

GOING ON... AFTER THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE

PEACE
of mind



WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY? HOW CAN WE HELP YOU BUILD IT?



COVENANT TRUST COMPANY®

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GOING ON ...

AFTER THE DEATH OF A SPOUSE

First, we want to express our sympathy to you on your loss. Losing a loved one is never easy, but the death of a spouse is especially difficult. Our prayer is that you will be sustained by God's grace, assured of His love, and supported and encouraged by those who know and love you.

There are many details which need to be handled during this time; and you may not remember-or even know about-important things that have to be done.

Financial Services Representatives have worked with many persons going through this process. We hope this booklet will be a helpful resource for you.

Some items on the lists in this booklet apply to anyone, not just a spouse. There may be items not on these lists, or others that are specific to your own situation. The important thing to remember is: **don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.** Talk to your legal and financial advisors, your pastor, family and friends, and ask for their assistance.

As always your local Financial Services Representative and Covenant Trust Company® are available to provide information and resources. Don't hesitate to call us toll-free at 800-483-2177.

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help when you need it*



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FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

- ❑ Contact your chosen funeral home. If possible, know in advance whether your loved one had a prepaid funeral arrangement.
- ❑ Review your loved one's personal papers for specific funeral details or instructions.
- ❑ If you go to the funeral home to handle details, take someone with you for support during this emotional time.
- ❑ Your funeral home may be able to help file a request for a flag or headstone, if your loved one was a military veteran.
- ❑ Request extra certified copies of the death certificate. (see Important Documents)





People to Notify

- Pastor** - talk about funeral services, and any help you may need in the immediate future.
- Family members and friends** - in addition to notifying them of the death and funeral arrangements, ask for any help you may need from this very important support group.
- Attorney** - notify your family lawyer, and review the various legal issues. (See Important Documents)
- Social Security** - often the funeral home will do this. But you must still contact Social Security on your own to discuss death benefits, and spousal benefits for which you may be eligible. You will *not* receive benefits automatically.
- Insurance companies or agents** - review all policies to discover benefits and/or payments to which you may be entitled. Check for coverage which may no longer be needed.
- Pensions/retirement plans/annuities** - contact the appropriate companies. They will probably send you forms to complete, and may request a copy of the death certificate.
- Entitlement plans** - Medicaid, etc. must be notified if benefits were being received.
- Newspaper** - the funeral home will post a simple notice of death. If you want anything more extensive, you must contact the newspaper yourself. Be careful about putting time and date of funeral in the paper; thieves may use this information to “schedule” a robbery at the home of a family member.
- Trust Administrator** - if you have any type of trust, notify the trust administrator right away.
- Banks, Loan Companies** - notify banks and other institutions where you have loans, checking and/or savings accounts.
- Military Service** - if your spouse ever served in the military, notify the service of the death and check for possible death or other benefits.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- ❑ You will need several certified copies of the death certificate. We suggest requesting at least six. They are available from your funeral home or the county where your loved one lived.
- ❑ Locate the original Last Will and Testament of your loved one as soon as possible. If you are not named as Executor (Personal Representative), notify that person immediately, and stay in touch all during the estate settlement.
- ❑ Check with an attorney to see if probate must be opened, especially if your spouse owned any property in his/her own name. If there was a will, it should also be filed with the county in which your loved one lived.
- ❑ Change vehicle titles by contacting the motor vehicle registration office for your state.
- ❑ For jointly held real estate, file an Affidavit of Survivorship with the county recorder to remove your spouse's name.
- ❑ Review your own will. You may need to amend it if you named your spouse as Executor, or left everything to your spouse. If you do not have a will, get one prepared as soon as possible.
- ❑ Review your financial and health care Powers of Attorney. If you named your spouse as your Agent or Attorney-in-Fact, you will need to amend these documents.





FINANCIAL AND TAX MATTERS

- Review personal effects such as desk contents, checkbook, accounting papers, etc. If there are unpaid bills that could affect your credit rating or cause a problem, arrange to pay them.
- Go through your safe deposit box. This will help locate important documents, and may unearth assets you had forgotten about.
- Review all securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, etc.) and change ownership if needed. Contact your broker if you have one.
- If necessary, file health insurance claims to pay the expenses of the last illness.
- If a credit card or charge account was in **both your names**, you will be liable for the bills. If the account was in your spouse's name only, you may not be responsible for the bills. Seek legal advice if you have questions.
- You may need professional assistance in preparing federal and state tax returns for the year in which the death occurred.
- Watch incoming mail carefully for items such as bills to be paid, insurance policies, investments or other assets of which you may not have been aware, subscriptions or memberships to be changed, cancelled, etc.

Information contained in this brochure is presented for purposes of information and education only. It is not intended as either tax or legal advice, nor are items listed in order of importance or priority. Consult your own legal, financial and tax advisors for professional help.

PERSONAL

- ❑ Take care of your own physical, emotional and spiritual needs.
- ❑ Accept that grieving is a natural process which takes time. Don't expect too much of yourself too soon.
- ❑ If you are a widow, consider listing your phone in your spouse's name, using only your first initial, or making it a non-published listing.
- ❑ Be cautious about making any major life decisions during the first year after the death. This is a time to seek help or advice from those you trust.
- ❑ Be especially careful of dishonest persons who prey on those who have experienced a family death. These may include bogus creditors, phony home repair schemes, investment deals, or claims of bank or other investigations where you are asked to provide money of your own. If you aren't sure, ask someone you trust to review the situation with you before you sign or agree to anything.
- ❑ Sometimes people close to you want to help, but don't know what to say or do. Don't hesitate to ask them to help you with specific needs. Far from feeling imposed on, they may be relieved that you have given them a concrete way to help.

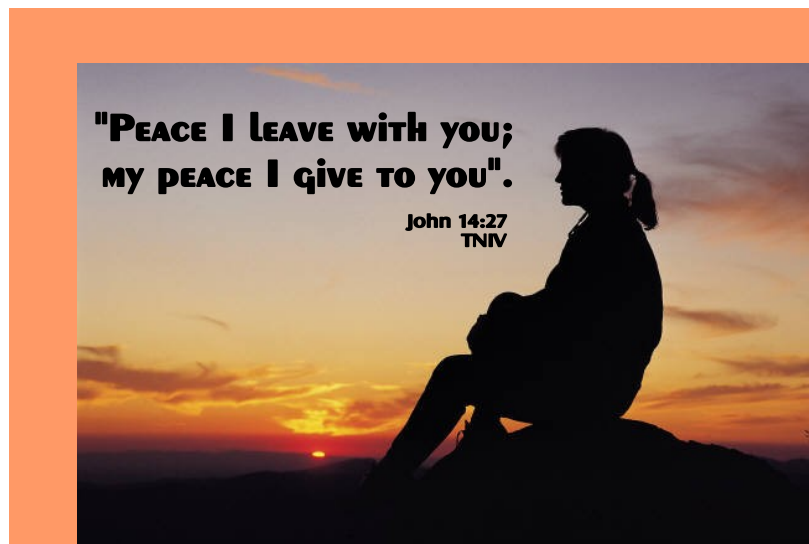




Dealing with death is never easy. As Christians, we believe that death is—at the same time—an ending and a beginning, with the promise of a joyful reunion in the future. Even as we celebrate a life, we mourn a passing. Grieving is an essential and natural part of healing; there is no right or wrong way to grieve after a significant loss. “One day at a time” is a good maxim to follow during this period. Don’t be afraid to express your grief; seek out those who will listen, support you, encourage you, and pray with you.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you...and I will come back and take you to be with me. ...Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

John 14: 1-4, 27



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