

Finishing Well Class Notes

Refresher for Advent 2021

Sunday, December 12, 2021

The Book of Common Prayer has always admonished Christians to be mindful of their mortality. **It is therefore the duty** of all Christians, as faithful stewards, to draw up a *Last Will and Testament*, making provision for the well-being of their families and not neglecting to leave bequests for the mission of the Church.

In addition, it is important while in health to provide direction for one's own funeral arrangements, place of burial and the Scripture readings and hymns of the burial liturgy, and to make them known to the priest.

2019 Book of Common Prayer, p.246

Scriptural Foundation

We all have a life that is measured in years, days, hours.....

But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Matthew 10:30

We do not know when we will be called home.....

But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Matthew 24:23

We are reminded to be ready.....

Therefore you also must be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect Matthew 24:44

We are people of Hope who are called to Prepare

We are people who have hopeJohn 3:16

This is a time of preparation.....

- Spiritual Examination

- Health Examination
- Legal Affairs
- Funeral Plans
- Comfort and Faithfulness

Don't let Anticipatory Grief Be an Obstacle

- **Anticipatory grief** is the “beginning of the end” in our minds. We now operate in two worlds; the safe world that we are used to and the unsafe world where a loved one might die. We feel that sadness and the unconscious need to prepare our psyche.
- Anticipatory grief is generally more silent than grief after a loss. We are often not as verbal. It's a grief we keep to ourselves. We want little active intervention. There is little or no need for words, it is much more of a feeling that can be comforted by the touch of a hand or a silently sitting together. Most of the time in grief we are focused on the loss in the past, but in anticipatory grief we occupy ourselves with the loss ahead.
- When a loved one has to undergo preparatory grief in order to prepare for the final separation from this world, we have to go through it too. We may not realize it at the time. It may be a strange feeling in the pit of the stomach or an ache in the heart before the loved one dies. We think of the five stages of death occurring for the dying person, but many times loved ones go through them ahead of the death also. This is especially true in long drawn out illnesses. Even if you go through any or all of the five stages ahead of the death, you will still go through them again after the loss. Anticipatory grief has its own process; it takes its own time.
- Forewarned is not always forearmed. Experiencing anticipatory grief may or may not make the grieving process easier or shorten it. It may bring only feelings of guilt that we were grieving before the loss actually occurred. We may experience all five stages of loss (**denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance**) before the actual death. We may experience only anger and denial. Not everyone experiences anticipatory grief and if they do, certainly not in the same way.

Navigating the Medical Field

Be Prepared:

- Have a list of all current medications to include drug, dosage and frequency
- List of contacts if necessary
- Have a current Advance Directives (Included in handout)
- Be ready to articulate accurate information about present complaints, past illnesses, hospitalizations, medical matters relating to one's health
- Assertively ask questions when unclear about your healthcare or expectations of you in regard to treatment
- Set pride aside and assume the responsibility for following the treatment plan
- Know the patient's rights (Included in handout)
- Communication is key – listen closely or have someone with you to listen
- Do not self-diagnose based on Google

End of Life Discussions

- Complete Advance Directives (Copy of form may be obtained in the church office) – Update when needed
- Discuss your wishes with family members.
- Make your wishes known to your Primary care physician

Hospice Care

The **primary goals of hospice care** are to: Relieve the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual suffering of our patients and those who **care** for them. Promote the dignity and independence of our patients to the greatest extent possible.

Key Facts:

- Hospice is not about giving up; it's about living in comfort and dignity for the time one has left. Hospice does not make death come sooner. ... There are no studies that indicate that hospice can hasten death, but there have been studies showing that some patients live longer when receiving hospice services.
- There is no homebound rule for hospice patients. They are encouraged to travel outside the home as much as they are able.

- If you have an emergency unrelated to the hospice terminal diagnosis, you will have regular medical benefits for hospitalizations.
- For the first benefit period after election of the Medicare hospice benefit, the certification must be signed and dated by the:
 - Medical director of the hospice or the physician member of the hospice interdisciplinary group (IDG); and.
 - The beneficiary's attending physician (if they have one).

Navigating the Legal World

*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘**You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:30-31*

Components of an Estate:

- 1) Living Will (Advanced Directives)
- 2) Last Will and Testament
- 3) Power of Attorney and/or Financial Power of Attorney

Legal Requirements of a Will

- Although it varies by state, a testator must be of legal age (usually 18).
- The testator must be of “**sound mind**” at the time the will is written (means having an understanding of one’s actions).
- A will is not valid if created through “**undue influence**” or if the testator is under “**duress.**”
- A will **must** be properly signed. If not the entire will is **invalid**.
- Two witnesses are required to sign in the presence of the testator thereby authenticating it is the will of the testator.

Dying Without A Will

- The government basically decides everything for you through a process called “Administration.”
- The state in which the property is located designates who will receive your property.
- A court through will determine who will care for minor children.

Do I Need An Attorney?

No. However it is **advisable** and very **helpful** particularly if:

1. You have children with special needs and you wish to set up a trust or another instrument to ensure their care.
2. You have a concern about Federal estate taxes.
3. You have a complex property distribution.

