



# *The Funeral Ritual*

A FAMILY'S JOURNEY  
TO RECOVERY AND  
HEALING



# The Significance of the Funeral Ritual



IF YOU ARE LIKE MOST PEOPLE, YOU DON'T THINK MUCH ABOUT FUNERALS UNTIL YOU HAVE TO GO TO ONE.

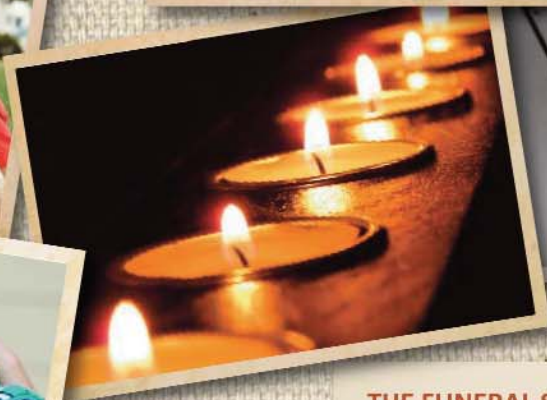
Funerals then become very significant occasions to honor a lost loved one. Especially if we've lost someone very close, funerals help us to transition from our lives before the death to our lives following the death.

This also is a time when a support system may be established so our friends and extended family can show their love and concern in tangible ways.



## VIEWING

A viewing or visitation is a gathering of friends and family before the funeral service, often in the presence of the deceased's body. Some family members may be tempted to discard the idea of a viewing saying, "We want to remember her as she was." However, spending time with the body doesn't have the power to alter or take away our memories. In fact, grief experts explain that a viewing, if it is possible to have one, can help us **acknowledge the reality of the death**, and this is a very important step on the road to healing. While it is ultimately a personal choice, a viewing or visitation could become one of the most significant events in a mourner's grief recovery process.



## THE FUNERAL SERVICE

A good funeral is one that truly reflects the unique personality of the person who has died. Friends and family have the opportunity to remember and honor the life of their loved one in special ways. They might share a eulogy, a song, a memory, or a letter written by the deceased. Funerals give us a time to **face our grief and emotion** so that we can begin to heal.

*Each phase of the funeral ritual is an important part of the family's journey to recovery and healing.*





### THE PROCESSION

The procession takes place after the funeral service as mourners make their way to the burial site for the committal service. It is **a symbol of our mutual support** of one another and a public honoring of the deceased. This is a ritual that can be a touching moment as those who love and care for you travel alongside you. Sometimes rituals speak louder than words.



### THE COMMITTAL SERVICE

The committal or graveside service is **a final opportunity to say our goodbyes**. Usually a speaker shares a few parting thoughts.

### THE GATHERING

After the committal service, there is usually an informal gathering where friends and family can continue to share memories and express their condolences after the loss. A meal usually accompanies this time that can become **a time of gratitude and thankfulness for a life that was well-lived**. Slide shows, personal anecdotes, and memorabilia are often shared, and usually the family emerges from the funeral ritual with a sense of hopefulness and a knowledge that life continues to unfold, even in the face of death.





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