

Discipleship and the Priority of Honoring the Faithful: Reflecting on the Jeri Solberg Memorial

At memorial service for Jeri Solberg, it was notable that many disciples—particularly men aspiring to pastoral ministry—chose not to attend.

John 11:35–36–35 Then Jesus wept. **36** The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!”

I. The Missed opportunity - Why men would not come to a memorial service

A. Don't see why its important

1. **Other people will be there so I don't have to**

- All of ministry is creating an atmosphere where people come into contact with a living God
- Much of what we do in ministry flows from the heart - whats inside is revealed

2. **Failure to prioritize what matters**

- Sleeping in, chores around the house, family time, work, recreation - going to a funeral - less important*
- Not a matter of fellowship rules rather memorials are a simple way to show what matters*

B. Lack of relationship with the person who died

1. **I don't know the person so why should I attend?**

- We are apart of a church family - built upon relationship and connection with other believers
- the memorial service yesterday was celebrating a man who has been coming the church for the past 20 years, who was backslid for 26 years and came back to church
 - As a disciple you should strive towards knowing the people in our church/ know their story/ know their name

2. **Deeper issue:** I care deeply about people in my circle/ people I know - *not healthy if you want to be a pastor*

36 The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!”

- Our text - Jesus love for Lazarus was notable and obvious - a man we know very little about

II. Understanding why Funerals are Important

A. Honoring Faithful lives

- Ministry is built upon faithful people who support and labor in the church - PG - What you celebrate you cement
- A memorial service in the FINAL opportunity we have to show gratitude and appreciation for peoples faithfulness
 - When we attend a funeral we are saying how much we honor and value the contribution this person made
 - Jeri Solberg was instrumental in following up and befriending a young 14 year old here in Prescott who said during the funeral yesterday - impacted his life and played a major role in helping this young man live for God in the critical stages of his salvation - That young man was Pastor Greg Mitchell.*

- Honoring faithful people demonstrates **our** gratitude and respect

- By nature we are selfish - want only what benefits us -
- Coming to a memorial service shows gratitude for people who have gone before us *in giving, prayer, evangelism* and have now passed away.

B. Evangelistic Opportunity

- Funerals are some of the only church related events sinners come to
 - In our church these are possibly the only opportunities these people will have to respond to the Gospel message**

- Disciples play a critical role in the altar call in encouraging people to pray / get saved

C. For your future

- Mens who are seeking pastoral ministry -

- You will want faithful people in your church — you will officiate funerals for those people
- If you understand the importance now - down the road you will be able communicate that to your men

- The small areas we take care of today will equal Gods greater blessing down the road

D. God attends funerals

- Our text - Jesus goes to a funeral for a man he deeply cared about

- Aim of discipleship - God what matters to you - I want that to matter to me too*

- Being in a memorial service demonstrates that what is important to God is also important to you