



Simplicity
Cremations

How to Plan a Funeral Service



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A funeral service is a chance to honour and reflect on the life, values and beliefs of a loved one who has passed away. It can be an occasion for mourning, reflecting and celebrating the life your loved one led.

A Family Led Funeral from Simplicity allows you the opportunity to arrange a family-led funeral service, whilst our funeral professionals bring your loved one into our care and tend to the essential cremation aspects of the funeral.

This guide will take you through the process of planning a funeral service. You do not have to arrange all of these elements; this is simply a guide of some things you may want to consider including.

Visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice for more helpful guides and practical information.

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Introduction

Our Family Led Funeral allows you to say goodbye to your loved one, your way.

It provides a full-length service slot in the crematorium chapel for an unlimited number of attendees with a service arranged by you, followed by an unwitnessed cremation. This allows you to organise a personalised funeral service that is befitting of your loved one's life and character, without the often unwanted and unnecessary ceremonial excess and need for a funeral director.

A Family Led Funeral is arranged over the telephone by you. A dedicated funeral advisor can provide advice and guidance however there will not be a funeral director organising the services on your behalf. There is no procession, hearse or limousines. Instead, the focus of the funeral is the service, arranged by you and your family.

If you are responsible for planning a funeral service and have chosen the Family Led Funeral from Simplicity, you should allow for around 30 minutes in the crematorium's chapel. This will allow ample time for attendees to calmly enter and exit the chapel.

Upon your arrival at the crematorium, your loved one's coffin will be resting on the catafalque in the chapel. You will be welcomed inside the chapel by a chapel attendant.

The cremation will take place at a CMG crematorium,, local to the resting place of the deceased at an available date and time of your choosing (exc. weekends and bank holidays). As part of one of the largest funeral groups in the UK, we have access to over 45 crematoria nationwide.



Choose a type of service

The first step of planning a funeral service is to think about what type of service you would like for your loved one. Would you like the service to be formal or informal? Religious or non-religious? A celebration of life, or something more similar to a traditional funeral service?

Although funeral services have in the past been very traditional in nature, this is no longer always the case. Planning a funeral service is now more of a personal process, with funeral services shaped around the deceased's life, religious or spiritual beliefs or family traditions.

Some families opt for engaging with the services of a minister or officiant, and organise a service in the way you would with a traditional funeral, whereas others prefer to do something a little less formal, such as spend the time playing a collection of their loved one's favourite songs and sharing happy memories.

Non-religious funeral services tend to focus on celebrating a loved one's life, personality and accomplishments as an alternative way to say goodbye. If you do want to include religious elements in the funeral, you may ask a religious leader to lead the service, choose a hymn to be played or perform a religious reading.

Honouring a life with personal touches and details can create a meaningful and lasting remembrance, whether that's by adding small details or planning a more elaborate affair; how the service is planned is completely up to you.





Who will lead the funeral service?

An important thing to consider when organising a funeral service is who will conduct the service. Although most funerals are led by a celebrant or minister, anyone can perform a funeral service.

If you decide you would like a family member or friend to lead the service, you should be sure whoever you ask is confident doing so. It is totally understandable that even the most confident of family and friends may get upset whilst leading the service. In some cases, they may feel that they can't continue, so it's a good idea to have someone else in place who can step in until they feel composed enough to speak again.

If you'd like a religious figure to lead the ceremony or something a bit more formal, we can also provide guidance on finding a minister or officiant.

When organising a funeral of any kind, there will be a limit on the length of time allowed in the chapel. We'd recommend planning for around thirty minutes for the service itself, so there's ample time to enter and exit the crematorium without feeling rushed. Ensure you have prepared for this beforehand with whoever will be conducting the service.

For more advice on deciding who will lead the funeral service, please visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/who-can-perform-a-funeral-service



Personalising the funeral service

Every funeral service will be different, as it will be unique to the person who has died. A typical funeral service may include funeral music, eulogies and funeral poems and readings read by family and friends. You may have other ideas, especially if your loved one had any special hobbies or interests.

Music

Funeral songs and music are a great way of personalising a funeral service. Music can be a powerful factor when processing grief. All of our crematoria feature a music system so you will have the ability to arrange a playlist of songs to play inside the chapel. It can be a nice touch to have your loved one's favourite song playing as you enter or exit the chapel. If you need inspiration, visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/best-funeral-songs for a list of popular funeral songs.

At a Christian funeral service, traditionally there are two hymns sung; one hymn to open the service and a second as a closing hymn. Many people also find comfort in including funeral hymns in their loved one's funeral service, even if their loved one was not of Christian faith. Several hymns have remained popular song choices for funerals over the years, visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/funeral-hymns for ideas.



