

ASSETS	APPROXIMATE VALUE
equity in your home	_____
real estate & land	_____
savings	_____
life insurance	_____
business assets	_____
IRA/retirement funds	_____
stocks, bonds, and mutual funds	_____
automobiles/vehicles	_____
furniture	_____
jewelry	_____
collectibles	_____
books and antiques	_____
expected inheritance	_____
other properties	_____
Total	_____

PREPARE TO WRITE YOUR WILL

be a responsible steward



**EPISCOPAL
CHURCH FOUNDATION**
Learn. Lead. Give.

**815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
(800) 697-2858
www.EpiscopalFoundation.org**

For a detailed booklet on
Preparing for the End of Life, contact:
Episcopal Church Foundation

For additional copies of this brochure, contact:
Episcopal Book & Resource Center
800-903-5544

This series of gift planning brochures was developed by the Episcopal Church Foundation. The church, the writers, and publishers of this material are not engaged in rendering legal or tax advice. For advice and assistance in specific cases, please consult an attorney or professional counselor.

Copyright © 2006 Episcopal Church Foundation



For hundreds of years through various editions of the Book of Common Prayer, Episcopalians have been encouraged to make a will, to provide for their families, and to make bequests for religious and charitable purposes if possible.

In the church we suggest you plan your funeral even before writing your will. This way you can make a statement about your life and can tailor your will to reflect your values.

Preparing a will is a loving and responsible act for the sake of your family. Dying intestate is difficult for the family at best. Paul's letter to Timothy reminds us of the simple truth that

“WE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THIS WORLD ...
WE CAN TAKE NOTHING OUT OF IT.”
(I Timothy 6:7)

Here are a few helpful suggestions on how to prepare to write your will, the ultimate exercise in Christian stewardship.

BEFORE SEEING A LEGAL ADVISOR ...

What should you do before seeing a legal advisor? To save time and expense and to ensure that you achieve your goals, take a little time to do the following:

Make a list of everyone for whom you are responsible.

List everyone you would like to remember in your will including charities or causes that have been meaningful to you.

List all of your material assets. This list may be more extensive than you think. (See side panel.)

AFTER SUBTRACTING YOUR DEBTS ...

Match the names with the assets or consider giving a portion of your total estate to each individual. Take care of your family first. This is also the time to consider special friends and your church.

Consider establishing a trust if your estate is large enough by consulting with a financial planner, the trust department of a bank, or a representative of the Episcopal Church Foundation. If your total assets are substantial, you may be subject to federal estate taxes. In some cases, forming a family and/or charitable trust may reduce both estate and inheritance taxes.

Ask your chosen estate administrator (sometimes called executor/executrix) if he or she is willing to serve.

Consult with the people you select as guardians of your children (where minor children are involved) to be sure they are willing to serve.

Talk with your priest to explore the ministries of the church that could best be funded by a gift from your will.

BEQUESTS TO YOUR CHURCH CAN TAKE SEVERAL FORMS ...

- an outright monetary bequest
- a percentage of an estate
- a specific asset, such as personal or real property

- a trust created in a will
- a contingent beneficiary, i.e., the church receives the assets if there are no surviving beneficiaries

Sample language for including the church in your will might be: “I give, devise, and bequeath (state the amount, asset, or percentage of estate) to (name and address of the church) to be used (describe use) or as the church's governing board or vestry deems appropriate.”

A bequest to the church is deductible from the value of your estate for tax purposes.

AFTER YOU MAKE YOUR WILL ...

Make sure that someone knows where your will is located. You might place a copy in a secure file at home and leave a copy with your attorney.

Do not place funeral instructions in a safe deposit box. Generally, services will be over by the time your administrator checks your bank box. Leave a copy of your funeral plans and wishes with your priest and a member of your family.

Review your will from time to time with your legal advisor. Laws, assets, family, and personal interests often change over time. You probably have not written your last will, only your latest will.

Preparing a will is an act of love for your family and friends, a way of easing the pain of loss that follows death. It is also your final legacy.