



**A CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR  
THEOLOGY & PRACTITIONER TRAINING**

# What Is a Death & Resurrection Doula?

## *Professionalism & Ethics*

*The role of a death doula is specifically designed to assist the patient and family with understanding the natural process of death (before, during, and after) while providing suggestions for comfort and support as well as advocating for autonomy in the choices of the client and encouraging the best communication possible between family, caregivers, and professionals working in the direct care of the patient.*

What is a doula? Doula is an ancient Greek word meaning “a woman who serves.” While of course not all doulas are women, service is at the heart of doula work. If you have ever heard of a doula, it is likely it is around childbirth. A death (or end-of-life doula) is a non-medical practitioner trained to assist in the dying process. Through holistic practice, a doula helps families and communities care for someone who is dying. Doulas support patients, caregivers, families, and communities. The concept of a doula is becoming a vital role in the end-of-life process. Death Doulas can add quality of life to the end of life. Hiring a doula can transform the death experience for everyone involved. With the assistance of a trained doula, the end-of-life process can be proficiently less muddled, after-death planning can be made lighter, and the family can focus on being a family.

Doulas are quickly becoming end-of-life ambassadors and are a cutting-edge way to deal with death. A Death Positive movement aims at taking death back — bringing it home — so to speak. After a century of outsourcing death care to hospitals and funeral homes, individuals are revisiting the idea of dying at home, and families are finding themselves in a new role of becoming caregivers to the dying.

It may be difficult for prospective clients to see the value of an end-of-life or death doula. There are a couple of reasons for this. One reason is that the role is relatively new. Many people are not aware of doulas serving in end-of-life care. This leads to the likely connection to the fact that many people are not *aware* of the needs that will arise when someone they love is facing death.

One of these needs is hospice care. But, hospice care alone cannot fulfill the dying person and his or her family's needs. Generally, the hospice team is well equipped to help patients and families work through fear and sadness, and a hospice social worker will assist individuals and families in locating additional resources, but even if a personal care aide is hired to be present in assisting with the activities of daily living, a family will likely still be overwhelmed with all of the needs that occur when someone is dying.

A doula is not a personal care aide and cannot administer medical services. If a certified doula also has a personal care aide certificate or nursing license, he or she may serve in multiple capacities if the services are agreed upon by both the doula and the person(s) receiving care.

The **value** of a Death and Resurrection Doula lies outside of both the necessary personal care and medical care. A doula may overlap with the provisions of hospice care in a few different ways, but this does not reduce the necessity of a certified doula.

*How does a doula participate with families when a dying person is referred to hospice?*

1. **No regulations on time and visits:** a doula is not regulated by an insurance reimbursement structure. (This also includes the time before and after hospice care) A doula can stay with a family throughout the entire end-of-life process, which lasts much longer than the point where the hospice team must exit the scene.
2. **Professional commitment:** some of the greatest services are done through volunteer work, but this should not underestimate the value of professional services. The unregulated time of a professional doula is a game-changer for families and dying people. A certified doula will guide a family every step of the way keeping everything organized and on time while offering a family the time to be with their dying loved one. A doula also incorporates faith-based grief care and engaged support from the faith community.
3. **Community engagement:** doulas serve as a link between church communities and the patient and family. What other needs need to be met? Housekeeping, food service, visitation, respite care, prayer chains, and more.
4. **Doula care services:** helping with memory projects and completing a life review have become popular doula services. A hospice volunteer could also help in some capacity with these important facets of death care, but hiring a Christian doula gives these tasks fresh importance. Regret and the need to clear up estranged relationships may haunt dying people and people they love. God's unlimited grace and forgiveness provide the way forward. Joy and sadness should also be embraced at the end-of-life.
5. **Comfort care plans:** this work includes helping the family care for the patient, and establishing visitation schedules for community visitors, friends, and family. Doulas support families in keeping with the care plan for the highest dignity of the patient and peace of mind for the family. Oftentimes, panic sets in as death arrives. Doulas help families and patients through this difficult transition.
6. **Vigil & funeral planning:** doulas help families prepare for the death vigil, a dynamic time of waiting and expectation for Believers. Once a death has occurred, the funeral displays the

family and community's faith in God and their commitment to the deceased human being. Doulas can assist in preparations for this event.

