

Whether updating your will, or designing a Revocable Living Trust which gives instructions for the delivery of your temporal goods, use the FOUR “P’s:”

1. **PEOPLE**—Think first of the people you love, and the passions you have (Change the world? Arts? Animal rights? Environment? Church?).
2. **PROPERTIES**—Then make an inventory of what you have.
3. **PLANS**—Then write down how you want that stuff to be applied to the list of people and passions.
4. **PLANNERS**—Then make sure you have the right people to help you get your ideas in order: attorney, investment person, accountant. Don’t forget your Priest—a person who can help you be sure that your plans will reflect your values.

The fifth “P” might be **PREPARED**.

Staff at the Episcopal Church Foundation is available to help you. Send for your copy of the free booklet, *Planning for the End of Life*, by completing the form below, or by logging on to www.EpiscopalFoundation.org.

Please send the free booklet *Planning for the End of Life*

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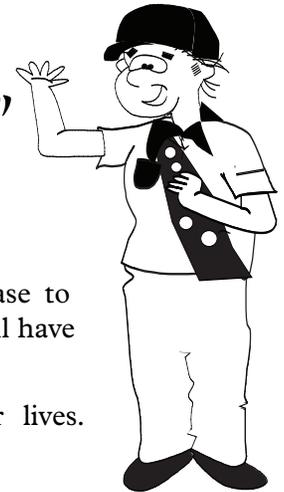
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“BE PREPARED”



The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts use this phrase to describe their readiness for any contingency. We all have “contingencies” in our lives—are we ready?

The ultimate “contingency” is the end of our lives. Are we ready for that?

An old Chinese proverb warns us that if we “Live every day as if we will never die, we may die never having really lived.”

I once got the birthdays of all the participants in a workshop and calculated their statistical death date—and told each person what his or hers would be. We had a lively discussion about how differently we would each live our lives if we knew exactly when we would die! For we are finite, frail creatures, and we will die.

Getting ready for death doesn’t have to be a lugubrious experience. As year-end approaches, I sometimes use the shortening length of daylight to remind me of my own shortening life. Memories of good times, of loved people, of various accomplishments come flooding back, not in the “whole life flashes before your eyes” form, but in pleasant, repeatable and describable batches.

God may have plans for our souls after we die—you’ll take that with you. But we’d better make plans for our stuff—we’re not taking it with us! The will is the most widely used tool for leaving instructions for the distribution of your property. Nowadays a lot of people are creating what’s called a Revocable Living Trust to hold their property—you’re the beneficiary during your lifetime, and designated family or friends benefit after your death. You can even be your own initial trustee!