

On the Destruction of a Home

This is a service of pastoral care for families, couples, or individuals who have lost a home to earthquake, fire, flood, hurricane, tornado, or other disaster. It should be adapted according to specific needs and local circumstances.

Opening Sentences

We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed,
we have a building from God, a house not made with hands,
eternal in the heavens.

2 Cor. 5:1

Prayer

Gracious God, we gather here
to give thanks for the place we have called home;
to grieve painful losses and broken dreams;
to call upon your saving power and healing love;
and to pray for renewal, recovery, and restoration.
We are the sheep of your pasture, O God;
we are the work of your hands.
Gather us close to your heart and into your fold
so that we may know the comfort of your sheltering presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn or Psalm

A hymn or psalm such as "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" may be sung.

1. My Shepherd will supply my need; Jehovah is his name:
in pastures fresh he makes me feed, beside the living stream.
He brings my wandering spirit back, when I forsake his ways;
and leads me, for his mercy's sake, in paths of truth and grace.
2. When I walk through the shades of death, your presence is my stay;
one word of your supporting breath drives all my fears away.
Your hand, in spite of all my foes, does still my table spread;
my cup with blessings overflows, your oil anoints my head.
3. The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days;
O may your house be my abode, and all my work be praise.
There would I find a settled rest, while others go and come;
no more a stranger, or a guest, but like a child at home.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719; alt. 1972 Tune: RESIGNATION CMD

SCRIPTURE

One or more of the following passages may be read:

*Isaiah 61:1-4 or 65:17-25
Psalm 46 or 91
Romans 8:18-27 or 8:35-39
Matthew 6:25-34 or 7:7-11*

The family and minister may go from room to room through the house (if it is safe to do so), remembering significant events, sharing stories, and offering expressions of sorrow or gratitude.

After visiting each room:

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Ps. 46:1

Prayer

Gracious God, maker of heaven and earth,
you are our shelter when earthly houses fall;
you are our strength when other powers fail;
you are our security when everything is shaken.
Establish us on the firm foundation of your steadfast love,
build us up in faith, and renew our hope,
provide for us from the abundance of your grace,
and abide with us this day and in all the days to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Hymn or Psalm

A hymn or psalm such as "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past" may be sung.

1. Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:
2. Before the hills in order stood, or earth received its frame,
from everlasting thou art God, to endless years the same.
3. A thousand ages in thy sight are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.
4. Time, like an ever rolling stream, soon bears us all away;
we fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.
5. Our God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while life shall last and our eternal home.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1719, alt. Tune: ST. ANNE CM

Closing Sentences

Jesus said: Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Believe in God; believe also in me.
In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.
If it were not so, would I have told you
that I go to prepare a place for you?
And if I go to prepare a place for you,
I will come again and will take you to myself,
so that where I am, there you may be also.

John 14:1-3

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord be kind and gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and give you peace. **Amen.**

Num. 6:24-26