

## **CEREMONY SUGGESTED FOR DEPARTED LIONS**

### **PAYING TRIBUTE TO A LION WHO HAS PASSED AWAY**

In the natural course of events, every Lions Club is confronted with the passing on of one of its members. Anxious to honour the deceased and express the sympathy of the Club to the immediate family, the organization is often at a loss as to the proper things to do. The following suggestions are offered in the hope that they might find a place in the Club's files, being ready for reference, when needed.

**BRIEF NOTE:** A brief note on behalf of the Club should be sent immediately to the family upon learning of the death. The note should be signed by the President, Secretary, or both. It should be addressed to the widow/widower or, if the deceased did not leave behind a spouse, to the most immediate member of the family.

It might read as follows:

"The entire membership of the \_\_\_\_\_ Lions Club feels deeply for the loss of your husband/wife, Lion \_\_\_\_\_. We held him/her in high esteem as a member of our fellowship. As President (or Office of the Lion Corresponding, if not the President), I wish to extend to you and your family the sympathy of each and every Lion. Such service, as we can render, is yours on request."

**VISITING THE FAMILY:** The President and/or some other officer should make a call at the home as soon as possible. If the visiting officer is not on intimate terms with the family, one of the Lions, who knows the family well, may be asked to accompany the officer. Sympathy should be expressed, both personally and on behalf of the Club. It should be made known that the Club is willing to be of service.

The officer will learn the name of the clergy and the funeral director. Remember, the family will expect the funeral director and clergy to take care of the details of the service and burial. Do not, therefore, ask members of the family concerning matters which they have referred to others.

In many communities, the Club may express its regard for a deceased member by visiting the funeral home in a group, when it is open to the public. The funeral director should be consulted as to the best time for the group to attend for a service and procedure. The purpose of this visitation is twofold:

- 1 to manifest respect for the departed member
- 2 to express sympathy to the family

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An elaborate ceremony, especially one which could duplicate that of the church, is out of order. It may be enough for the President or a spokesperson for the Club to tell the representative of the family receiving them, that the Club is present to express their sorrow and extend its sympathy to the family. The President will then walk quietly to the casket, view the departed, and then proceed to the exit. The members will follow in single file.

**TIME AND PLACE OF FUNERAL:** From the clergy or funeral director, the following will be learned.

- the plans and time of the funeral
- whether the funeral is public or private
- if the Club may pay its respects as a group and hold a service
- if the Club may provide pall bearers, transportation, or other services
- if the Club may attend as a group with seats reserved for them

**FLOWERS:** If flowers are in order, these should be ordered for delivery at the place and time suggested by the undertaker. There is a growing trend to substitute a more lasting and constructive token in place of the customary floral tribute. Clubs may wish to consider making a donation to some charity, which interested the deceased member, as a tribute in their name. A note is then sent to the family such as the following:

"Knowing that the welfare of the \_\_\_\_\_ Club (or hospital, church, etc.) was of great interest to Lion \_\_\_\_\_, we *have* sent a contribution in his/her name; thus paying tribute to the memory of a cherished friendship, and, also expressing to you our deepest sympathy."

**GATHERING AT THE FUNERAL HOME:** Too often, when we gather at a funeral home for a Lions Service, we tend to forget the purpose of the gathering and use it for renewing old friendships. As is the norm, when a group of people get together, we try to "drown out each other" with our conversation so that the person we are talking to can hear us. This makes the noise level increase beyond reason. We must remember that we are there to pay tribute to a friend, a deceased Lion, and we should keep the noise level down by not treating the occasion as a gathering to renew friendships. The raised noise level that results with this kind of situation does nothing to improve our image as Lions and may have a negative effect on the grieving family.

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The Club membership, having assembled at the designated place, will proceed where the body has been placed. It is imperative that a Club member assumes the responsibility to organize the Lions in a fashion so as not to look like a "rag tag" group out for a good time, as they go by the coffin. The membership, who may be accompanied by their spouses (pending the wishes of the Club), will follow the presiding Officer in double file and form an orderly group facing the coffin, avoiding both the stiffness of a military unit and the appearance of an unorganized crowd at a football game.

In some cases, pending the wishes of the family, it may not be necessary for all those assembled to pass the family and pass on their condolences, especially when there is a great number of Lions present. Remember, a little has more effect than a lot. If you wish to extend your personal condolences, perhaps you might want to arrive a bit earlier than the time scheduled for the service, or stay a while after it.

**CEREMONY SUGGESTION:** The following brief ceremony, simple and sincere, may be offered by one or more of the Club Officers. It is not always necessary to have a District Officer do the service. That is up to the wishes of the family and of the individual Clubs.

"Fellow Lions: It is fitting and proper that we who have enjoyed the fellowship and cooperation in Lionism of our friend, Lion \_\_\_\_\_, should mark his/her demise together. Lion \_\_\_\_\_ joined our Club in \_\_\_\_\_. He/she held the following offices (list) and served on the following committees (list and add any other outstanding accomplishments in Lionism). We shall miss his/her presence at our meetings and his/her assistance in our programs of service. We acknowledge the obligation that he/she leaves with us -that we carry on, each of us, with greater zeal, in order that those things which he/she would have helped us to accomplish will not be left undone. We seek to express, once more, the affection that we felt for Lion \_\_\_\_\_. To his/her loved ones, we sincerely give our heartfelt sympathy. We pray they may realize every comfort and hope of their faith in this time of sorrow.

We mourn the passing of our friend,  
And gather now in solemn mood.  
We know all things of time must end;  
E'en what to us seem wholly good.

Fellowship we've had in service,  
Common problems and belief;  
How our hearts are drawn together  
By the bond of common grief.

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We are thankful for the days  
We've had with him who's joined the dead;  
But thankful more that we have hope  
For that which for us lies ahead.

Each one of us must run his course  
Till He who doeth all things well  
Will call us to join our friends  
Who now beyond our seeing dwell.

And so for now we say "Farewell",  
And carry on the work below,  
Believing that the time will come  
When we will once more say, "Hello"!

Let us stand for a moment in silence and let each of us who so desires, offer a silent prayer from the heart. (Pause for about 30 seconds)

Almighty God, hear the prayers, spoken and unspoken, of our hearts. Grant the blessing of Thine inner peace and may Thy benediction rest upon us. For Thy name's sake, Amen."

The visiting Lions and their spouses will then file by the casket and the family, and leave.