

THE CHALLENGE OF PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING TO THE
BEREAVED FAMILIES OF KILLED POLICE OFFICIALS: A CASE STUDY OF
LIMPOPO PROVINCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Police killing is a global problem that poses a serious challenge to the security and stability of any country since police officials are responsible for making sure that every citizen is safe and secure. The current crisis of police killings in South Africa is a challenge to the bereaved families of killed police officials in Limpopo Province. The bereaved are faced with the challenge of coping with the loss of their loved ones. The South African Police Services employs chaplains who must provide pastoral care and counseling to SAPS members and their families. The objectives of this study are: to explore the intricacies that serve as stumbling block to counselling the bereaved families of killed police officials, to examine the psycho-social effects of killing of the police on the bereaved families of killed police officials, and finally to examine pastoral care that is relevant in the emotional healing of the victims of police killings. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative method to obtain data from individuals within Limpopo Province. A sample of 30 participants (bereaved family members of killed police officials) from Limpopo Province was used. Data were collected on an individual basis through the use of in-depth interviews. This was necessary because each bereaved family member is unique. This required proper listening skills to extract information from the participants. Data were collected and analysed using the seven steps proposed by Tesch, in order to understand how participants understand their personal experiences as bereaved family members of killed police officials in Limpopo Province. The findings of this study show that the bereaved families of killed police officials are experiencing many challenges, and that SAPS chaplains are not doing enough to provide pastoral care and counselling to address those challenges. This research will help to enhance the quality of pastoral care and counselling to the bereaved families of killed police officials in Limpopo Province. The research would make recommendations aimed at alleviating the plight of bereaved families of killed police officials in the Limpopo Province. The findings and recommendations emanating from the study will be useful in guiding all SAPS chaplains and pastors in providing pastoral care and counselling to the bereaved families of killed police officials in Limpopo Province.