

Funeral Options

Today's funerals often include a wide-range of religious, spiritual, and celebration options. It is important to consider your specific needs and choose how you best want to be remembered and honored.

Main Elements of a Funeral

A funeral service is about honoring the loved one whose life has ended, and providing comfort and support to those who remain.

Each phase of the funeral ritual is an important part of your loved ones' journey toward recovery and healing. There are three essential elements to planning a healthy, healing funeral experience:

- *Ceremony or Service:*

A ceremony helps honor the loved one who has died and helps others understand the reality of the death. Including the appropriate religious or spiritual elements often offers hope to the grieving family and helps in the search for meaning.

- *Procession:*

A procession to the graveside is a strong symbol of unity, support, and acknowledgement that something important has occurred. It helps families transition from the funeral to the graveside together and accept the finality of the loved one's death.

- *Public or Private Gathering:*

After the graveside or committal service, there is often an informal gathering, sometimes called a wake, where friends and family continue to share memories, express their condolences, and share comfort.

Ceremony or Service Options

Specific ceremony or service options to consider include:

- *Traditional funeral service*

A traditional funeral service begins with the loved one's remains being carried in a casket. Family and friends remember and honor the life of their loved one through prayers, literature passages or songs.

- *Graveside or committal service*

A graveside or committal service is held at a gravesite or at a mausoleum in a cemetery. Like a traditional service, it provides a final opportunity to honor and say goodbye to their deceased loved one.

- *Memorial service*

A memorial service is most commonly held after burial or cremation. Memorial services may be held several days to up to a year after the disposition of the deceased loved one.

- *Traditional funeral service followed by cremation*

With this option, when the traditional funeral service is complete, the deceased's remains are directed to a crematorium versus burial.

- *Direct burial*

In a direct burial, there is no formal funeral or committal service. The loved one is buried shortly after death, with no viewing or visitation.

- *Direct cremation*

As with direct burial, with cremation there is no formal funeral or committal service. After cremation, a loved one's remains are returned to the family.

- *Home funeral or home burial*

Home funerals, sometimes called, home burials, are when a service or ceremony for the loved one is held at home and managed by the family.

- *Anatomical gift to science*

Remains may be donated to medical centers or to schools for scientific study. After the medical institution has completed its process, the body is cremated and the remains are returned to the family.

Personalizing Your Funeral

Today, you may now choose creative and personal ways to make your funeral service unique. Families may choose to include memorabilia, pictures, art objects, or hobby or craft items at events.

- *Public or Private Viewing Before the Funeral Service*

A viewing or visitation is a gathering of friends or family before the funeral service. The viewing occurs with the body of the deceased loved one present.

- *Friends and Family Gathering After Graveside or Committal Services*

After the committal service, there is often a gathering of friends and family to continue to share memories and express their condolences.

Your Final Resting Place

There is a growing trend toward creative and inspiring final disposition options including scattering ashes at sea, sending remains into space, transforming ashes into a jewelry or keepsake or donating remains to science.

Whatever type of service you choose, from traditional to non-traditional, the service will help commemorate and honor your loved one.