7. **Continued Support:** new needs will arise after a death has occurred and a family settles into a new way of life. A doula that has journeyed with a family will stay a supportive presence in the days to come.

### *Ethics, Code of Conduct, Patient & Employer Rights*

Professionalism, confidentiality, and the highest ethical standards are of utmost importance for a Death and Resurrection Doula practitioner. Every patient and family served is unique, and services will be tailored to their individual needs providing physical, emotional, and spiritual support to the patient, family, loved ones, friends, and their support communities. There are **certain limits** to the scope of what a doula can offer in care. Death Doulas should carry insurance, but they do not perform any medical tasks such as administering medication, checking vital signs, wound care, or incontinence care (if a licensed medical professional acting as a doula wishes to use their skill in addition to doula work, they must rely on the parameters of and training of that field of work, and such expectations are spelled out in the contract). While a doula cannot carry out these specific tasks, he or she has been trained to provide education regarding the end-of-life process and the options available so that families can make informed decisions about their care. The goal of a doula is to collaborate with the hospice and any other healthcare professionals on your case to create a dynamic support system to ensure the highest level of care in the end-of-life process. During each visit, a doula will assess any outstanding acute and safety issues to be addressed and will be equipped with referral resources in order to maximize the necessary support that is outside of the trained doula's scope of practice.

Death and Resurrection Doulas may not engage in any form of **discrimination** based on race, creed, socioeconomic status, or gender. No form of **sexual relationship or harassment**, physical or verbal, is permitted between a doula and a patient, family, or community member. Any form of **dishonesty or fraudulent behavior** is unacceptable. A doula must uphold a patient and family's **confidentiality** to the highest degree. This means there is no sharing of financial, medical, or personal information unless there is permission. This includes **social media posting** of any sort, even if names and photos are omitted. If a doula has a concern, a doula can take these steps: ask for direction by making an anonymous post on the Certified Doula discussion board, seek help from the Church pastor, and/or inform the family of other professionals who may be able to help address a situation (including the hospice team). Always alert the family to the steps(s) you are taking.

**Autonomy** and **dignity** are essential for someone with a terminal illness. A doula will not usurp the choices available to someone, but with competence and service, a doula should use his or her knowledge to help a person understand how his or her choices might play out. A doula can best help maintain a dying person's dignity by ensuring his or her needs are being met.

A Death and Resurrection Doula must offer patients and families **reasonable availability of service** and a **reasonable pricing structure**. *If a doula does not feel he or she is the best fit for a job, it is best practice to refer an individual or family to another doula.*

Private end-of-life doula care falls under a **consumer-directed model** of service. There is no overarching agency involved in doula placement, rate negotiations, or employee benefits. The family or individual is considered the employer. The employer is responsible for hiring a doula and has every right to terminate the provided contract if the doula does not do his or her job adequately. Creating contracts for service is covered in the training program. Doulas may decline service requests that are not stated specifically in the contract. For instance, toileting and incontinence care are not doula services and an employer cannot require this help.

### *What Christians Believe about God and His Creation*

- God is the Creator of the Universe. He is a Trinitarian God who is Father, Son, & Holy Spirit.
- Human beings are created by God in His Image.
- Death entered the world through the sin of Adam, and this affects every single human being (Original Sin).
- In Jesus Christ, God has atoned for the sin of humanity on the cross.
- God justifies sinners because of Jesus; Good works provide no salvation.
- God requires fundamental dependence upon His free gift of salvation. *Justification by grace through faith alone* is the basis of human dignity before God.
- God commands all human beings to “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength*” and to “*Love your neighbor as yourself*” (Mark 12:30-31).
- **Jesus Christ will return again.** The dead will be raised and those who believe in Jesus will be with Jesus: “He will hand over the Kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power...The last enemy to be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:24-26).