Ask a family member or friend to prepare a eulogy

It is common to feature a eulogy as part of the order of service, as a tribute to your loved one. You should consider asking someone who knew them well, so they'll be able to say something appropriate and fitting. It can be quite an honour to be asked to speak at a funeral, although some people may prefer not to, as it can take a lot of confidence to stand up and speak in front of a large congregation.

For advice on how to prepare a eulogy, visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/how-to-write-a-eulogy

Readings and poems

Although whoever is leading the funeral service will do most of the speaking, it's common for a loved one to read a few words. This is often in addition to the eulogy.

Bible readings are an important part of a funeral service for those of Christian faith. If religious readings weren't important to your loved one, a reading from their favourite book or even lyrics from a song might be more appropriate. Visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/bible-readings-for-funerals to see a bible verses that are appropriate for a loved one's funeral.

If you've got multiple friends and family members who would like to say something, then several shorter readings rather than one longer funeral reading may be a good option.

See www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/popular-funeral-readings for inspiration.

Like funeral songs and readings, a funeral poem can provide comfort as well as serving as a touching reminder of a loved one. We've created a guide to make choosing a funeral poem easier, which includes a collection of short poems, happy poems and religious funeral poems.

Visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/funeral-poems to access our guide.

You do not have to choose a traditional funeral poem; writing your own funeral poem means you can make it as personal as you like. You can include memories shared with your loved one, their hobbies and interests and their personality traits.

Share memories of your loved one

There are lots of ways of sharing memories at a funeral. A photo memory board can be a nice touch for everyone to share photos of happy times with the departed. By asking family and friends for pictures, you should hopefully collect a range of photos covering the course of their life, as different people might have known them best at different times. This is a nice way to highlight the person's life and accomplishments.

Taking this one step further, you could dedicate part of the service so mourners can share memories and stories with the congregation. Alternatively, you could leave paper and pens on the seats so guests can write memories and place them into a memory box at the end of the service for you to read at a later date.



Order of service

A funeral order of service provides an outline of what will happen throughout the service. It is often a printed 4-page booklet that is handed out to mourners as they enter the chapel or resting on seats before they enter. It is common for mourners to keep the booklet as a memory of your loved one or for a copy of the order of service to be sent to those who cannot attend.

As the arranger, you will decide on the order of service. Each order of service will be different as it is personalised for your loved one.

An order of service may include:

- Hymns
- Songs
- Readings
- Poems
- Photographs

Visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/funeral-order-of-service for advice on how to create an order of service.





Funeral flowers or charitable donations

Many people choose to arrange funeral flowers and floral tributes to create a personal tribute to a loved one.

Some funerals can involve an abundance of flowers, wreaths and floral tributes, while at others, the flowers are kept to a simple funeral spray on the coffin or casket, or even no flowers at all. It is totally down to the personal preference of you and your family.

Traditionally, coffin sprays (sometimes referred to as casket sprays) are usually chosen by close family members as the main floral tribute. Letter tributes (such as 'DAD' or 'NAN') are also sometimes ordered by the family. If you are arranging a Family Led Funeral, we'd advise you have the flowers delivered to the crematorium on the morning of the funeral.

Most florists are experienced with funerals and will be happy to assist in talking through the options that are available to you. You can also purchase funeral flowers via the internet. There are many online retailers that offer competitive prices, and the range of floral tributes is a lot wider than most florists.

Some families prefer to fundraise for a chosen charity in lieu of floral tributes from mourners, although it is common for families to do both.

If you would like to request donations in lieu of flowers, you can include this request in any newspaper obituary notice, or on the day of the funeral, along with details of the chosen charity.



Funeral attire

It is also a good idea to think about whether you'd like to have a dress code for the funeral. Traditionally, people have worn black to a funeral as a mark of respect.

Opting for alternative funeral attire is a really easy way to personalise a funeral. It's becoming a popular request to ask mourners to dress in bright colours or even your loved one's favourite colour, instead of traditional mourning colours.

When making funeral arrangements you should give attendees as much notice as possible, if you wish for them to dress in a particular way.





Organise a wake

When arranging a funeral for your loved one, you may want to consider holding a reception after the service. Funeral wakes are less formal than the service, offering a place for the bereaved to gather, share stories of a loved one, and celebrate their life.

Although it is a widely held custom, it isn't compulsory to arrange a wake after the funeral. People will understand if you would prefer not to do this.

People may choose to attend the wake if they cannot attend the funeral; while some guests who were at the funeral may be unable to attend the wake. A wake may be a chance for children to attend, especially if they did not attend the funeral.

Visit www.simplicity.co.uk/advice/how-to-organise-a-wake for information on how to organise a wake.

