

# Advice on Selecting a Funeral Home, Before You Need One



**BRENTWOOD  
FUNERAL  
SERVICES**

By Brent Taylor

For most people, death is a topic to be avoided unless absolutely necessary. For many people, the subject becomes absolutely necessary when they are called upon to arrange services for a family member. This is an emotional time, even when a lengthy illness has allowed a time to prepare. With the unexpected death of a family member, this is an especially difficult period, one in which making final arrangements can bring unneeded stress.

Based on my years of experience in funeral service, I find the same issues addressed time and time again. Which funeral home can I entrust my loved one to for burial or cremation? Should there even be a service? If there is a funeral service, where should it take place, the graveside, the church, the funeral home, or some other location, and will there be visitation? What will this cost and what are the options?

Here is my advice for addressing these issues and others that may arise:

Have a family discussion regarding final wishes, and ask every adult in the family to participate and share their preferences. Topics should include burial or cremation, the grave site, and the type and location of service.

Many families rely on the same funeral home for generation after generation. If your family is one and has had positive experiences with a particular funeral home, I encourage you to consider them first. Consistency is comforting at this time. Just as important, longevity in this profession shows that the firm has performed well over time.

If you are considering other options, start with funeral homes that have directed services you have attended. Did the services go smoothly? Did the staff manage the small

details in a way that made it easier on the family? If the service or visitation was at the funeral home, were the interior and grounds well maintained? Was the overall experience one in which you were comfortable? When what you see goes well, it is likely that all is in order behind the scenes.

Don't hesitate to visit several funeral homes before making a final decision. You should be welcomed at all, and if you are not, look elsewhere. Costs are an important issue, and one that families sometimes avoid. Don't. Any reputable funeral director will be happy to discuss cost options with you. If they don't, again you should look elsewhere.

Additionally, all funeral homes are state-regulated, so you can check for violations and to ensure state licenses are in order. In Tennessee, the Department of Commerce and Insurance (<http://www.state.tn.us/commerce>) is the regulatory body.

You may also consider a pre-need plan or funeral insurance. This is a good option for many, but exercise care. Again, you can check with state regulators. The Department of Commerce and Insurance also regulates these policies in Tennessee.

As we have seen with the Forest Hill Funeral Home pre-need debacle, which required state intervention, and now with the Highpoint Funeral Chapel case of allegedly cremating the wrong person, you must be careful of shopping on price alone. Sometimes a lower cost is the result of cutting corners. As with most purchases, you generally get what you pay for. ■