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The Death and Resurrection Doula Training Program is a complete certification program for Death Doulas. The first module, **Rediscovering The Cross: Theology in Practice**, focuses on the spiritual aspects of death from a Christian perspective. The second module, **Death Doula Practitioner Training**, incorporates the Christian understanding of Death into Death Doula practice.

Although the Death and Resurrection Doula training program is a faith-based program, it is not exclusive. This goes for doulas who are training and for the population served. A doula does not need to be a Christian to sign up for the training program. They only need to be aware the training is built upon the Christian faith and that many training doulas are Christians, who want to talk about their faith. Other doula training programs include some talk of spirituality.

Oftentimes it is new-age centered and that is why many Christians are looking for an alternative program.

Certified Death and Resurrection Doulas cannot require a family to adhere to the Christian faith. A Jew or non-Christian should be confident in hiring a Death and Resurrection certified death doula knowing that they will get the services they need with or without religious discussion. For the Christian doula, being grounded in his or her faith will be a foundation of their strength in service.

I believe it is very important that all faiths are respected and understood. Eventually, there may be more discussion about other faiths, but the underlying rule for this program is that no faith other than Christianity will be incorporated into the curriculum other than for purely educational purposes. This is my commitment to being the only Christian training program in the world.



## Sales & Service Models

### How can you use your Death & Resurrection Doula certification?

#### Service Model 1:

*Death and Resurrection Doulas are End-of-Life Care Consultants, Companions, and Non-Medical Care Practitioners.*

Death Doulas by tradition **do not** provide personal care such as bathing, toileting, feeding, etc. In addition, a doula will **NEVER** provide medical care or legal advice to a client. Sometimes, a certified doula will have other professional licenses that permit them to carry out more services. A doula/client contract should not be combined with other service contracts.

A death doula is an essential supplement to hospice care and additional nursing or personal care services. A doula will support the patient and family receiving care and focus their time on helping the family through the *experience* of death. This work includes support in finalizing unfinished end-of-life planning (i.e. advance directives, death vigil & funeral plans), comfort care planning, family mediation, memory projects, and grief work. If a family hires a doula before hospice or personal care assistance is established in the home, a doula helps a family find these resources.

End-of-life care consulting does not only happen when someone is sick. It is important to market doula services to the young and healthy. In this way, doulas can help foster open conversations about mortality, facilitate the necessary steps for end-of-life planning, and help others see their stories as human beings justified by the God who created them.

A great sector for marketing doula services is for-profit businesses. Doulas can offer professional consulting in end-of-life planning education for employees and clients.

*Rates may vary per service. Rates & contracts are discussed in Module 2.*

## **Service Model 2:**

*Death and Resurrection Doulas support churches in end-of-life care needs & the formation of end-of-life care ministries.*

The Death and Resurrection Doula Training Program aims to create a standardization of death doula services. Through Christian Theology, end-of-life consulting training, and non-medical practitioner instruction, Churches can be confident in hiring a certified doula from this program.

In order for doulas to make a “sale” of doula services to church pastors, doulas have materials to share with pastors, including the vision and structure of this program and a realistic look at the need for end-of-life planning conversations and care.

Churches can provide a platform for presentations and possibly a space for future client meetings. Any service contracts will be private pay between the doula and the client.

Additionally, a Church can hire a doula at his or her consulting rate for any further work, such as implementing a parish-wide end-of-life care ministry or teaching community classes with the teaching materials from the curriculum (ie, Advance Directives, Medical Aid in Dying, Writing your Story, Vocation in Community, End of Life Care, etc).

## **Service Model 3:**

*Death and Resurrection Doulas challenge the current state of end-of-life planning and care through education and share personal testimonies of God’s faithfulness and creative renewal in the lives of His people.*

Death and Resurrection Doulas should consider being hired as a conference speaker. This is an opportunity to share your story and invite others into conversations about death, freedom, and salvation.



The Death & Resurrection Doula

# Training Program

We can change the way we do death care because we believe in the power of the gospel.



Valid thru 12/1/24



## Module 1 (\$300)

Theology in Practice:

Rediscovering a Theology of the Cross

## Module 2 (\$450)

Death Doula Practitioner Training  
w/updated Ministry Guidance

Starting a Business?

