



Small Group Ministry

Funeral Care Guideline for SG Leaders

Suggestions to Small Group Leaders on offering hope to those who have lost an immediate family member

Sadly, death is a part of our lives until we enter the eternal presence of Christ, and death is no more. Thankfully, whether we are the ones leaving this life or those left grieving, we experience the grace of a risen Savior. We grieve as those who have hope (1 Thes. 4:13-18)! Funerals are a time of great challenge, but can also be an incredible moment of thanksgiving for God's faithfulness and grace as the family comes together mourning the absence of one who has gone home to be with Jesus.

Often times, grieving family members are willing to make suggestions regarding how the small group can serve in their time of need. This can be helpful but also daunting depending on what is being asked of you. In order to serve you, the Small Group leader, this document has been prepared as a guideline to support your ministry in these situations. Always feel free to do more, but never feel a pastoral expectation to do more.

As people in your group experience these challenges, please be prepared as their small group leader to encourage them in these ways:

- Pray for them. In their grief, your prayers will encourage them more than anything else.
- Consider sending them a card to encourage them in their sorrow. Invite members of your small group to send them notes of encouragement.
- Extend grace through answering questions they have pertaining to God and their relationship with Him.
- Guide them to a staff member who would facilitate the funeral for them.
- Encourage them with your presence, i.e., "being there" with a listening ear provides a lot of support (also reference the booklet, "Did I Say The Right Thing" by Mitch Schultz).
- Connecting them to the Biblical Counseling ministry if, as time goes on, they seem caught in their grief, or if unanswered questions persist.

A request may be made to the small group leader for a meal to be prepared for the reception following the funeral. Typically, the family of the deceased provides any meal they would like to have. Providing and preparing this meal is not an expectation we have for our small groups to organize. Certainly a small group is free to provide some of the food for the reception. As part of the Body of Christ, you can offer any help your group would like to supply, *but it is not an expectation of your leadership for you*. There is no provision for reimbursement for this situation within the Church budget. If your group chooses to provide this, consider it an offering to the Lord. Please be careful of overextending yourself in planning and/or hosting a reception. Allow the immediate family to make these very personal arrangements. The small group will be there to minister to this family long after everyone else has gone home.

As questions arise, please contact Tyson Ziegler or David Michael, and allow us to walk with you through these challenges.