

LESSON SEVEN

SPECIAL SERVICES

Beside the regular gospel service or worship service the pastor must be prepared to minister in many special services under many various and sometimes strange circumstances. The important thing at all times is for the minister to be relaxed and calm. This gives him confidence and permits him to successfully carry out his duties and responsibilities as a minister of the gospel. If he keeps prayerful and surrendered to the Holy Spirit, he need never be unduly nervous or fearful. The Holy Spirit will give him the unction and power to speak effectively. The pastor should never be unduly concerned with being a success in order to receive praise, but rather he should at all times desire to exalt Jesus Christ.

There are several different kinds of services where he will be called upon to officiate. In this study an introduction will be given to three such services. It should be noted that each pastor should develop his own method in conducting these services. The following studies are suggestive only to be considered by the young minister.

A. THE ADMINISTRATION OF WATER BAPTISM.

Most young ministers will be very familiar with this service having observed it on many occasions. It possibly is the most frequent service that the pastor will be called upon to take charge of.

1. This service may be conducted at any time; night or day whenever there is a candidate to baptize.
2. The minister should counsel with the candidate and explain fully the meaning of baptism, the manner of baptism, and question the candidate regarding whether or not he is ready for baptism. Actually the only condition which must be met is that of repentance. The minister should make certain that the candidate's life is not entangled in a common-law marriage, concubinage, etc. If this is so then baptism must be postponed until he has had time to get the affairs of his life straightened out.
3. Baptism is by immersion in water. This could mean that one could administer baptism in a baptistry, the sea, a lake, a running stream or even in the bathtub if it were necessary.
4. Generally it is desirable for the minister to enter the water with the candidate although sometimes it might not be possible.
5. Attention should be given in advance to suitable clothing. Never is it excusable to expose the body of a person being baptized. It is a girl or woman being baptized a sheet should be thrown around them as they leave the water.
6. When baptizing in a river the minister should baptize upstream. The current will assist him in lifting the believer out of the water and never will the clothes be lifted by the current exposing the body of the candidate.
7. After entering the water the believer should be permitted to give his testimony.

8. Prayer should follow this for the candidate. This prayer may be by the officiating minister or anyone in the congregation.
9. Water Baptism to be Scriptural must always be administered in the Name of Jesus. In fact a person is not baptized unless he has been baptized according to the Scriptures in the Name of Jesus. Each pastor may have his own wording to the formula to be pronounced which, of course, is permissible providing it is in the Name of Jesus. The writer gives the words, which he has used for many years in baptizing scores of people. It is only given here as an example for the student's consideration. "Brother (Sister) . . . upon the profession of your faith and in obedience to the Word of God, I now baptize you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
10. Upon pronouncing the formula the minister then proceeds to immerse the candidate in water (only once) making certain that the water completely covers the candidate.
11. Faith should have been built up in the heart of the candidate to receive the Holy Ghost in the water. Therefore, they should never be in a hurry to leave the water but remain in the water for a season of worshipping and praising the Lord.

B. THE FUNERAL.

People who never think of church or the ministry will want his services in time of bereavement. The pastor will often be called upon to conduct the funeral service of saints and members of the church but also of complete strangers. He must never allow the service to become one of mere formality, the act of giving mere professional service. He must always allow his heart to be moved and stirred with genuine sympathy for those that are suffering and sorrowing.

A few suggestions are given here for the consideration of the student and the young minister.

1. The pastor should visit the home promptly upon hearing the news of the death. At this time he will simply and quietly give his sympathy and concern and lead the family in a season of prayer. After the family has had time to contact other relatives and the funeral director, the pastor may return to discuss the plans for the funeral. He should always respect the family's desires and requests regarding the funeral service.
2. The minister should at all times be calm and conduct himself in a manner which will build strength and faith in the hearts of the sorrowing.
3. The funeral service itself should be simple, brief and orderly. The purpose of the service is to calm and soothe the bereaved and to point them to Jesus Christ. Experience has proven that Scripture can bring great comfort. Therefore, the reading of Scripture should have an important place in the service. Next to the reading of Scripture is prayer.
4. If hymns are to be sung, they should be chosen carefully. Old hymns are best.
5. The order of the service should be typed out and given to the organist, soloist, or others who may be assisting.
6. The pastor should acquaint himself thoroughly with the life and death of the deceased. He also should know something of the spiritual experience of the deceased.

7. When the funeral service is concluded, it is proper for the pastor to take his place in advance of the pallbearers.
8. The minister should always call at the home very soon after the funeral to offer consolation and counsel.
9. At all times the pastor should remember that he is ministering to the living and not to the dead. If it is possible to say a few words of eulogy regarding the departed, he should surely do so but it should never be overdone. His main duty is to point the living to Jesus Christ.

C. THE WEDDING.

One of the most beautiful and joyful occasions that a minister has the privilege of being a part of is the Christian wedding. No attempt will be made to give in this study a marriage ceremony. Each pastor will develop a ceremony to his own liking and there is such a wide choice here that it would be useless to attempt it in these studies. However, a few simple rules are given here to be remembered by the young minister.

1. The pastor should acquaint himself with the laws of the state, province or country, concerning marriage. These differ from state to state, and province to province. He should read carefully the marriage law and at all times strictly abide by it.
2. The pastor must receive his appointment as a marriage officer and be authorized by the government to perform marriages.
3. The minister should counsel with the young couple before plans for the marriage are made final. He must make certain that he is free to marry them according to the Bible. He must satisfy himself with their spiritual status, etc.
4. The pastor must also familiarize himself with the customs of that particular community. Customs are so varied and different when it comes to marriages. By acquainting himself with the customs of the area the minister need never be caught by surprise or off guard.
5. At the wedding the bride is queen for the day. Wherever possible her wishes and desires should be respected. She should plan her wedding the way she wants it. There is much freedom today allowed as far as weddings are concerned. As far as possible the minister should allow her to do the planning. At the same time he must be prepared to give advice when needed.
6. The marriage ceremony should be simple, solemn and sacred. Although it is a joyful occasion the minister must never be frivolous as two young lives are joined together.
7. The pastor should never refuse marrying a young couple unless the marriage is impossible according to the Word of God. He must remember that he will always have access to that home and that he will always have influence in the lives of the young couple. If he refuses, his influence over them is finished.

LESSON SEVEN

SELF HELP TEST

- A. Write out the formula that you would use in baptizing a believer in the Name of Jesus.
- B. Write a paragraph on the following subject: *"In the funeral the minister should minister to the living, not to the dead."*
- C. Unless it is contrary to the Word of God a minister should never refuse marrying a couple. Why?