

Preparing for a death

Irrespective of what we may believe, death remains one of the great mysteries of our world and the greatest certainty of them all.

No matter how much we may plan for it or how much we may know of its imminent occurrence, death often remains a shock to the system and a very unpleasant business. Paradoxically, it is of course, the most natural of all events in our lives.

Preparation in advance of death can be of great advantage to all concerned; while this is true of many aspects of dying, it is only the funeral arrangements that we will consider on this page.

Firstly, we congratulate you on considering these matters at an early stage. Many people do not, there is a reluctance to discuss such things and no matter how painful it is to continue the progress we encourage you to do so and to involve your family.

We have a sister web site that deals exclusively with considering funeral arrangements in advance of death and we recommend it if you would like to consider the funeral in great detail. Before visiting there we must warn you that the web site is designed for people where death is not imminent and therefore gives a very factual and some times light hearted look at death; we advise caution if you feel emotional.

For now, we suggest there are a number of things that you should consider and discuss among leading family members; clearly the list is not exhaustive:-

- If possible, ensure everyone in the family is at peace with the person who is dying and that appropriate 'goodbyes' have been said.
- Do you need to ask the dying person if they have concerns in respect of the funeral? You may be surprised that they are keen to talk about this. Do not fear it being an emotional conversation, of course it will be, but the advantages of knowing that his/her wishes have been adhered to at the funeral will be therapeutic for all.
- The fundamentals of the funeral are whether to bury or cremate; if cremation, what to do with the ashes; whether to have a religious or secular funeral service; should there be a reception for mourners after the service; is there to be a memorial to commemorate the person; who needs to be informed of the funeral
- If the person is dying in an institution, particularly if this is a nursing home, it would be very useful to all concerned if you advise the person in charge there of your wishes at the time of death (choice of burial or cremation/selected funeral director etc).