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10 Ideas For A Special Crematorium Funeral

One of the biggest complaints about funerals is how impersonal and soulless the funeral at the crematorium can be, but that's where 70% of us end up. However, with a few personal touches, you can make a crematorium funeral special. Here's our top ten list to help you:

- 1 Find a good funeral conductor to take the funeral, who will spend time finding out about the person who has died and devise a special ceremony which reflects their views and beliefs. Many independent funeral celebrants have no dogma of their own and will advise you on making a funeral more personal.
- 2 Take some decorations with which you could quickly personalise the ceremony hall, such as flowers or plants, candles, swathes of material and photographs, or make the coffin personal with decoration or objects placed on top of it.
- 3 If you want a more intimate feel, place the coffin on trestles closer to the mourners, instead of on the catafalque at the top.
- 4 Ask for religious objects to be removed or covered if they are not appropriate and replace them with objects relevant to the person who has died.
- 5 See if you have a choice of crematoria. Often you may have a choice of two and you may have a nicer ceremony hall or a longer ceremony time.
- 6 Consider holding the main funeral ceremony elsewhere. Just a few mourners or the funeral director could accompany the coffin for a simple committal at the crematorium afterwards. We've held funerals at home, in a function room, in a marquee or yurt, outside, in village halls.
- 7 Book a double time at the crematorium so that you don't feel rushed.
- 8 Give everyone a sprig of heather or a single flower and have a few moments when these can be put on the coffin or woven into it if it is a woven coffin. This connects everyone and creates a sense of intimacy.
- 9 Choose whatever words and music you like – they do not have to be funereal or religious. Most crematoria have good CD sound systems and you are allowed to have live music.
- 10 If you don't want to see the curtains close or the coffin move out of sight at the end of the ceremony, ask for it to be left in place until all the mourners have left. If it is on trestles it may be possible for everyone to file past on their way out to say their final farewell.

Crematorium staff are usually helpful and obliging and will help you if you ask.

For further information and more ideas like this, buy 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 or download from www.greenfuse.co.uk/funeralbook.htm for £14.99.

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