

Organising Someone's Funeral

Before organising a funeral, it is important to remember that we need to say goodbye.

1. Why have a funeral?

A funeral is for those who are living. It is a celebration of the life of the loved one who has died - not the death.

Consequently, it is essential that everyone who has been touched by the life of the deceased, also has the opportunity to share in that celebration and the chance to say goodbye.

We need to be able to say goodbye before we can work through our grief and learn to go on to new life.

There are four basic needs fulfilled by the funeral:

a) Physical - the disposal of the deceased's body is controlled by State laws, and is usually by way of burial or cremation.

After burial, the remains are still legally identifiable at a later date if necessary, whereas cremated remains have no legal status and this allows the flexibility for disposal in a more personalised manner.

b) Emotional - a funeral allows us to "let go" of our emotions and face the reality of death. It allows family and friends to share their memories of a loved one, to laugh and cry together and provide vital support to each other in their grief.

The funeral experience helps us to put our memories in perspective and provides the opportunity for healing to commence. It allows us to pay our last respects and "tie up all the ends".

c) Social - A funeral is a social event that emphasises and acknowledges life. It is also an historical event that should be shared, so that family and friends can support each other to help everyone survive.

d) Spiritual - A funeral helps us realise that material things don't really matter as money can't buy the most important gift of all, that of life. A funeral gives expression to love and allows for faith to be shown.

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Preparation.

When it comes time to make an appointment with one of our staff, there are a few things you may wish to know beforehand. Below are a few of the main questions that will be asked at the time of a funeral arrangement. At least having considered a few of the main details for the funeral will greatly assist the preparation of a funeral - for both yourselves and the arranger. In any case, your funeral arranger is there to advise and guide you through all the different aspects of organising someone's funeral.

- Is it to be a religious or a non-denominational service?
- Where would you like the service to be held?
- Is it to be a burial or a cremation?
- Are there to be newspaper notices inserted and, if so, what newspapers should be used?
- Would you like flowers for the top of the coffin or casket?
- What music would you like played at the service? Live or recorded?
- Are there people in particular you would like to have as readers or bearers?
- Do you have the necessary personal information, such as place of birth, marriage details and parents names and occupations?

The Arrangement

At the time of the appointment your arranger will sit down with you and discuss all of the major funeral service components as above. During this time you will be informed as to various options that you have available to you. The arrangement is usually the best opportunity to do the following:

- * Finalise when and where the service will be held.
- * Select a coffin or casket.
- * Work out death and funeral notices.
- * Discuss floral tributes or donations to be made in lieu of flowers.
- * Organise what music, if any, is to be played at the service.
- * Arrange a time for a viewing.
- * Talk about additional services such as those by the RSL or a Lodge.
- * Complete death registration paperwork by recording personal information.
- * Complete application forms for burial or cremation.
- * Sign all of the relevant paperwork.
- * Talk about other optional products, services and activities that may be incorporated in order to personalize the funeral service.
- * Answer any questions you may have.

Following the appointment, your arranger will first and foremost go about contacting the relevant clergy or civil celebrant to discuss possible dates and times for the service to be held. Also, the

cemetery or crematorium is contacted to make a tentative booking. After these aspects of the service are set, the arranger can then begin to organise other things like flowers, notices, music, service booklets and more.