

Liz Carlile

Celebrant

Guide to a good funeral

A death – even if you have been expecting it – leaves you feeling vulnerable and at a loss. If there is no pre-prepared plan for the funeral suddenly there is lots to think about. The first decision is what type of ceremony you want.

Will you be choosing a religious service or a non-religious ceremony? What is right for the person who died – was religion important to them or not? If they had no preference then what is right for you?

Here is a guide to the key elements of a non-religious ceremony that will help you get started. Your Funeral Director and Celebrant will also be very experienced and will steer you through all these decisions beforehand as well as looking after you on the day.

I am accredited with Humanists UK and my details and more information can be found at: lizcarlilecelebrant.org or humanists.uk.org/lizcarlile.

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MAKE MOMENTS COUNT



1. Your chosen Funeral Director will help you choose the type of ceremony – a cremation, a burial, a direct cremation and/or a memorial service?
2. You will need a Celebrant. Your Funeral Director can recommend or you can find one yourself online (Humanists UK) or from friends' recommendations.
3. You can design the ceremony, with the Celebrant, in any way you like within the time available at the crematorium.
4. Crematoria offer time slots that range from 25 mins – 45 minutes depending on their particular programme. You can pay for two consecutive slots to have more time if you think you will need it.
5. For the ceremony you will want to think about:
 - Music:** There is often music on entry to the chapel. There is also time for music within the ceremony, one piece is usually a slower piece dedicated to personal reflection. Mourners usually leave to a final piece.
 - Readings:** Poetry, song lyrics, literary extracts or verbal contributions from family and friends can be part of the ceremony but are not essential.
 - The Tribute/Eulogy:** The celebrant can write and read this for you or they can read your piece should you feel unable. A family meeting before the ceremony will ensure the celebrant knows about the life of the deceased.
 - The Committal:** When you say goodbye to the deceased you will choose between leaving the curtains open or closing them. Leaving the curtains open allows for people to touch the coffin as they leave, closing them can lend an air of finality.
 - Webcast:** Those who cannot attend in person can watch the ceremony online. This can also be useful to share afterwards as a recording.
 - Photo Tribute:** This can play during the ceremony. The Funeral Director will cost and produce this for you depending on the number of photos.
 - Order of Service:** You may choose to have a printed programme for mourners. The celebrant will help you determine the order and the Funeral Directors will oversee the print and production of the copies. Instructions about flowers and/or donations will be included.