

Ten Mistakes to Avoid in Funeral Planning

"I don't know where to start."

For most people, planning a funeral is an unfamiliar process. It's important to select a good funeral home that offers the services and pricing that are appropriate for your family's beliefs, values, and budget.

We've prepared this simple, straightforward guide to make the process easier for you ... and to help you make the most informed choices. Of course, we will be happy to answer your questions and offer any assistance you might need to help with your decisions. We hope the ten steps in this guide will help you plan the most appropriate tribute for your loved one – or for yourself.



DON'T WAIT UNTIL SOMEONE IS ILL

Everyone thinks preplanning funerals is a good idea. But, often people put it off. They procrastinate thinking, "I'm still young," or, "I don't want to think about that now." However, the best time to do it is when everyone is healthy. You can give it the time and attention it deserves and go on enjoying life.

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IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO PUT YOUR CHOICES IN YOUR WILL

And it's not enough to simply mention your desires to your children or spouse. Wills are read after the funeral and family members can either forget or disagree with your choices. The only way to be sure your wishes are carried out is to plan your funeral in detail with the assistance of a funeral professional who can keep your specific choices on file. When the time arrives, your family need only make one telephone call, and all arrangements will be in place.



3

DON'T BASE YOUR DECISION SOLELY ON PRICE.

Many times, families gathering information on funeral costs make a decision because of a low price. While it is very important to stay within a predetermined budget, it's also important to completely understand exactly which services are offered, and which you really want. In making this decision, be sure to consider the trustworthiness of the funeral home, the quality of the facilities, and the experience of the staff. You might receive a much more satisfying service for only a few dollars more.

4

*DON'T PRICE
COMPARE WITHOUT
KNOWING WHAT'S
INCLUDED AND
WHAT'S NOT.*

When people shop they often fail to compare the same services and merchandise at each firm. If a casket has the same name, they will assume it is the same quality when often there are different levels of quality. The most confusing part is when families compare service charges and think one funeral home is a lot less when actually the firm with the lower service charge may charge more for the casket and other merchandise. Always compare the bottom line and find out what is included and what is not.



5

DON'T DO ALL YOUR SHOPPING OVER THE PHONE.

It's not uncommon for people to "call around" to many funeral homes, asking about prices for specific services. But a funeral is a serious, important event, and sometimes price isn't the most important consideration. Do your shopping in person as well. You should want to inspect the facility, and meet the people who will be making the arrangements for your loved one. When you visit a funeral home in person, and meet the staff face to face, you'll be more comfortable, and more secure in your decisions.

6


ASK ABOUT GUARANTEES.

A funeral is a series of small events, each one carefully planned. If the planning is inadequate or faulty, the emotional impact on family and friends can be severe. Professionals understand how important it is to carry out each detail without flaw, and they generally offer a satisfaction guarantee. Be sure to ask about this, and request that the funeral home explain it to you in detail.

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DON'T ASSUME EVERY FUNERAL HOME IS A CREMATION EXPERT.

If you or your loved one has chosen cremation, it is important to ask specific questions about how the funeral home handles the process. Will you be allowed to witness the event if you desire? Do they abide by a code of ethics? Do they offer a large selection of commemorative items (such as urns or mementos). Be sure to ask the funeral professional to explain the entire process, so that you understand all the steps – and the costs – you will encounter.



*DON'T OVERLOOK
HOW THE FUNERAL
HOME MANAGES
THE DETAILS.*

We believe that a funeral should be as unique as the individual. Today, most funeral directors offer ways to tell the story of the life that has been lived, through services such as memory tables, tribute videos, commemorative items, symbols that honor military service, memorialization jewelry, and much more. Personalizing the service makes the event more satisfying and memorable for everyone.

*DON'T FAIL TO
CONSIDER THE
REPUTATION OF
THE FUNERAL HOME.*

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Not all funeral homes are the same. A qualified funeral professional will take time to discuss the variety of options available. You will need to know that the funeral home stands behind the services and products they offer. An established firm with a strong reputation offers peace of mind in knowing that all the details will be carried out as planned. A funeral is one of life's major events, so it is important to have it taken care of by people you can trust.



*DON'T FORGET
TO ASK WHAT THEY
WILL DO FOR YOU
AFTERWARDS.*

The best funeral professionals truly care about the families they serve, and believe that their responsibility to you continues long after the funeral. When selecting a funeral home, ask about the services they provide when the funeral is over. They are there to direct you to local resource centers that can assist you with the necessary documents and certificates. Services may also include referrals to grief counselors and support groups, memorial services on special days, follow-up visitations, literary resources, and much more.

IT'S AN IMPORTANT DECISION.

That's why planning a funeral in advance is such a good choice. It is an important decision ... one that can lead to a healing experience and the creation of cherished memories that last a lifetime. The alternatives are many and varied, but they don't have to be difficult, and they don't have to be beyond your means. Make sure you are comfortable with the funeral home, staff, and services you are considering, gather all the information you need, and plan the type of service you want.

And ask questions. *We're here to help.*

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