



green fuse helpsheet 7

4 main purposes of a funeral

A good funeral will fulfil the following purposes. Depending on the circumstances of the death and the age of the person who died, one or two may become more important than the others, but all will be present in some way.

1. To enable families and friends to understand, share and mourn their loss and remember and reclaim elements of their relationship with the person they may have lost suddenly or to illness or distance perhaps years ago.
2. To illuminate and give thanks for the life of the person who has died. A good funeral nourishes and warms us as we interweave and share stories, memories, music, poetry, sadness and humour amongst the community of family and friends who loved the person.
3. To confirm the reality of the loss and say goodbye to the physical form of the person who has died, and ask for the safe transition of the spirit or soul into whatever is believed to lie beyond, helping those left behind to achieve closure.
4. To help the survivors take comfort from each other, initiate their grieving process and find a new sense of being in a world that has irretrievably changed.

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You can find more information and ideas like this in our book *We Need To Talk About The Funeral - 101 Practical Ways To Commemorate And Celebrate A Life*, by Jane Morrell and Simon Smith, available at bookshops for £14.99 or download from www.greenfuse.co.uk/funeralbook.htm.

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