



# THE APOSTOLIC FAITH MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA DIE APOSTOLIESE GELOOF SENDING VAN SUID-AFRIKA

(PBO no/WO nr: 930004069)

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## FUNERAL GUIDELINES

Covid-19 has affected the way we grieve and honour the memories of our members who have passed on. It has also affected the way we conduct funerals, especially when it comes to those who have succumbed due to the pandemic. While we find new ways of dealing with bereavement, we need to bear in mind the highly infectious nature of the coronavirus.

It has been established that funerals are one of the places where the infection is spreading more easily than in any other context, mainly due to the closeness of family and friends and the emotions involved at such an occasion. It is for these reasons that special measures and guidelines need to be adhered to when it comes to meeting bereaved families and funerals.

We ask you to keep within the following guidelines when it comes to what needs to happen prior, during and post funerals.

### NB!

These guidelines exclude Covid-19 related deaths when it comes to death at home and preparation (washing of the body). In the case of a Covid-19 related death at home or in hospital, the undertaker will have (or must get hold of) the rules and regulations that must be followed, and act accordingly. In this case, the body of the deceased remains in the undertakers' car from the mortuary until arrival at the cemetery.

#### 1. DEATH AT HOME

The death must be reported to the Police and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) before the body is removed by the undertaker.

#### 2. PREPARATION OR WASHING OF THE BODY

- 2.1 The body may be washed, but only at the mortuary or undertaker's premises.
  - 2.2 The body may be dressed at the mortuary or undertakers' premises.
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### **3. NIGHT VIGILS**

Night vigils are not allowed. This is because the virus spreads very easily when people are in close contact with one another.

### **4. VALEDICTORY**

If the family wishes to have a short valedictory ceremony, it must be done in an area that allows adherence to safety measures outlined in 6.4 herein below.

### **5. VIEWING OF THE BODY**

5.1 It is recommended that the viewing of the body should be restricted to family members only.

5.2 It should be done in a ventilated and decongested place which allows safety measures as stated in 6.4, herein below.

5.3 Family members should be arranged to assist those who become overwhelmed by emotions (If possible, they should be discouraged from viewing the body).

### **6. FUNERAL SERVICE**

#### **6.1 Pastoral Responsibility**

- The Pastor requested by the family to lead the funeral service must take responsibility for ensuring that regulations, in respect of funerals, are complied with.
- Should there be a breach, he/she will be answerable to the authorities.

#### **6.2 Venue**

The funeral service should be held at a venue that has been decontaminated before or prior to the service.

#### **6.3 Funeral Service attendance**

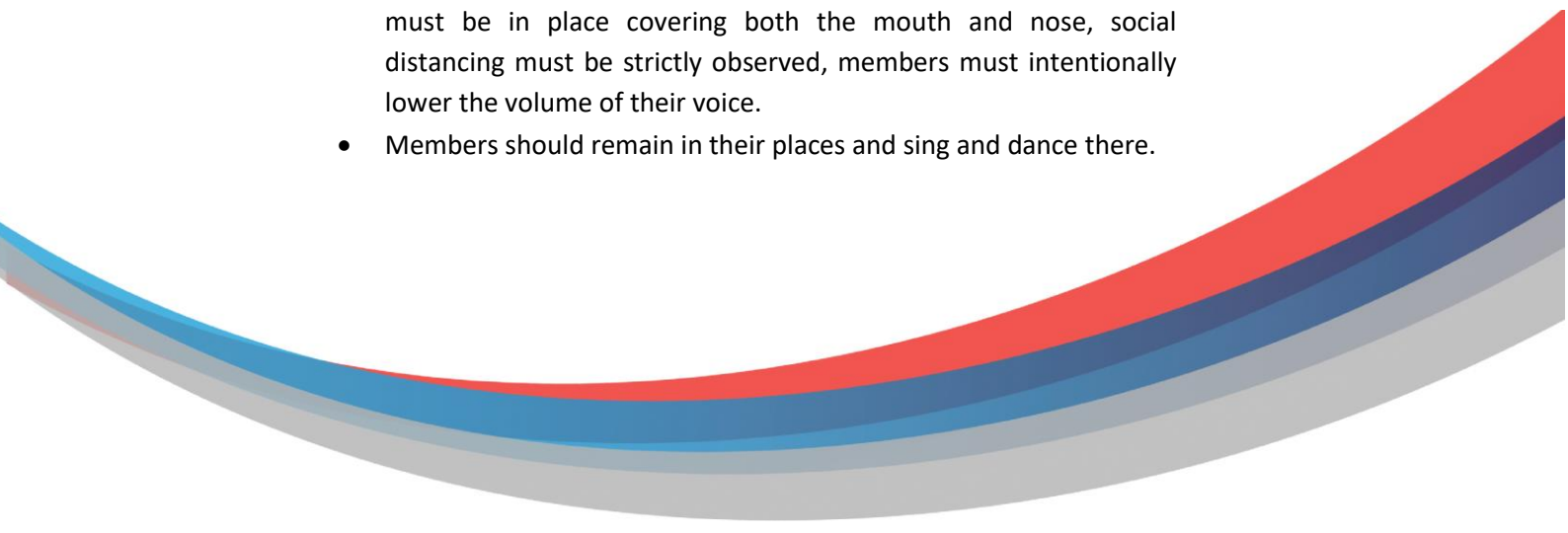
- Close relatives should be prioritised when it comes to attendance.
- Attendance is restricted to only 100 people. This includes the pastor/s who conducts or attends the funeral, but not the undertaker.
- People who are sick, older than 65 years and those with underlying conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure or tuberculosis should be discouraged from attending funerals.
- Families should ensure that family members who were with people who tested positive do not attend funeral services.