Celebrating Life

Death of a Loved One

- If the death occurs at home: Call 911 or the hospice organization for pronouncement.
- If the death occurs in the hospital the staff will notify the authorities and if you have given them the funeral home's name they will contact them as well.
- Registration of the death: medical certificate
- Notifying Family and Friends: Designate someone to do that for you.
- Notify Church Family and access plan documents on file.

If There Are No Prearrangements Loved Ones Must Choose:*

- Should the deceased be embalmed?
- Do I need to purchase a casket?
- Will I care for loved one's physical remains through burial or cremation?
- What sort of funeral or memorial service should I plan?
- Are there any religious traditions or customs I need to plan for? Should I engage the services of a clergy member?
- Planning now can take the burden from your loved ones.

Plan Your Burial While You Are Living:

- Loving and caring thing to do for those you love.
- ASAC has a form to pre-plan your burial. We will retain on file.
- Designate and communicate your needs to all who should know.
- Order of service can be found on page 249 of the 2019 BCP and on page 324 of the 1928 BCP
- Key is choosing the scripture that is meaningful to you and the hymns that speak to your spirit and journey with the Lord.
- Holy Communion is encouraged.
- Determine how memorials should be designated.

When Everyone Goes Home

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;
heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.
My soul also is greatly troubled.
But you, O Lord—how long?
Psalm 6:2-3

THE SIX STAGES OF GRIEF: *ShelleyKlammer@ShelleyKlammer.com

1. NUMBNESS AND DENIAL

To initially cope with loss it common to go in a state of shock and denial. Denial helps you to pace your feelings of grief but it also makes you feel numb, hard and frozen. As you proceed through the grieving process, all the feelings you have been denying about your loss will eventually need to surface.

2. ANXIETY AND PANIC *

When you feel anxiety, deeper feelings about your loss will be piercing through your denial. Anxiety and panic will chip away at your emotional numbness, hardness or frozenness to indicate that you need to go into the deeper stages of grief so that it can be resolved.

3. BARGAINING AND CONTROL

The normal reaction to feelings of helplessness and vulnerability is to try to regain control through a series of “If only” statements. This is an attempt to bargain. Guilt often accompanies bargaining. You might believe there was something you could have done differently to avoid your loss. You might become lost in a maze of “If only...” or “What if...” statements.

4. FRUSTRATION AND ANGER

Intense emotion deflected from your vulnerable core most often gets redirected and expressed as anger. After bargaining and your attempts to control do not work, you will likely get frustrated and you will have to face your loss at a deeper level.

You might resent a person for causing you pain or for leaving you. Your anger and frustration might be aimed at inanimate objects, complete strangers, friends or family. Anger, most especially, might be directed toward the person you have lost.

5. DEPRESSION AND DESPAIR

After bargaining and attempts to control, grief enters into a much deeper level. You might want to withdraw from life for a time to truly process what you have lost. You might feel intense heartbreak and sadness. You might wonder despairingly if there is any point in going on. When a loss fully

settles into your being there will be a deep realization that your life will not continue on as it as before.

6. ACCEPTANCE AND PEACE

Eventually, you will learn to live with your loss. You must now live in a world where your loved one is missing. You might need to give up your hope that your emotional needs from the past will be met. Or you might need to accept that your cherished dreams for your future will not come to fruition.

Emotions Experienced in Grief:

- Shock
- Question of sanity – Am I going crazy?
- Pressure to be strong
- Your own grief – Your loss is different from anyone else's and you will grieve in the manner in which you need to do so.

Take Care of Yourself:

- **Emotional Needs** – don't deflect or deny in favor of other responsibilities
- **Physical Needs** – Pay attention to your body
- **Acknowledge the Possibility of the "Fog" of Grief** – a sort of "going through the motions existence"
- Do not dwell on shortcomings, **You Did the Best You Could.**

Myths About Grief:

- People with strong faith don't grieve
- A strong person should be able to cope during a loss without showing emotion
- You should be back to normal after two or three months
- Expressing strong feelings is losing control of yourself
- Crying is a sign of weakness, men don't cry
- Grief gets easier as you grow older
- Getting angry at God or asking God difficult questions means you have a weak faith
- Loved for lost can be measured by the depth of grief
- Losing an infant doesn't hurt because parents didn't have time to know the child
- Resolving grief means dismissing loved ones from your mind and moving on with your life
- A strong person should be able to deal with grief alone

- Christians shouldn't grieve if they know their loved one is in heaven. They should feel joy.
- It's better to deal with grief on an intellectual manner than emotionally
- Only immediate family members will experience significant grief
- Continuing to talk about the person who died only makes the pain last longer
- Grief proceeds through very predictable and orderly stages
- After a loved one has died you can never be happy again

If God Seems Far Away

- Be yourself with God
- Be honest with God
- Don't mistake **feeling** abandoned by God for being abandoned by God
- God is there grieving and suffering with you

What God does is not always immediately evident to human eyes.

Rev. John Claypool, "Tracks of a Fellow Struggler"

source: Haugk, 38-41