

Appendix A

Covenant of Dedication

A Ceremony for Infant Dedication

Life is a stewardship. It is not your own; you have been bought with a price—the precious blood of God’s own Son. Life is, therefore, God’s gift to you. It is to be returned to Him fulfilled and glorifying to Him. The opportunities and experiences in life are experiences in stewardship and worship. We are charged to render each experience to God.

Marriage is a stewardship in which one man and one woman are joined by God to be one flesh. Marriage is returned to God as an act of divine worship when two people live their lives in such a way that they exemplify the relationship between Christ and the church.

Parenthood is a stewardship. This child which we will dedicate today is not your own. He/she belongs to God. God gave him/her life and that life will be returned to God.

You are the keepers of this treasure.

You are the developers of this treasure.

You are answerable to God for the manner in which you keep and develop this treasure.

God has given you a privilege. You have the opportunity to return to God a treasure developed to its full potential spiritually and socially.

This stewardship requires certain commitments on your part. You are not prepared to dedicate this child unless you are yourself dedicated to Christ as your Savior and Lord. You are not prepared to believe for this child unless you believe for yourself and for your salvation. Though your faith will be no substitute for this child’s personal faith, it is essential to your act of dedication and your stewardship. I will ask you in Christ’s name to affirm or to reaffirm your personal faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.

To the father: Do you now affirm that Jesus Christ is your personal Savior and Lord? (Response: I do.)

To the mother: Do you now affirm that Jesus Christ is your personal Savior and Lord? (Response: I do.)

Please respond to the following pledges of dedication with the words, “We dedicate ourselves.”

To live a life of personal faith in Jesus Christ
We dedicate ourselves

To exemplify in the home the grace of God
We dedicate ourselves

To live by the love of God demonstrated in thought, word and deed
We dedicate ourselves

To raise this child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord
We dedicate ourselves

To instill in this child a love for the Word of God and faithfulness in the worship of God
We dedicate ourselves

Will the congregation please stand and share in this act of dedication? With the birth and dedication of this child, this congregation has also inherited a stewardship.

These parents standing alone are not sufficient to the vows that they have just taken. These vows and the goal of personal salvation can be fully realized in a community of faith.

You as the congregation of God are charged by God to provide a nurturing and supporting community of spiritual oversight and nurture for this child and his/her parents.

Please respond in unison to the following pledges with the words, "We dedicate ourselves."

To provide for these parents and this child a household of faith—the temple of the Holy Spirit
We dedicate ourselves

To provide for these parents and this child a sanctuary of prayer and love
We dedicate ourselves

To pray for these parents in the fulfillment of the vows which they have taken before God
We dedicate ourselves

To pray for this child that he/she come to an experience of saving faith early in life
We dedicate ourselves

To follow this child with our prayers and love throughout his/her life
We dedicate ourselves

(At this time, the minister should receive the child from the parents and offer the prayer of dedication).

Used with permission by the author, R. Hollis Gause.

Appendix B

Intervention Models During Times of Crises

Behavioral Model²⁵

This model is based on Carl Slaikeu's proposal of five steps for first psychological help. These steps are: establish contact, assess the problem, look for possible solutions, initiate concrete actions, and follow-up.

Establish contact. The objective is to reduce affliction and control initial reactions.

What to do:	What NOT to do:
Listen carefully	Judge or take sides
Explore feelings and actions	Ignore feelings and actions
Communicate acceptance	Rely on "own history"

Assess the problem. The objective is to establish immediate and later needs.

What to do:	What NOT to do:
Ask specifically	Ask yes/no questions
Ask the person for concrete facts	Allow abstract concepts to continue
Evaluate the possibility of negative outcomes	Ignore dangerous signs

Find solutions. The objective is to find possible solutions.

What to do:	What NOT to do:
Stimulate creativity	Allow a reductionist vision
Deal with obstacles	Leave obstacles unexplored
Establish priorities	Tolerate mixed needs

Initiate concrete actions. The objective is to motivate the person to take action.

What to do:	What NOT to do:
Take one step at a time	Try to resolve all things at the same time
Identify short-term goals	Make long-term mandatory decisions
Confront	Abstain from responsibilities
Be direct, if necessary	

Follow-up. The objective is to evaluate if the purpose to help has been fulfilled.

What to do:	What NOT to do:
Agree on a new covenant	Leave out details
Evaluate intervention stages	Assume the person will continue with the agreed action on his/her own.
Evaluate progress	Have a third party doing the evaluation

Family Model²⁶

The Family Model presented by Frank Pittman consists of seven steps. Pittman insists that every person plays a role in significant relations, which demands for the help to be directed towards the entire family group rather than the individual.

Take care of the emergency. Emergency and crisis are not the same thing. There is a willingness to attend to, but not to take care of, the whole thing. The fresher the situation, the better it is to make changes. It can be directive, even temporarily, to assume administrative functions in the family.

Commit the family. Families “choose” one of their members to feel for the entire family or to change without the family changing. Involve everyone in the process of being helped, especially those who have the power to penalize, hinder, or facilitate the change and/or emotional resources and materials.

Define the crisis. Every family has moments of specific tensions, depending on their values, expectations, and resources. If there are external tensions, the family unites, and the community helps to see that it’s resolved. If the tension is hidden and no one is aware of it, then the needed help is not provided, and the crisis is not resolved. This leaves a dysfunctional balance and the potential for a new crisis to rise.

General orientation. As soon as the crisis has been defined, we should try to calm all moods, assign tasks that will provide support, process pain, and reflect on the situation while exploring possible options.