#### **6.4 Safety Measures**

The following, Covid-19 safety measures should strictly be adhered to:

- Attendance at the church and cemetery should not exceed 100 people.
- According to the size of the house, and to always keep a distance of 1.5 metres, only a small number of people might be allowed inside the house at a particular time.
- If someone has died due to Covid-19 related complications and/or if any family members are feeling sick, NO additional family members should be allowed to visit the house.
- Family members feeling sick should quarantine and be tested for Covid-19 before they interact with other family members, relatives and friends.
- The house should also be disinfected before any family members or friends are allowed to enter.
- Attendees at the funeral service must go through a screening process inclusive of a temperature check.
- All entrances must have sanitisers and hands must be sanitised or washed with soap and water often.
- Masks covering both mouths and noses must be worn at all times.
- Social distancing rules of 1.5 m should be followed at all times.
- No handshaking, hugging, or kissing is allowed before, during or after the service. If any of the family members or mourners have a sore throat, dry cough or fever, it might be symptoms of Covid-19 and in order not to possibly infect others they must not attend the funeral but stay at home.

#### 6.5 Singing during the service:

- The number of worship leaders, singers and musicians/band members should be limited, and social distancing and strict hygiene should always be observed.
  - Instrumental music or solo singing can fill the slots where hymns or choruses would usually be sung.
  - Where projection of songs or Scripture on overhead screens is possible, this should be used.
  - Where the same microphone must be used by more than one person. The microphone, as well as the hands of the people involved, must be sanitised regularly, especially when microphones exchange hands.
  - If/when the audience does sing, the following is important: Masks must be in place covering both the mouth and nose, social distancing must be strictly observed, members must intentionally lower the volume of their voice.
  - Members should remain in their places and sing and dance there.
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6.6 Duration of the service

The funeral services must be kept short - no longer than 2 hours.

**7. BURIAL**

7.1 The Pastor appointed by the family will be responsible for the service at the gravesite. This service should not be longer than 30 minutes.

7.2 At the gravesite, social distancing and the wearing of masks must be observed at all times.

7.3 Funeral undertakers are responsible for the lowering of the body into the grave.

7.4 In areas, where the filling up of the grave, is done by attendees, volunteers should be on standby, to sanitise the spades, shovels and any other tools used before it exchanges hands.

**8. AFTER THE BURIAL**

8.1 Washing of hands should be with soap and running water (people should not wash hands with water that is in the basin).

8.2 If the family would like to serve food, take away containers should be used.

8.3 If the family wants to come together after the funeral, they must meet in a place that allows them to keep social distance from each other with their masks on. They can also meet outside.

8.4 Social gatherings are not allowed after funeral service.

**END**

