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Malphurs, Willhite, & Hillmans' "A contemporary handbook for weddings & funerals and other occasions" (book review)

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Book Review



Malphurs, A., K. Willhite, and D. Hillman (Eds.). (2022). *A contemporary handbook for weddings & funerals and other occasions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications. 456 pp. \$23.99. ISBN 9780825446658

Officiating a wedding or funeral could be intimidating to some, so having a handbook with basic guidelines and examples of scripts to follow for these services is helpful to reference. This third revised edition is packed with great resources for pastors or other officials leading special and meaningful occasions for loved ones. Two of the editors are or were professors at Dallas Theological Seminary and the third has been a pastor and publishing executive. Excerpts have been provided for anyone's use by 42 contributors from unique walks of faith and backgrounds. It is mainly written by Christian pastors for pastors; thus, no secular examples are included.

The wedding section contains sample service outlines, sermons, vows, scripture readings, prayers, benedictions, and other guidelines. Services for second weddings are a new addition. The funeral section includes various sermons, eulogies, outlines, scriptures, quotations, perspectives, and guidelines drafted to comfort those mourning. Some spend more time on a gospel message while others celebrate the impact their loved one's story had on others.

This edition added messages specifically for those who had cancer, were a service member, had died accidentally, or were victims of violence or tragedy. Distinctive messages set this book apart. For example, there is a postabortion memorial service outline or templates provided for a baby dedication or church ordination. Since other books have been written to support other special occasions like holidays, this one focuses on a few that may not be covered otherwise, such as a message for Earth Day.

While other publications may include more general guidelines to assist in formalizing a personalized ceremony, this one provides verbiage to utilize or adapt as one wishes. Whether brief or lengthy, one should find inspiration in many of the words expressed in this handbook. Even if one does not have to craft a speech, these writings can inspire one to love more deeply and find comfort in their grief. It would be best suited for a seminary or church library since pastors are often the first ones called upon to minister in these unique settings. It offers recommended reading lists and a Scripture index.

Reviewer

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