

From the Parish Nurse

Death & Dying

First in a three-part series on End of Life issues

Funerals are a time of great sadness for the family and friends of the deceased. Yet for the Christian they are also a celebration of the person's spiritual self and preparation for an eternity with the Lord.

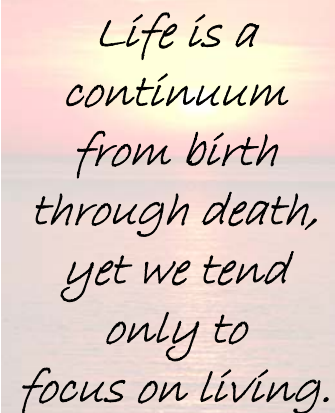
The experience of arranging a funeral and settling one's affairs after a death is a difficult time. So many decisions have to be made in a relatively short time span, sometimes with differing opinions within the family group about what "the person wanted." During times of significant stress, such as a funeral, the best and worst of family cohesiveness can surface. Family and friends ultimately want to honor the person yet may disagree on what's best.

Life is a continuum from birth through death, yet we tend only to focus on living. That makes the discussion of one's funeral wishes a difficult topic. No one specifically wants a loved one to die yet it is

inevitable. Looking ahead and writing down your wishes or instructions and/or prearranging your services is a way to ease this time of loss for your family and significant others.

Some things to think about and give instructions on regarding the funeral and related services include:

- The person designated to make the funeral arrangements
- The place where funeral services will be held
- Memorial services, military or fraternal organization
- Selection of casket
- Will the casket be open or closed
- If cremation is selected, state desire for handling of ashes
- Any specific requests regarding a eulogy
- Music selections, food, post-service gathering
- Clergy - any specific requests
- Attire
- Memorials (specific desires, if any) and/or flowers.
- Bible verses/readings
- Pictures or photographs to be displayed
- Organ donation(s) and/or autopsy
- Pallbearers
- Burial site/graveside services
- Transportation
- Payment
- Obituary information
- Gravesite/gravestone and inscription



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Funerals do not have absolutes. They are a celebration of an individual's life and a time for grieving for family and significant others. This is when we open

our arms and let go of the person's physical existence into the presence of God for His external care.



Champs
Center for Healthy Aging, Ministries, Programs & Services
13271 Millard Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68137
Tel: (402) 895-2224
Website: www.champsonline.info
Email: champs@crossandheart.org

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