

# A Glossary of Funeral Terms

When a person dies there are many different words that enter the vocabulary.

Some may be new and difficult to understand. This is designed to help you get a better understanding of what they mean.

## Funeral

The ceremony that happens when the dead person's body is buried or burned. Family, friends and people who knew the person who has died usually attend. The life story of the person who has died is told. There may be songs, readings, poems, candles and flowers.



## Burial

This is when the body inside the coffin is placed into a hole called a grave that has been specially dug into the ground. Usually, people say some words or a speech at the moment the coffin is lowered into the grave.



## Eulogy

The speech that a person makes at a funeral telling the life story of the person that has died.



## Officiant

A person who leads the funeral from the moment the coffin is placed onto the catafalque to when the mourners leave the space after the committal. This person may be a religious or faith representative or a civil celebrant.



## Cremation

A funeral that takes place at a crematorium and the body and coffin are burned after the ceremony has taken place.



## Committal

The moment that the coffin is put into the grave if they are buried.



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## Catafalque

The stand that is used to hold the coffin during the funeral. It can look like a table and often it is made of wood.



## Mourners

The people who knew the person who has died. They may be sad, upset or even angry.



## Pallbearers

The people that carry the coffin from the hearse to the catafalque.



## Bier

The wheeled trolley or table that is used to move the coffin during a funeral.



## Hearse

The vehicle used to transport the coffin to the place where the funeral service takes place and to the eventual crematorium or burial site if these are different.



## Ashes

The material left after a cremation that can then be kept, scattered, or interred – which means placed into a special casket or box and then buried.



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## Chapel of rest

The room where mourners can visit their loved one before the funeral takes place.



## Vigil of the Princes

A traditional way of showing respect to the Queen when senior members of her family will stand guard next to her coffin.



## Order of Service

A printed document that summarises the content of the funeral service, including the songs or hymns, poems to be read and may also include photographs of the person who has died.



## Lying in state

This is where the Queen's coffin will be placed in Westminster Cathedral so that people can walk by it as a way of showing their respect.



## Obituary

A written summary and review of the life of the person who has died, it can appear in newspapers or online.



## Urn

The receptacle used to contain ashes following a cremation. They can be a variety of shapes, designs and colours and can also be called an ashes casket.

