

How To Choose a Funeral Home

In the past, most people chose a funeral home for the following reasons: they had a relationship with the funeral home before, the perceived ethnicity of a funeral home, the location of the funeral home or upon the recommendation of a friend.

Most local, independent funeral homes rely upon their reputation for success. They have been operated by the same family from generation to generation and have been successful because they have built a business based on trust. With various mergers and acquisitions occurring in our industry, it is important that you choose a family owned funeral home where the family cares about your needs.

The reasons for choosing a particular funeral home are now changing. Many people should address whether the funeral home they used before has had a change of ownership; this might translate into whether the service standards have changed or whether the ethnicity of the ownership has changed. However, every funeral home should be capable of addressing each family's religious needs and provide a service that is meaningful to each family. Some funeral homes are better than others in going the extra mile to provide a personalized tribute to a life that was lived.

Some people choose a funeral home based on their location, however the most convenient location may not be the best suited for your needs or a good value.

You should visit various funeral homes to see whether their facilities are up to date, whether they offer a variety of options based upon your budget and whether they are willing to offer a personalized tribute to the life of the person. There should be plenty of parking and the building should be handicapped accessible. You can often get a feel for a particular funeral home by accessing their website. The website should provide a description of the funeral home as well information about the variety of services they offer. Many of your questions will be answered directly on the website or you can contact the funeral home by email for more specific requests.

You should not choose a funeral home based on price alone. All funeral homes are mandated by law to give you a General Price List before you begin to talk about any type of arrangements you will make. Therefore you can select the services that are right for your family and your budget. A good funeral home will take into consideration your family and circumstances and offer recommendations. Choosing a funeral home on price alone may shortchange you on the personalized care and service you need to receive.

It is also very important to make sure that the funeral home is a member of a professional organization such as the Connecticut Funeral Director's Association on a local basis, or NFDA, OGR or NSM to name a few on the national level. These are associations of funeral homes that have pledged to abide by a certain set of ethical standards and guidelines.

The Funeral Staff

While a funeral home can be truly beautiful, it is the willingness of the funeral staff to insure that the funeral of your loved one be meaningful to you. The funeral staff should be attentive and provide compassion and support since you will be with them for a few intense days. You should always get the feeling that they will take care of your loved one just as you took care of them in life. You should also be able to relate to the funeral director who will handle the arrangements and be able to speak frankly about what you want. No request by you should go unfulfilled. You should also ask whether the funeral home offers concierge services, i.e. assisting with ordering flowers, arranging accommodations for out of state relatives, reserving a restaurant or catering facility for a family reception, or helping with any other need that may arise.

Support Services

While most funeral homes can provide any type of funeral service, the good funeral homes are concerned about what happens after the funeral is over when the family member finds himself/herself all alone. The funeral home should be able to provide support information so that a grieving family member can begin the grieving process. In addition, the funeral home should be able to recommend specific support organizations where people can go to learn about coping with their loss whether it is with a private therapist who specializes in grief issues or with a support group.

Preplanning

When someone dies there are over 97 decisions that need to be made about planning a funeral. Oftentimes, you need to address these important issues in a very short period of time. You can avoid many of these hasty decisions by preplanning the funeral services.

After visiting a few funeral homes, you can select a funeral home.....you can complete the vital statistic portion of a funeral; you can talk about the type of services; the people you might like to have involved; begin to write an obituary; and organize your legal and financial documents. So many things can be done ahead of time to make it easier for families at the time of need.

In conclusion, after you have met with a funeral director to ascertain what you think might be important to you, then you can determine whether that funeral home would be able to deliver on your requests. A funeral home should be a center where you receive help and support to make sure that the funeral experience is soft, soothing and a tribute to the person that you just lost from the time of their death to your road to recovery. There is a difference in funeral homes. Make sure that you compare.