

Presence: A Pastor's Guide to Funerals	
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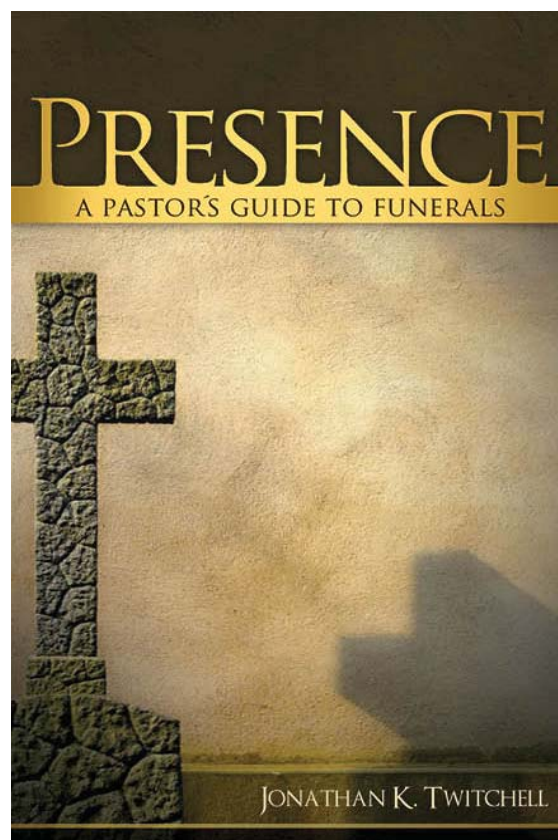
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Description

Death comes as an unwelcomed interruption. The disruption forces individuals to abandon regular routines so they can deal with urgent concerns, such as caring for a dead body, planning a funeral, and beginning the journey through grief. In days clouded by sorrow, pastors embody the Good Shepherd who walks through the valley with those who mourn.

Presence: A Pastor's Guide to Funerals begins with a story about Pastor Jamie who recently graduated from seminary. In just the second week as a pastor, Jamie recognizes the nuances of ministry not evident in a classroom as he steps alongside a family mourning the death of its matriarch. This fictional account is unpacked in part I by exploring the cultural context of death and dying.

Part II develops biblical theologies of death, dying, and the funeral service. Those theological tenets are applied to the practice of ministry in part III. Parts II and III work hand in glove since by considering the ways that God is made manifest in seasons of sadness we discover guidance for the incarnational ministry of presence. Part IV outlines formative practices to assist pastors in the development of the being and doing of pastoral ministry when people grieve.

Presence: A Pastor's Guide to Funerals explores bereavement ministry by helping pastors apply their theological convictions to particular situations. Lifelong ministry practitioners will appreciate the reminder of the theological foundation that undergirds ministry actions. New pastors will find value in the "quick start" hints found in the practical applications. **Presence** provides numerous examples of the significant role played by pastors through which God comforts those walking in the valley dark with death.

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