## Module 3 (\$300)

Business & Marketing Kick-Start  
Includes 2 private sessions with your  
trainer!

(\$75/mo. additional coaching subscription  
available)

**\*\*Cost for all 3 Modules \$1050\*\***

Modules 1 & 2 Required for Certification  
(\$750)

This program offers referral payouts!

Module 1: The theological curriculum covers the topics of creation, the fall, the flood, God's promise through Abraham, Patriarchal history in Genesis, the Exodus, baptism, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and 21st-century eschatology.

Module 2: The practitioner curriculum is in-depth training for the professional vocation of non-medical support to individuals, families, and communities in the face of death. The training includes professional contributions by industry professionals..

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## Rediscovering the Cross: Theology in Practice

### *Navigating Module 1*

### **Theology Introduction**

#### 1. Documents

##### *A. Guide to Doula Care*

Learning Objectives: Understand the value, professionalism, and ethics of a Death & Resurrection Doula.

##### *B. Module 1 Introduction & Vision*

Learning Objectives: Introduction to a theology of the cross and the death positive movement.

#### 2. Experiences

##### *A. Old Selves & New Selves*

Learning Objective: Complete a contemplative exercise on encountering the faithfulness and grace of God in our lives.

##### *B. Why become a Death Doula?*

Learning Objective: Complete a contemplative exercise on your call to be a caregiver to the dying.

### **Theology Curriculum**

#### 1. **Required Reading:** *Surprised by Hope* by N.T. Wright

Learning Objectives: The Western discourse on the Biblical realities of heaven is inconsistent with the New Testament. As Death and Resurrection Doulas, how might we aid in revitalizing the Biblical expectation of heaven? This book will be incorporated into live discussions through the Fellowship Café.

## 2. Experiences

### A. *Genesis & The Gospel*

Learning Objective: An introduction to the doctrines of Creation and Salvation; Why is the human body important?

### B. *Why Do We Die?*

Learning Objectives: The answer to this question distinguishes a Christian Death Doula from a non-Christian one. Christians believe death is not natural; it is a result of original sin. This experience is an introduction to *recapitulation* (Romans 5:14).

### C. *What is Baptism? (with Rev. Jacob Smith)*

Learning Objective: The sacrament of baptism is essential in the life of a Christian. What does it mean and why is it important? We can see the effects of baptism in our lives as God renews us and creates faith in us.

### D. *The Passion & Easter Resurrection*

Learning Objective: The word *atonement* means reconciliation. Each Gospel narrative proclaims the truth of our hope in Christ's death and resurrection.

### E. *The Importance of Having a Funeral (with Chad Bird)*

Learning Objective: Funerary practices have changed greatly through the past 3 centuries in American Society. From traditional funerals to post-modern "celebrations of life", green burials, and online funerals, as a practicing end-of-life doula, you will see various ways families and communities commemorate their dead.

### F. *Christian Eschatology*

Learning Objectives: A basic introduction to Christian Eschatology, which is rooted in Judaism's expectation of a future bodily resurrection. This experience includes a brief look into the postmodern emphases of Christian Eschatology.  
by Chad Bird

## **Telling Our Stories**

### Experiences

#### A. *Dying Well Story #1*

Learning Objective: Study a real-life end-of-life experience for a dying man and his family.

*B. Dying Well Story #2*

Learning Objective: Study a real-life end-of-life experience for a young dying mother and her family.

*C. Writing Your Story (with Chad Bird)*

Learning Objectives: Contemplate the meaning of your story through the lens of justification in Jesus Christ. Doulas will create their own Story Experience.

*D. Listening to the Stories of Others*

Learning Objectives: Introduction to Legacy Projects, a popular component of doula care. Doulas will write up the structure of a mini legacy project for someone they know.

