

CHAPTER XV

CEREMONY SUGGESTED FOR DEPARTED LIONS

HONORING OUR DEAD

In the natural course of events, every Lions Club is confronted with the passing of one of its members. Anxious to honor 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 be of some benefit when needed.

BRIEF NOTE

A brief note should be sent immediately on learning of the death. The note should be signed by the President, Secretary or both. This should be addressed to the most immediate member of the family. It might read as follows:

“The entire membership of the _____ Lions Club feels deeply the loss of Lion _____ whom we held in high esteem as a member of our fellowship. As President, I wish to extend to you and your family the sympathy of each and every Lion. (Please let us know if we can help in any way.)”

VISITING THE FAMILY

The President or some other officer should make a call at the home as soon as possible. If the officer is not on intimate terms with the family, he may ask one of the Lions who knows the family well to accompany him. He should express sympathy both personally and on behalf of the club. (He can request the name of the funeral home or clergyman in charge of funeral arrangements, in order to find out the details concerning the funeral. This is easier on the family.)

In many communities, the club may express its regard for a deceased member by visiting the family home or 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, the place for a service and procedure. The purpose of the visitation is twofold.

1. To show respect for the departed member
2. Express sympathy to the family

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 spokesman 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. They will walk quietly to the casket, view the departed, and then proceed to the exit. The membership will follow in single file.

TIME AND PLACE OF FUNERAL

From the clergyman or funeral director the following will be learned:

1. the plans and time of funeral
2. Whether the funeral is public or private
3. If the club may pay its respects as a group
4. If the club may provide pall bearers, transportation or other services
5. 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 the deceased member's favorite charity as a tribute in his/her 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 one of great interest to Lion _____, we have sent a contribution in his/her name; thus, paying tribute to the memory of a cherished friend and also expressing to you our deepest sympathy.”

CEREMONY SUGGESTION

A brief ceremony, simple and sincere, may be in order. The following is a suggestion: please check on departed Lion's religious preference, and the wishes of the next of kin.

The club having assembled at the designated place, will proceed to the room where the body has been placed. Club members will follow the presiding officer in double file and form an orderly group facing the casket avoiding both the stiffness of a military unit and the appearance of an unorganized crowd. The following may then be said by one or more of the club officers while facing the club from a place near the head of the casket:

President or presiding officer, "As we begin the Memorial Service, I'd ask that you repeat with me the Lions' Grace:

Together:

"O Lord, thy blessings now let fall
Upon Thy Lions as we call
May all our ties of friendship be
Forever strengthened, Lord, by Thee."

President:

If we did not go to sleep at night
We'd never awaken to see the light,
And the joy of watching a new day break
Or meeting the dawn by some quiet lake.
Would never be ours unless we slept,
While God and all His angels kept
A vigil through this 'single death'
That's over with the morning's breath... ..
And death, too, is a time of sleeping,
And there's a sunrise for each soul,
For life, not death, is God's promised goal.. ..
So trust God's promise and doubt Him never
For only through death can man live forever."

President or Spokesman for club:

"Fellow Lions:

It is fitting that we who have enjoyed the fellowship and cooperation in Lionism of our friend, Lion _____, should mark his/her demise together. Lion _____ joined the _____ Lions 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 the he/she leaves with us, that we carry on, each of us with greater zeal, in order that those things which he would have helped us to accomplish will not be left undone. We seek to express once more the affection that we felt for Lion _____. We mourn, but do not grieve his/her leaving us, for we know that he/she has been called to the home of our Heavenly Father and there he/she has found peace and rest from his/her earthly labors. He/she adopted and lived according to the Lions Code of Ethics. He/she was a credit to Lionism and was admired by all who knew him/her. We as Lions were proud to have served Lionism with him/her. 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."

President or Chairperson: "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 seems wholly good.
Fellowship we've had in service,
Common problems and beliefs;
Now our hearts are drawn together
By the bond of common grief.

We are thankful for the days
We've had with him/her 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/her course
Till He who doeth all things well,
will call us too 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'.

We ask these blessings in the name of Thy Son who taught us when we pray to say,

All

Our, Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

President or Chairperson:

"Let us stand for a moment of silence and let each of us who so desires, offer a silent prayer from his/her heart. (Pause for about 30 seconds.) Almighty God, hear the prayers spoken and unspoken, of our hearts. Grant the blessings of Thine inner peace and may Thy benediction rest upon us. For Thy Name's sake. Amen."

The club will then file by the casket and leave.

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Many times, Lions die and none of their friends outside their club hear about it. Clubs should contact their Zone Chairperson when a member of their club dies. The Zone Chairperson in turn should notify the District Governor and the Multiple District Office letting each know when and where the service is being held and what time. The office receives many phone calls concerning funeral arrangements and if it is notified, can be a clearing house for information concerning the deceased Lion.
