

## **Lessons From a Funeral**

by Heath Rogers

The obituary page of this newspaper has been unusually crowded lately. I recently spoke with Darlene Tise ([editor of newspaper](#)), and we remarked on the increased number of obituaries that have been appearing in the paper. I had a similar conversation at a flower shop just a week later. Indeed, we have had more than our fair share of funerals the past few weeks.

"Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart" (Ecclesiastes 7:2). This certainly seems like a strange statement. If given a choice, who would choose to go to a funeral over a festival? Funerals are sorrowful and painful, yet Solomon says they are to be preferred over the house of feasting. Why is it good for us to go to the house of mourning? What lessons does the Lord intend for us to learn from a funeral?

**We Learn of Our Own Mortality.** A funeral is where most people come face to face with death for the first time. Sooner or later, the realization sinks in – "This will happen to me some day." As Solomon said, this is the end of all men, and the living need to take it to heart.

"What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave?" (Ps. 89:48). Death is an unavoidable experience that is common to all of mankind. Regardless of our economical, educational, or social (etc.) status, every one of us will die. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

**We Learn the Value of Our Time.** Since a funeral is a vivid reminder of the fact that our lives will one day come to an end, a funeral reminds us of how valuable our time is. "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). A wise man will number his days, realizing that they will come to an end. In numbering our days, we need to learn to make our days count. We need to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). Jesus showed the importance of making the most of our time when He said, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). We should leave a funeral determined to make the most of the time that we have left.

**We Learn To Appreciate Others While We Have Them.** Jesus told His disciples, "For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always" (Matt. 26:11). How many times do we take our friends and loved ones for granted? A funeral reminds us that their lives will come to an end as well as ours. We should leave a funeral with a determination to do good for others and take advantage of every opportunity to teach them the gospel.

**We Learn the Importance of Preparing For Our Own Death.** Insurance companies make us aware of the financial consequences of our own death. It is irresponsible for a man to know that he will die, but leave it up to his loved ones to plan and pay for his burial after he is gone. How much more irresponsible is it for us to fail to make the *spiritual* preparations for our death? The greatest gift we can leave our loved ones at our funeral is the peace and comfort of knowing that all is well with our soul. If I obey the gospel and live a faithful life, my loved ones can find peace in the house of mourning. However, if I never obey the gospel, or become unfaithful and never make things right with the Lord, my loved ones will have sorrow upon sorrow (1 Thess. 4:13)! Which will it be for those whom you leave behind?