Specific orientation. Summarize what has been heard; try not to pass judgment on anyone. Give simple and direct assessment. Put emphasis on perpetuating the family.

Negotiate resistance. In general, people who are experiencing a structural crisis (a recurrent result of the internal dynamics and exacerbation in the family), present resistance to an intervention. The negotiation process of inflexibilities can be long and difficult for the pastor/counselor. A detour may be possible.

Finish. With or without changes, crises end within a few weeks (its effects may or may not continue). The facilitator, along with the family, defines when his/her service has concluded. Leave the doors opened in case you are needed again.

Appendix C

The Funeral Sermon

Preaching can be a powerful tool in providing spiritual care at the time of death and grief. A funeral sermon is given with the purpose of comforting those who have lost a loved one. This type of sermon can't deny the reality of suffering. On the contrary, the sermon needs to acknowledge and accept it; but also proclaim hope in resurrection.²⁷

Characteristics of a Funeral Sermon

Theology

A sermon given at a funeral service should be founded in the hope the gospel of Jesus Christ brings.

Unique. Every person that passes away was a unique individual. Therefore, every funeral sermon should be uniquely created to honor the person who has died. For that reason, a standard, repetitive, or recycled sermon is not appropriate.

Brevity. For the sake of a grieving family, keep the funeral sermon brief.

Clarity. Quoting Warren Wiersbe, Scott Gibson writes, "As people walk through their valley (of death), they can't manage the abstractions in systematic theology, but can see the Biblical images that reveal a savior who cares for them and strengthens them."²⁸ The funeral sermon should be a simple declaration of hope and comfort that is found in Jesus Christ.

Classification of funeral sermons²⁹

The biographical sermon is based on life experiences the deceased had. It is an important presentation of that life to the community.

The circumstantial sermon is given when the deceased passed away during unusual circumstances—like a murder, suicide, or accident.

The doctrinal sermon focuses its attention, not on the individual or special circumstances, but on the death experience and the problems it poses in our minds.

The memorial sermon. Commemorative services can be days, weeks, or even months after death. For various reasons, family members and friends do not gather immediately after death to honor the deceased. Instead they service is planned at a later time.

What should be done when preaching a funeral sermon.

Establish and keep visual contact with those mourning and with the congregation.

Be warm, compassionate, and friendly.

Pay attention to body language and the tone of voice.

Repeat the main sermon idea at least three times.

Speak as if engaged in a conversation.

Articulate and project your voice.

Know the name of the deceased and the names of his/her immediate family.

Be sympathetic.

If possible, preach without notes.

Be brief.

Sample Sermon for a Christian Funeral³⁰

Title: COMFORTING WORDS

Bible Text: John 14:1–6

Introduction

Sample Sermon for a Christian Funeral³⁰

Title: COMFORTING WORDS

Bible Text: John 14:1–6

- Introduction

The physical separation of a loved one caused by death is always painful. When Jesus' crucifixion and death was near, He prepared his disciples with these words to help them with the imminent transition:

- A word of peace "Do not let your hearts be troubled" The peace of God. (So much needed during these times!)
 - Peace for the believers, Philippians 4:7.
 - Peace during trials. Jesus didn't promise an undisturbed life, exempted from struggles and conflicts. Life brings diverse trials; however, in the middle of difficulties and uneasiness, there needs to be an invulnerable place for peace in the heart.
 - It's the peace that Jesus gives. Philosophy is a way to help us understand and stoically accept grief. But only Jesus can give peace to our spirits (John 14:27). The peace the world offers depends on circumstances (These are always uncertain and brief.) Divine peace is a work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts (The world cannot give and cannot take it away.) That's the reason why Jesus could say, "Do not let your hearts be troubled," because He has the power to give peace to a troubled heart.
- A word of faith "Believe also in me."
 - It's a personal faith. It's not the faith of my church or my family, but mine. It's a subjective experience that can't be delegated. No one can believe for me, neither can I believe for someone else.
 - It's to have faith in a Person. In the Messiah. (The disciples believed in God; therefore, they also believed in Jesus.) In a Friend. He trusted in them and kept a sincere, continuous, and spontaneous friendship with them. (John 15:14, 15) He rejoiced with them and cried with them. He accompanied Martha and Mary in their grief. (John 11:28–37). In the Son of God. He was able to say, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die" (John 11:25, 26). He died and rose again. He ascended into heaven and intercedes for us. That's why He's worthy of our trust. Let's put our faith in Him.
 - It's faith-efficient.
This marks the difference from those who don't believe. Belief in Christ allows believers to face adversity with courage.
It doesn't exclude sadness. Jesus was also sad (Matthew 26:38); it's something natural and human. But even when you are sad, you don't despair; instead, you are confident.
- A word of hope "I am going there to prepare a place for you."
 - Hope in heaven. There will be homes prepared for those who are ready. Paul was confident that when he left his body, he would "be with Christ, which is better by far" (Philippians 1:23).
 - Hope in eternity.

The dead will resurrect. When Christ comes again, He will bring with him those who died believing in him (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14).

In eternal life. Those who are still alive at that moment, will join them and be with Christ forever (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17). This is our surest hope, and it should be comforting (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

- Conclusion
 - Jesus came to make God known to us. Jesus told His disciples that He would be absent, that He would die and go back to His father in heaven. However, He made a way through Himself (John 14:6) for all who believe in Jesus. We too can have fellowship with God, experience peace, and know that we will have a life forever with Him in heaven ...

Contributed by Víctor Jesús Cabrera