

Funeral Etiquette

The accepted customs of dress and behaviour in a funeral have changed over time, but courtesy never goes out of style. Here's what we'd like you to know about funeral etiquette.

Making the most of a difficult time

It is important to know what religious, ethnic or personal considerations you need to take into account. It's also important to be respectful of the emotions of close family members.

Here are a few things expected of you:

❖ Offer an expression of sympathy

Sometimes we are at a loss for words when encountering something as final as death. Simply saying "I'm sorry for your loss" is usually enough. Be respectful and listen attentively when spoken to and offer your own words of condolence.

❖ Find out the dress code

These days almost anything goes, but only when you know it's the right thing. In fact, sometimes the deceased or family of the deceased has specified the dress code – 'no black' is a common request. If you don't know the wishes of the family then dress conservatively and avoid bright colours.

❖ Give a gift

It doesn't matter if it is flowers, a donation to a charity or a commitment of service to the family at a later date. As always "it's the thought that counts". Always make sure to provide the family with a signed card so they know what gift was given and by whom.

❖ Sign the Memorial book

Include not only your name, but your relationship to the deceased ie. Co-worker, gym buddy or casual acquaintance from the golf club. This helps the family place who you are in the future.

❖ Keep in touch

It's sometimes awkward for you to do so, but for most people the grieving doesn't end with the funeral.

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But what shouldn't you do?:

❖ **Don't be afraid to laugh**

Remembering their loved ones fondly can mean sharing a funny story or two. Just be mindful of the time and place – if others are sharing, then you may do so too. There is simply no good reason you shouldn't talk about the deceased in a happy, positive tone.

❖ **Don't feel you have to view the deceased if there is an open casket**

Act according to what is comfortable to you.

❖ **Don't allow your children to be a disturbance**

If you feel they might be, then leave them with a sitter. If the deceased meant something to them, it's a good idea to invite them to share in the experience.

❖ **Don't leave your mobile phone on**

Switch it off before entering the service or better yet, leave it in the car. It is considered quite rude to be checking your mobile phone for messages during the service.

❖ **Don't neglect to step into the receiving line**

Simply say how sorry you are for their loss. Offer your name and how you knew the deceased.

When the funeral service is over, always remember to offer support and love to the bereaved. The following few months will be a time when grieving family and friends could need you most. Let them know your support did not end with the funeral.

If you have any concerns about an upcoming funeral or memorial service, we are here to provide advice. Simply call us on 0420 383 222.

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