

RECOGNITION OF THE END OF A MARRIED RELATONSHIP

A service for use at home or in church

The minister greets the community.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.
And also with you.

Recognition of Failure

Dear friends in Christ,
We have come here today with N (and NN)
to acknowledge before God
that *his* marriage has ended.

When a marriage relationship ends there is a kind of death.
Our hopes for that relationship, our vision of the future
and the gift of lifelong commitment all die.
Instead of mutual comfort and help
N and NN have experienced brokenness and pain.

When a marriage ends in this way
even the best of memories can be tarnished,
joys tempered and good times qualified.
We recall too how many people are affected by these events:
family ties and common friendships may end
and those who knew them both are saddened.

Even now N and NN may be uncertain
whether they were wrong to begin their relationship
or how and why they now find themselves at the end.
Deep within them are the events which proved to be too great
for them to negotiate successfully together
and the times when they have wounded
those they sought to love.

It is to acknowledge the reality of all these things
that we have come together today,
praying for healing and wholeness –
for N and (also) for NN.

Almighty God, you enlighten every heart.
Give comfort and healing
to your people gathered here today.
Enable us, with N (and with NN)
to recognise what has been lost,
and to turn to you in faith and in hope,
trusting in the new life that lies ahead,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Proclamation of the Word

One or more of the following readings may be used

For everything there is a season
and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to gather;
a time to kill and a time to heal;
a time to break down and a time to build;
a time to weep and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn and a time to dance;
a time to throw away and a time to gather;
a time to embrace and a time to stand still;
a time to seek and a time to lose;
a time to tear and a time to sew;
a time to be silent and a time to speak;
a time to love and a time to hate;
a time for war and a time for peace.
God has made everything beautiful in its own time.
He has also set eternity in our hearts. Yet we cannot fathom
what God has done, from beginning to end. (Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8; 11)

What then can we say? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then can condemn? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecutions or famine or nakedness or danger or the sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8: 31-39)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
(Matthew 11: 28-30)

A time of reflection may follow

Hope and Promise

To God our endings can be the sign of new beginnings.
Our deaths can be the prelude to the resurrection.

We bear the consequences of what we do but we are not condemned.

N (and NN), let nothing disturb you, nothing destroy you;
All things pass, but God never changes.
Whoever has God lacks nothing.
If you only have God, you have more than enough.

(Prayer of St Teresa of Avila which may be sung as a Taize chant - Nade te Turbe)

Intercessions and Thanksgivings

Let us pray for all whose lives have been affected by the ending
of this marriage.

For those who have help and support

God of all goodness and mercy,
we thank you for the friendship and love
of those who have helped N (and NN)
through the pain endured in the ending of this marriage.
We praise you for the gift of loving friends,
for their support and caring
in the grief and loneliness of separation.
Give them your healing wisdom
and fill their hearts with the comfort and grace
of your strengthening presence.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For any children

God of wisdom and understanding ,
whose Son Jesus loved children and blessed them,
bless the child(*ren*) of N and NN.
Strengthen them, calm their fears and heal their memories,
so that in these uncertain days when nothing is as it was
and nothing can be the same again,
they may know in the enduring love they receive from their parents
the comfort and the newness of life
that even sadness and change can never take away.
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For the family of N and NN:

God of compassion and healing,
we lift to you the hurt and grief
borne by family members caught up in this divorce.
Pour down your blessing and your peace on all those
who supported N (and NN) in times of anxiety and frustration;
may their love and affection provide stability and courage
for all that is yet to come.
Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Prayer for Restoration:

N (and NN) may say:

God of infinite tenderness and hope,
I acknowledge before you and before my friends and family
that the marriage I once entered into, freely and joyfully,
has now come to an end.

I give thanks for all that was good in our relationship
and pray that I may cherish the good memories from our time together.
I admit to you those things which contributed to the failure of our relationship
and I ask for your grace to forgive those things which hurt me
so that I may let go of all resentment, anger and pride.

Gentle Father, may this moment be one of blessing and renewal,
that we may (both) go forward from this day
confident in your never-failing love
yet free to make whatever new and loving relationships you have in mind for us.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, pour upon me that new life
that will enable me to serve you with greater faithfulness,
now and for ever. Amen.

The anointing:

In this prayer the minister may use holy oil as a sign of healing

In the name of God who brings hope out of defeat
and life out of death,
we pray for N (and NN) as *he* seeks God's blessing
at the end of *his* marriage.
Anoint *him*, we pray, with the oil of healing,
and fill *him* with the power of the resurrection. Amen.

**O God, our comfort and challenge,
whose presence appears to us
both unexpected and constant;
help us to mourn the loss of what might have been
without fearing what the future may hold.
Transform our desires with your holy inspiration
so that we may discover our life's direction
and the gifts you have showered upon us,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Peace

Let love be genuine. Never pay back evil for evil.
As far as it lies with you, live at peace with everyone.

or

Set your troubled hearts at rest, believe in him who has conquered all things.
Trust in God who gives life eternal.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray as the Father taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever, Amen.**

The Blessing and the Sending out

The Father who created light out of darkness,
the Son who is the light of the world,
the Spirit who enlightens everyone,
the Holy Three be with you
and scatter the darkness from before you;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Glory to God
**whose power, at work among us,
can do infinitely more
than all we can ask or conceive;
to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

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Note:

Where NN is to be found in brackets, these words may be used to refer to a spouse who is able to be present at this service.

Acknowledgements:

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