



Options For Gathering and Connecting

We are built to connect with others, in spite of the fact we often avoid it, especially under difficult or stressful situations. When a death occurs we need connection most, and that is why funerals and other types of gatherings are so important. Naturally we don't "feel" like being in the company of others, but we definitely "need" the opportunity to share what we are going through.

When someone first hears about a death, often one of the very first questions asked is "When is the service?" People don't ask that question because they want to go to a funeral, they ask because they want to know when and how they can see you, interact with you, and share in the loss.

Not providing some way to gather is just like posting a big "NO TRESPASSING" sign. Those who care about you will have no idea what to do next, and if no service is held they may assume you want to be left alone. Remember, people are waiting to find out how best to reach out to you, and the most appropriate way to help is with a visitation or service.

Those who care about you and your family will want to have an opportunity to share in their loss. This is another reason we have funerals, memorial services, visitations, and other forms of gatherings regardless of whether burial or cremation is chosen for the body of the deceased.

Gatherings are critical for other reasons. First of all, this is where the important first conversations about the death will happen. The people who know you, your family, and the person who died need an appropriate opportunity to see you, show their support, and to begin talking about the loss.

Failure to set aside a time and a place for a visitation or funeral means that you and other family members will be faced with talking about the death at times and places they won't control. Instead of having one funeral, you will end up having multiple funerals at work, school, church, or even the grocery store, reliving and retelling the experience over and over often for months.

Gatherings also allow for connection. By providing a time and place to gather, you also create a time to reconnect for those who have grown distant over the years. Funerals and visitations often become "unplanned family reunions", and may be the last time many will see each other.

The connections made or strengthened by gatherings also help those left behind by creating an emotional support team to help as grief sets in, especially at many of the "firsts"...the first birthday, anniversary, or holiday without the deceased.

Following are just a few ways the families we serve have chosen to gather; there are many options available, so please let us know how we can help you, your family, and those who care about you to gather, connect, and remember.

Traditional Funeral Service

Gathering in a church, funeral home, or other facility with the remains of the deceased present.

Memorial Service

Gathering in a church, funeral home, or other facility without the remains of the deceased present.

Graveside-Only Service

A service at the place of burial of the body or cremated remains, usually a cemetery.

Informal Visitation

An informal opportunity, usually 1-2 days at the funeral home, for friends to say goodbye and pay their respects to the deceased. The family does not necessarily have to be present.

Formal Visitation

A more structured time, usually 2-3 hours at the funeral home, where the family is present and others can come and visit, as well as say goodbye and pay their respects to the deceased.

Come-and-Go Reception / Open House

An informal gathering, usually 1 -2 hours in our chapel, that takes the place of a traditional funeral. Light refreshments can be served, special music and video tributes can be played, and photos and other memorabilia can be displayed.

Memorial Reception

A come-and-go reception for friends and family held in our chapel following a private burial where only the family was present.

Life Celebration

Otherwise known as a "non-traditional funeral", hosted at a specific time but with a more celebratory feel. These gatherings are highly personalized, and may be directed by the family.

Home Visitation

Viewing of the deceased and visitation at the home of a family member or friend instead of having the viewing or visitation at the funeral home.

Private Family Viewing

Viewing of the deceased and time to say goodbye restricted to family only. This is available for burial or cremation arrangements.

Private Burial followed by Public Memorial Service

Private family-only graveside (casket or cremation urn) followed by a traditional memorial service at a church or the funeral home.

Public Funeral Service followed by Private Burial or Cremation

Public service at a church or the funeral home, concluding with a private graveside for family only.