



An open casket vs. a closed casket service – it's a personal choice

When planning a Funeral, there are many different decisions to be made. One of those decisions is whether or not to have an open or closed casket for the visitation or funeral. Beechwood offers individuals and their families a variety of choices. It is important that the service truly reflects the individuals who are being remembered, as well as respects their wishes.

Let's see what information you need to make the choice between an open or closed casket service.

What is an open casket service?

An open casket service is where the body of the deceased is shown for viewing.

For an open casket service, the Funeral Director will recommend preparing the body, which includes embalming, dressing, makeup and placing your loved ones into their casket. The Funeral Directors may ask for a photo in order to prepare your loved ones to look as closely as possible to how they were remembered.

Funeral Directors are trained and work with exceptional care; however, at times, due to illness, accident, or injury, your loved one may not look exactly as remembered or the option for an open casket may not be possible.

When should the casket be open?

Typically, the casket is open for the Visitation and a Funeral Director will close the casket at the time of the Service. Some families will choose to have a Private Visitation for family and invited close friends, then the casket is closed at the time of the Public Visitation.

What is the etiquette on attending an open casket service?

Some may be nervous attending an open casket service and can be overwhelmed by the moment. Perhaps they find it difficult to see their loved ones after they passed. Keep in mind that those who would be upset viewing the body are able to avoid it. Most of the time, the casket is placed as a focal point of the service. If guests enter from the back, they can choose to sit in an area where they wouldn't necessarily see the deceased. Make sure you relay your wishes to your Funeral Directors, so they are able to assist you in the best way possible.

Viewing the deceased is seldom easy or comfortable, especially if you were close. If you don't know how you're going to react, it's a good idea to ask someone in the family or a friend to stand by you for emotional support.

What is a closed casket service?

A closed casket service is where the body of the deceased is not shown.

The family may still request a private moment to view their loved ones before the casket is closed. A Funeral Director will still prepare the deceased, this may or may not include embalming and ensuring that they are presentable if the family does choose to see them.

Why would you decide on a closed casket service?

Most of the time, when we think about someone selecting a closed casket service, the state of the body jumps to our mind as the main reason for it. Some wish to have a closed casket service to honour the wishes of the deceased, no matter the state of the body. There's no right way or wrong way to plan a service. Planning a service for a loved one, a lot of times is based on personal preference.

When you are choosing a closed casket service, sometimes you may want to think of the people attending the service. Some may find it comforting to see a person's body after they die. It can help them feel. Seeing the body may help them accept that the deceased is really gone.

Ultimately, it remains a personal choice. The best way to make sure your wishes are followed is by pre-planning your Funeral; this will help your family at the time of need, as your wishes are already clear to them.

More than anything, it doesn't matter why you choose a closed or open casket service. It's far more vital that it respects the wishes of the deceased.

When in doubt, speak to your Funeral Directors as they are always available to help, make suggestions and provide guidance and advice for you and your family.