

Myths & Misconceptions

Myth #1. “Funerals just make the grief worse.”

A funeral is intended to do just the opposite. It is a very important step to move the grieving process forward, to provide comfort and support, and to pay a proper tribute.

Myth #2. “Funerals are a thing of the past.”

Our Canadian culture generally prefers to deny the reality of death, but of course death is inevitable. Funerals are civilized, socially binding rituals which give us time – in a hectic world – to pause and reflect on what is truly meaningful to us as a culture and as an individual.

Myth #3. “It doesn’t matter if you attend the funeral or not.”

For the bereaved, this is a time when expressions of support can be very meaningful and long-remembered. For the few hours it takes, try to be there. The experience can also be personally enriching.

Myth #4. “There is no funeral if there is cremation.”

The term “funeral” applies to any ceremony which occurs upon the death of an individual.

about funerals

Myth #5. “Funerals are only for religious people.”

How you pay tribute to a loved one is entirely up to you and your family. Not being a member of a church should not prevent you from having a meaningful life celebration.

Myth #6. “Funerals have to be held in a church or funeral home.”

A funeral can be held virtually anywhere. The location, such as a park or garden, can do much to add to the meaning of the event. The Edwards Family Centre is also frequently used for memorial receptions and services.

Myth #7. “If burial is chosen, the body of the deceased must be embalmed.”

Embalming is optional.

Myth #8. “Funerals are for adults.”

Children, too, have the right and the privilege to mourn and to receive the support of others.

A Few Words about the Eulogy

The telephone rings. A friend has passed away. You are asked to “say a few words” (in other words, give the eulogy) at the funeral. You agree. After you hang up the phone you nervously ask yourself, “Now what do I do?”

First of all, remember the purpose of a eulogy: to pay a tribute to the person who has passed away. Here are a few tips to help you prepare those words of praise and fond remembrance:

“A few words” should really take no more than five to eight minutes. As you

write it, read it aloud. Things that might be fine when you read them silently might be quite different when you read them aloud. Also, you’ll get a better sense of length.

Be upbeat and factual. Prepare an opening statement that is easy to say and won’t “choke you up”. It will get you off to a good start. Continue by highlighting interests, hobbies, and character traits of the deceased.

If you find any material is too hard for you emotionally, leave it out. If

you feel yourself losing control, pause and breathe deeply before continuing. Most importantly, rehearse your eulogy often – so that when you give your eulogy, it won’t seem like you are hearing it yourself for the first time. This will help you to keep control and feel prepared.

Want more information? For a copy of Keith Frost’s The Eulogy: A Public Speaking Challenge and other resource material, contact the Edwards Family Centre or the funeral service providers listed on the back