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**Books for this module:**

*Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities at End of Life* by Ira Brock, M.D. (\$11 Amazon)

*Your God is Too Glorious* by Chad Bird (\$8.50 - \$17 Amazon)

*Surprised By Hope* by N.T. Wright (\$12 Amazon)



## The Death and Resurrection Doula: Practitioner Training *Navigating Module 2*

### Doula Practitioner Introduction

Document: *Intro to U.S. Death Care*

Learning Objective: An overview of Harold Braswell's book, *The Crisis of US Hospice Care*, and a continuation of the vision of the Death and Resurrection Doula ministry. Doulas will be instrumental in changing how end-of-life care is administered and educated in the destructive direction of the secular Death Positive movement.

### Doula Practitioner Curriculum

#### 1. **Part I** Experiences:

##### A. *Advance Planning for End-of-Life*

Learning Objective: This experience is an introduction to advanced directives, which include a Living Will and Health Care Power of Attorney. Additional documents to be familiar with are a POLST or MOLST form, Dementia Directive, and DNR. **Doulas will complete their personal advance directives and help a family member or friend complete theirs. A short documentation of the project is required.**

##### B. *Caring for the Elderly*

Learning Objective: This experience is an introduction to the statistics of aging individuals, the cost of Long-Term Care, aging in place vs. assisted living, and Medicare. This experience also includes a presentation on caring for loved ones with memory loss.

##### C. *The Medical Aid in Dying Debate*

Learning Objective: This experience is an introduction to Medical Aid in Dying, also called Physicians Assisted Suicide. Harold Braswell is a Bioethicist and Scholar who shares his work in the serious dilemma that poses a future risk to society.

*D. Vocation: Working with Families and Communities*

Learning Objective: Caring for the dying is multi-vocational. Understanding how God works in and through vocation is essential to providing the best death care and limiting physician-assisted suicide. As the Church, we all share in the vocation of being expectant upon the return of Christ.

3. **Pt. II Experiences:**

*A. Introduction to Hospice Care (with Lisa Bennion, RN)*

Learning Objective: This experience is a foundational introduction to Hospice Care. Death Doulas will serve families at different stages of Hospice Care and even educate and encourage patients to choose Hospice Care for the highest quality of life at the end of life.

*B. Understanding Death & Dying (with Lisa Bennion, RN)*

Learning Objective: As the body shuts down, Death Doulas support families in the process of caring for a loved one. This experience teaches doulas how the body shuts down and how to care for the family and patient at this time.

*C. Crafting Care Plans (with Lisa Bennion, RN)*

Learning Objective: Death itself is not painful, but depending on the disease process, different interventions and medications may be used to keep the patient comfortable as they are dying. Doulas are non-medical practitioners but understanding what the caregivers will be trained to do by the hospice nurse will boost your ability to support families with knowledge and confidence during this transitional time.

*D. Death Vigil (with Reverend Scott Bennion)*

Learning Objective: To be vigilant is to be awake or watchful. As Christians, we have the privilege of being vigilant with hope and expectation! Planning help for a death vigil is an important part of doula care. As Death and Resurrection Doulas, we have an opportunity to create awareness of the importance of this time while refusing the secular or New Age practices.

*E. Grief Support (with Reverend Scott Bennion)*

Learning Objective: Grief and mourning are inseparable from any loss. As Death and Resurrection Doulas, we will spend a lot of time sojourning with those who are grieving. This experience gives you important tools for being present with others as they navigate grief before and after death.

#### 4. Pt. III Experiences:

##### A. *Funeral & Burial Trends*

Learning Objective: Watch a brief interview with a Christian Funeral Director. In addition to an introduction to the modern funeral industry, this experience also teaches doulas how families can participate in traditional death rituals and the actions to take after death has occurred.

##### B. *Estate Planning Basics (With Estate Attorney Darlene Campbell)*

Learning Objective: A Christian Estate Attorney leads doulas through the basics of estate planning needs and teaches how to make strong referrals to local attorneys. Darlene highlights the importance of the Death Doula in helping families take the right steps to ensure that essential end-of-life planning tasks are complete.

