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Guidance for Planning a Funeral Service.

The first thing to say is that these days there is no “right” or “wrong”, but only that which is appropriate and fitting for you. Having said that, it is important to have a structure that enables the service to flow gently and to encompass all that you would like included without rush or hurry.

Length

Most services at the crematorium are 30 minutes in length within an allocated slot of 45 minutes. This length does place some restrictions on what is achievable within the designated time. A service will normally have between 2500 and 2700 words in the total script and typically between 1000 and 1300 would be made up of tributes and eulogy.

Tributes

It is normal to have one or two speakers at a service with a tribute, a poem or a reading they have chosen. If there are too many speakers wanting to contribute, then one way of dealing with this is to keep the speakers at the funeral down to just a couple and then have time of tributes at the reception later when people can be free to speak longer and with less pressure.

It is important that all those speaking at the service write their speeches verbatim and email them for inclusion in the final service script.

There are three reasons for this:

1. I am able to “word count” each contribution to ensure that it will not be too long and, if necessary, ask the contributor to edit down accordingly.
2. I can plan my words around the contributions without unnecessary repetition
3. If the contributor is not able to speak on the day then I will have the words on the service script and can read them as a backup.

Poems / Readings

I normally have a couple of poems/readings:

1. One at the beginning to open the service, set the scene and allow family and guests to settle down.
2. Then one at the end to round off the proceedings.

Music

It is normal to have three pieces of music (you can have more).

1. On Entry
2. Reflection
3. Exit

There can be special pieces to listen to during the service or, sometimes, snippets of music that have special meaning to you.

Hymns

I welcome hymns in the service but unless there is a strong reason for having a hymn there is no need to have one “just because you feel you ought to”. **Experience has shown** in most circumstances **few people join in the singing** so give this careful consideration.

An Example of a Typical Running Service Order

- Entry music
- Opening poem - (Celebrant) to settle everyone down.
- Welcome and introduction: - (Celebrant)
- Poem/Reading: - (Family member)
- Tribute: - (Family members)
 - If family members want to write a tribute, I am happy to deliver it.
- Eulogy: - (Celebrant - unless family members wants to do it)
- Reflection & Music: - (Celebrant)
- Committal Words: - (Celebrant)
- Final poem: - (Celebrant)
- Exit music