

Comprehensive Funeral Planning Checklist

Immediate Tasks (Within 24 Hours)

- ☐ Contact immediate family members and close friends
- ☐ Notify deceased's employer (if applicable)
- ☐ Arrange for care of any dependents or pets
- ☐ Secure the deceased's residence and vehicles
- ☐ Contact funeral home to arrange transport of the deceased
- ☐ Locate any pre-arrangements or written wishes
- ☐ Begin gathering important documents:
 - ☐ Birth certificate
 - ☐ Death certificate (multiple copies)
 - ☐ Social Security card
 - ☐ Marriage certificate (if applicable)
 - ☐ Military discharge papers (if applicable)
 - ☐ Insurance policies

Initial Planning (2-3 Days After)

Funeral Home Arrangements

- ☐ Meet with funeral director to discuss options
- ☐ Choose burial or cremation
- ☐ Select casket or urn
- ☐ Decide on embalming (if viewing is planned)
- ☐ Order death certificates (recommend 10-15 copies)
- ☐ Write and submit obituary
- ☐ Create memorial website or online tribute (if desired)

Service Planning

Choose type of service:

- ☐ Traditional funeral
- ☐ Memorial service
- ☐ Celebration of life
- ☐ Graveside service
- ☐ Select date, time, and venue(s)
- ☐ Choose religious or secular officiant
- ☐ Create guest list and send notifications
- ☐ Arrange transportation for family
- ☐ Select pallbearers (if traditional funeral)

Service Details

Ceremony Elements

- ☐ Choose music selections
- ☐ Select readings or prayers
- ☐ Plan order of service

Arrange for:

- ☐ Musicians/vocalists
- ☐ Audio/visual equipment
- ☐ Guest book
- ☐ Memorial cards or programs
- ☐ Photography/videography (if desired)

Visual Elements

- ☐ Select photos for display or slideshow
- ☐ Choose floral arrangements
- ☐ Gather memorabilia for display
- ☐ Create memory boards or tribute video
- ☐ Arrange for special tributes (balloon release, dove release, etc.)

Personnel Roles

Assign:

- ☐ Readings/eulogies

- ☐ Ushers
- ☐ Guest book attendants
- ☐ Gift/donation collectors
- ☐ Memorial table hosts

Reception Planning

Venue

Select location:

- ☐ Church hall
- ☐ Restaurant
- ☐ Family home
- ☐ Community center

Confirm:

- ☐ Capacity
- ☐ Available hours
- ☐ Setup/cleanup requirements
- ☐ Parking
- ☐ Accessibility
- ☐ Kitchen facilities

Food and Beverage

Choose catering option:

- ☐ Professional catering
- ☐ Restaurant
- ☐ Potluck coordination
- ☐ Family-provided
- ☐ Plan menu

Arrange for:

- ☐ Tables and chairs
- ☐ Linens and tableware
- ☐ Serving equipment
- ☐ Non-alcoholic beverages
- ☐ Alcoholic beverages (if desired)

Reception Details

- ☐ Assign reception coordinator
- ☐ Plan layout/seating arrangement

Arrange for:

- ☐ Background music
- ☐ Additional photos/memorabilia
- ☐ Guest book or memory cards
- ☐ Take-home mementos (if desired)

Coordinate helpers for:

- ☐ Setup
- ☐ Serving
- ☐ Cleanup

Follow-up Tasks

Thank You Notes

Create list of people to thank:

- ☐ Service participants
- ☐ Food/flower providers
- ☐ Donation givers
- ☐ Helpers/volunteers
- ☐ Purchase thank you cards
- ☐ Set timeline for sending notes

Administrative Tasks

- ☐ Collect and organize condolence cards and gifts
- ☐ Record donations for acknowledgment
- ☐ Save service programs and memorial items
- ☐ Create list of memorial donation recipients
- ☐ Plan for disposition of flowers after service

Documentation

Keep detailed records of:

- ☐ All expenses
- ☐ Donations received

- ☐ Items borrowed/loaned
- ☐ Contact information for vendors
- ☐ Photos and videos from service

Special Considerations

Accommodate out-of-town guests:

- ☐ Hotel arrangements
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Local information
- ☐ Consider weather contingencies for outdoor elements
- ☐ Plan for special needs accessibility
- ☐ Arrange for child care if needed
- ☐ Consider cultural or religious requirements
- ☐ Plan for military honors if applicable

Notable Dates for Follow-up

- ☐ Schedule gathering for deceased's birthday
- ☐ Plan memorial gathering for one-year anniversary
- ☐ Note important holidays for family support