

Funeral Ceremony in a Home

Some people are choosing to care for their family or friend after death, at home. This is called a 'Home Funeral' and is [safe and legal](#). You will find many ideas for ritual and ceremony for all the elements of preparing a home, a body, and more in [*Home Funeral Ceremonies: A primer to honor the dying and the dead with reverence, light-heartedness and grace*](#), by Donna Belk and Kateyanne Unullisi.

There can be a final funeral service in the home, or the body can be removed to another location such as a church or gathering hall, a grave, or a crematorium for final ceremony and commitment. We have lots of [ceremony ideas on our site](#) for other locations.

Watch [Grandma Lucille's Movie](#). Her daughter describes the home funeral for her mother, with a scene at the end of the funeral service in the living room. "Death be something not to be feared. It's a lovely way for Mama to be, to have fun and gaiety as well as the somber, serious part. A beautiful piece of love." By Olivia Bareham 2011 (2:40 min.)

Here is another beautiful video about Dorothy, a woman who had been a dancer in her younger years and is preparing for her death with Death Midwife Rev. Olivia Bareham. She wants a three-day vigil at home and dancing around her body at her funeral. [Watch Take Me Home](#). By Olivia Bareham 2015 (13:58 min.)

Below you'll find a short outline of what a funeral in the home or garden could be like. The body should be present (or urn, if there has already been a cremation).

A Funeral in the Home

Welcome

Celebrant:

Hello and welcome.

My name is <name>

I'd like to take a moment to ask everyone to check that your cell phones are turned off.

Thank you.

Let's sit with one another in this time we have together in a spirit of appreciation for <name>.

And we think also of those who cannot be here today. We especially remember <names>.

We have worked together in this home on the ancient practice of caring for our loved one, and now it is time to allow others to say their goodbye to <name>.

Thank you, <name>, for allowing us to care for you. Thank each of you who have gathered for this sacred practice.

As our hands have washed you, we hold you in love.

As you lie in honor now, we hold you in love.

As your journey continues, we hold you in love.

And so, in love, it is done. Amen.

Song

Celebrant:

You might play a favorite song or all sing together.

Celebrant:

Prayer

For every memory of love and joy,
every memory of life well-lived
and every sorrow shared with us,
we give thanks.

Heal any memories of hurt and failure

Give us the wisdom and grace

To use aright the time that is left here on earth, for the sake of love.

Amen

Eulogy

Here is where someone may have written the story of his/her life. Or you may want to go around and tell/share short memories.

Poem

Time for the Harvest

It comes time for the harvest.

Everything I have collected

All the roads I have travelled

All the stories shared

And the wishes taken on

The blessings given

The energy spent

The novels in the making

The songs on the wind

Every footstep, every footnote

All the promises given and received

Every memory of my life

Gathers round me now

Asking for their moment

To be sent and shared and acknowledged.

What have you learned from me?

What will you make of me?

What have I served?

All those threads woven and unwoven

Making the pathway
Lining the road
My forming and unforming
The beginnings and the ends.
What was unknown becomes known
What has gathered becomes seed
And I will blossom again.
by Mary Alice Arthur

Open Remembrance

You could also have a time for going around and sharing stories.

Announcements

Before we end, we just want to let everyone know (what comes next, are you taking the casket to a grave? Will there be gathering food?). That at the conclusion, you would like everyone to take a flower and put it in the casket and say goodbye, if they like.

Final Words

We came together to say goodbye to <name>.

Now, before we end, let's take a quiet moment to reflect on our final goodbye to the earthly remains of <name> – while what remains in our hearts cannot ever leave us.

<pause>

<name>, go on your journey from this world
carried by the spirit who made you and loves you.

May the homeward path rise to meet you
and may you be welcomed across the threshold
and received in love's embrace.

For you, there is no more death or sorrow or pain.

So may the company of heaven enfold you
and keep you in peace this day and always.

Amen

Flowers

Pass the flowers around. People go to the casket and put flowers in and say goodbye.
Then the lid is closed.