Cases of Difficult Funerals

Following are the four cases of difficult funerals:

1. **Funerals for those outside the Christian faith**: Pastors and priests are often asked to provide funeral services for those who had little or no connections to the church and the Christian faith.

Suppose that one of your church members had the sudden death of her husband, who had never been at the church and often publicly rejected the Christian faith. Nevertheless, his wife desires that her pastor in the church conduct the funeral service for him.

1. **Funerals for those who committed suicide**: Suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death among Americans, and a high proportion of deaths by suicide occur among males (four times more than among females), teenagers, and people older than sixty-five years old.

Suppose that Paul, a father of two minor children in your church, has been unemployed for a couple of years and has recently suffered severe depression. Paul committed suicide, and his wife desires that his funeral be officiated in the church by you.

1. **Funerals for children**: Today, the loss of children is relatively rare. Parents who lose a child cannot help but feel that they have been singled out for a catastrophic blow.

Suppose that a family in your church lost a five-year-old daughter, Sarah, by accident in a shopping mall parking lot, and her parents desire that their daughter’s funeral be officiated in their church by you.

1. **Your case:** You may describe a difficult funeral case and explain its particular situation based on your direct or indirect experience.

Choose one of the four cases as yours and respond to the following questions:

* What is a theological issue(s) related to this death? Share your theological reflection.
* What is your pastoral approach to the bereaved?
* What is the purpose of the funeral service in this case?
* How are you going to prepare for the funeral service?