

## **FUNERALS**

The conducting of funerals remains one of the great privileges of ministry. Through them we have an unparalleled opportunity to share in people's personal lives, as well as to bare witness to a gospel of hope to many who would not otherwise hear the Christian message.

The ministry should always be approached as a privilege, especially with those who have had little or no previous contact with the Church. The only question we should concern ourselves with is, "how can God best do God's business with these people". Agendas of our own are not particularly important.

We must make ourselves available for this ministry. Good relationships with an undertaker will minimise arrangements that are inconvenient. However, there will be times when a funeral needs to be taken on a designated day off.

Country priests will know that their credibility in the community hinges very much upon the conduct of this ministry.

No matter what the circumstances, the following ministry should be offered.

- \* Human remains should be disposed of reverently.
- \* Family and Friends need to be comforted.
- \* The life of the deceased should be honoured, where possible celebrated. In some circumstances unfinished business needs to be addressed in the lives of those who remain.
- \* The story of God in Jesus should be proclaimed, not primarily that people be converted, but that they may be gifted with God's grace.

### **The Service:**

- \* It is good for people to speak in honour of the loved one, but you should take responsibility for the length and balance of the service.
- \* The resources in APBA should become familiar and be thoughtfully used.
- \* It is appropriate for the RSL rite to be used, especially at the grave side. The concluding prayer and dismissal should however be taken by yourself.
- \* The masonic service is somewhat problematic. Many of you have very strong feelings about it. If in your ministry with the bereaved you judge that hurt will be caused if the service is denied, then I believe that grace should be exercised. In the end it is God who is at work.