opportunity to mark the passing of a loved one.

## Availability and Scheduling

Northside Baptist Church is only available for the funerals of its members, but non-member funerals may be requested and considered at the discretion of the Senior Pastor.

A pastor or minister from another Baptist church or evangelical Christian denomination may be allowed to officiate a funeral service at Northside Baptist at the discretion of Northside's Senior Pastor.

The planning and coordination for most funeral services takes at least a week. Loved ones should have that timeframe in mind as they make their request.

## The Planning Process

1. Review the Funeral Handbook
2. Secure the Services of a Funeral Director
3. Notify the Church Office About the Death of Your Loved One
4. Meet with a Pastor from the Church to Coordinate Arrangements
5. Confirm Arrangements with the Church and the Funeral Home

## Arrangement Options

- **Pre-service Visitation:** This is a time to gather with family and friends to find encouragement and honor the deceased. Most visitations or “viewings” are held for an hour or two before the funeral service, or sometimes even the evening before. Family members should plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of the public visitation for their own private family visitation.
- **Funeral Service:** The purpose for this gathering is to worship the Lord and to celebrate the life of the deceased. Funeral services usually include a time for prayer, Scripture reading, music, eulogies or “remembrances,” and a devotion. Most services last between 30 minutes and an hour.
- **Graveside Service:** This is an intimate moment where close family and friends commit the body of the deceased to the ground and say their final “goodbyes.” This brief time includes Scripture reading and prayer. It may also include military or other special honors.
- **Family Reception:** This is an extended time for the family of the deceased to find togetherness and support. Considerations for this optional gathering are listed below.

## Considerations for a Family Reception

The Church has a Bereavement Team that is ready to serve and help your family in your time of need. This team can provide snacks or a meal for up to two hours following a graveside service and a funeral service held at Northside Baptist Church.

You can choose from one of four menu options:

1. Fried chicken, potato salad or coleslaw, baked beans, desserts, and drinks (water, tea, lemonade, and coffee)
2. Ham, potatoes/sweet potatoes, green beans, breads, desserts, and drinks (water, tea, lemonade, and coffee)
3. Lasagna, salad, bread, desserts and drinks (water, tea, lemonade, and coffee)
4. Finger foods (i.e. sliced meats, cheeses, crackers, nuts) and drinks (water, tea, lemonade, and coffee)

If you choose to utilize an outside caterer, our team is available to help set up and keep food hot or cold as needed.

Church Community Groups often pitch in to help with Family Receptions. This collaboration is welcomed by our Bereavement Team.

The Bereavement Team will work to provide an inviting place for you to gather. Please use the Funeral Planning Worksheet at the end of this document to communicate any special needs or decorating requests ahead of time.

## Other Considerations

- The church staff members will do their best to make the church facility available as needed to the funeral home, florists, caterers, etc. Please communicate any special timing needs as soon as possible.
- The church office can provide help with a simple funeral program if arrangements can't be made with the funeral home.
- The church's video recording and video streaming system can only be used by trained technicians. Special arrangements must be made to secure the necessary personnel to use those systems.
- The Church offers a GriefShare Ministry to support those who've lost a loved one. Please contact the church office for information about meeting times and locations.

## Honorariums and Donations

Please note that these are only suggested amounts. The Church is regularly asked what is appropriate to give to those who assist with funeral services. Honorariums should be paid directly to the individuals who are providing the service and donations for a Family Reception can be paid to the Church to cover the cost of food.

### Suggested Honorariums

Officiating Pastor: \$100 - \$300

Musician: \$75 - \$200

Sound Technician: \$50 - \$100

Facility Coordinator: \$50 - \$100 (especially for services outside of regular operating hours)

### Suggested Donations for a Family Reception

Options 1, 2, or 3: \$100 - \$200

Option 4: \$50

Option E: no cost – pay caterer directly

## Funeral Planning Worksheet

The officiating pastor will work with you to complete this worksheet and make the necessary arrangements.

### Schedule

Pre-Service Visitation (Day and Time): \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral Service (Day and Time): \_\_\_\_\_

Graveside Service (Day and Time): \_\_\_\_\_

Family Reception (Day and Time): \_\_\_\_\_

### Arrangements

#### Pre-Service Visitation

Location? (Auditorium or Fireside Room): \_\_\_\_\_

Private Family Visitation? (Yes or No, allow 30 minutes): \_\_\_\_\_

Music? (Audio Only or Video Slideshow): \_\_\_\_\_

Addition Displays? (Tables, Podiums, Easels): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Service

Type? (Funeral or Memorial): \_\_\_\_\_

Location? (Auditorium or Fireside Room): \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated Attendance? (Under 50, 50 – 100, 100 – 200, 200 +): \_\_\_\_\_

Passages of Scripture? (Favorites of the Deceased, Special Requests):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Music? (Live or Recorded, Listening or Singing):

Song #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Song #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Song #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Song #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Musicians? (Name and Contact): \_\_\_\_\_

Eulogies? (Name and Contact): \_\_\_\_\_

Obituary Reading? (Officiating Pastor, Someone Else): \_\_\_\_\_

Video Streaming? (Yes or No, Requires Technician): \_\_\_\_\_

Other? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Graveside Service

Location? \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests? \_\_\_\_\_

Special Honors? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Family Reception

Number Attending? \_\_\_\_\_

Community Group Help? (Yes or No): \_\_\_\_\_

Menu Option?

(Fried Chicken, Ham, Lasagna, Finger Foods, or Caterer): \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs or Decorating Requests? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Notes: \_\_\_\_\_