##### C. *Ministry Matters: Forming end-of-life care ministries for Church communities*

Learning Objective: The final experience ties together faith, vocation, and eschatology. The first experience (M1) to the last (M2) forms the beginning and end of an arc. Beginning with the first experience, you explore a call to care for dying people inside a community. Throughout the curriculum, you explore God's transforming work in your life. Your new creation is emerging just like God promises those who believe! As God transforms your life daily, the pieces of your history **make your ministry matter**. After completing a theology and practitioner training program for Christian End-of-Life Doula Care, you are ready to lead in the Spirit of Christ.

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#### **Books for this module:**

*Spirituality of the Cross* by Gene E. Veith, Jr. (\$13 Amazon)

*Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande (\$13-14 Amazon)

*The Crisis of U.S. Hospice Care: Family and Freedom at End of Life* by Harold Braswell (This book may be on sale at <https://www.press.jhu.edu/>)



## **The Death and Resurrection Doula: Business & Marketing Quick-Start** *Navigating Module 3*

### **Starting Your Doula Business**

Learning Objectives: In this experience, you will learn about:

- Starting a Business
- Ethics & Professionalism
- Contracts & Billing
- Business Resources with Convene Communities\*
- Social Media, Websites, & Networking

**The purchase of this module includes 2 (45 min.) private sessions with Laurel.**

- \* **Convene Communities** is a Platform with a Purpose. One platform log-in provides access to training *and* the resources to grow a dynamic business. Inside The Death and Resurrection Doula Community, **State and International Directories** provide certified doulas with the potential to grow successful end-of-life doula business storefronts. Convene Communities opens new doors for business growth setting the Death and Resurrection Doula business model apart from the other doula training programs.
- \* The **Death and Resurrection Doula Executive Leader Training** is a future endeavor for business development. This is optional training for becoming a Death and Resurrection Doula Business Coach, State, or International Leader. Module 3 is a pre-requisite for leadership training.





Congratulations! You are ready to begin the following courses:

**Rediscovering the Cross: Theology in Practice**  
**Death Doula Practitioner Training**

By purchasing this training program, you agree to the following:

- 1. There are no program refunds.** The Death and Resurrection Doula uses the Convene Communities all-in-one platform to mentor end-of-life doulas in a faith-based curriculum. Convene Communities' *Terms & Conditions* apply to each platform member and creating a log-in requires you to agree to them. See all terms and conditions at the bottom of each page on the platform.
- 2. Certification in The Death and Resurrection Doula Training Program is not a guarantee of profit.** By purchasing Modules 1, 2, & 3 (optional), you have full access to a competitive doula training and certification program. When you begin your ministry with a Death and Resurrection Doula Certificate, you will have the necessary tools for success. Like any new endeavor, paying personal attention to your goals and putting in the hard work is the key to success.
- 3. The Death and Resurrection Doula Training Program is self-paced.** You can obtain a certificate without attending the scheduled live classes. The classes are intended for a deeper study of the content and collaboration with the community developer, course professionals, and other doulas. There is no time limit on completion. The **Death & Resurrection Collaboration Association** is a post-certification opportunity to ensure ministry growth and development.
- 4. The Death and Resurrection Doula brand contains the intellectual property of Laurel Nicholson.** Without the expressed permission of Laurel Nicholson, no part of the written lesson content from the Death and Resurrection Doula Training Program may be used outside of the Convene Communities platform.

**5. You are encouraged to create a personal business brand.** Still, you agree to adhere to the program standardization of a **Death and Resurrection Doula** as described in the *Guide to Doula Care*. This standardization resides under the Death and Resurrection Doula logo, which you are encouraged to use to distinguish your training competence.

**6. Freedom of expression is allowed and encouraged inside all Lesson Learned submissions and Discussion Board posts.** When engaging in public conversation, Death and Resurrection Doulas must treat one another with the utmost compassion and respect as we discern God's truth in all things. Lesson Learned submissions are anonymous by default and Discussion Board posts can be anonymous if selected. You should not use the anonymity feature to disparage another doula's beliefs or practices. If you disagree and wish to comment, you are encouraged to do so with care and discernment.

**7. The purchase and annual renewal of Professional Liability Insurance is recommended upon training & certification as a professional end-of-life doula.** You agree to release the Death and Resurrection Doula Training Program, a collaborative training program, from all liability in the event of individual professional malpractice.