

This week, I want us to consider the traditional Corporal Work of Mercy: Bury the Dead.

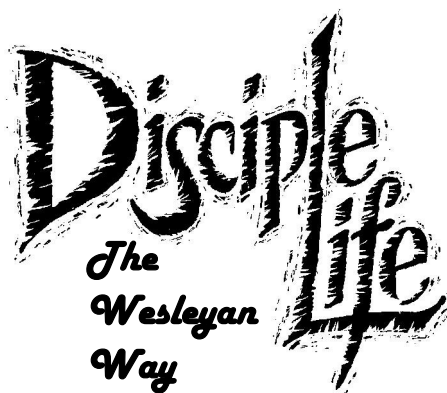
In the church, death is recognized and acknowledged in ways differently than most other societal institutions. We accept its reality and we stand as a faithful witness in the face of death saying, "O death where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

With faith in the resurrection, we boldly state that the earthly finality of death is but a mere passing from this world to life eternal. However, we don't neglect the care of those that have experienced death within their family. As the church family, we come together and offer support.

At Trinity UMC, we have several avenues of support that we offer to a family when it experiences the death of a family member:

- Pastoral visits are made to the home of the surviving family.
- Grief kits, containing paper goods, forks, cups etc.,. Along with a booklet for family members to read concerning aspects of dealing with loss, is available to each family in the church. We also send these kits out to friends of our members that we might know in the community.
- A meal is offered to each family, either at their home or at the church. Sometimes it is quite elaborate, when a large family is involved. Sometimes its just sandwich meats, bread, and other simple snacks when the family is small.

These are the official methods whereby our church ministers to families at the time of death. However, I would like to suggest



Week # 15



Start the
Conversation:
Provoke One
Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

What is the most thoughtful and appreciated thing someone has ever done for you following a death in your family?

that there are some unofficial things that you might be able to do to also minister to the grieving family.

- When you learn about a death in our church family, make a phone call to offer your condolences.
- Go to the visitation and offer your condolences.
- Send a card to the family and briefly mention some aspect of the deceased's life that was special to you.
- Keep open lines of communication with the family in the weeks that follow a death. Often these are the most difficult of times and tend to become the most neglected of times by many of us.
- If the surviving family member now lives alone, consider inviting him or her out to lunch or over to your home for dinner.
- Consider planning out aspects of your own funeral service: music and scriptures you like. Poems that are meaningful to you. Such thoughtful planning would be a big comfort to your remaining family members.

Carry the cross  **and follow me.**
Luke 14:27, NRSV