

Questions To Ask A Funeral Director

A Printable Conversation Guide For Christian, Catholic And Freethinker Families

The first conversation with a funeral director covers a lot of ground quickly, and it's easy to walk away unsure whether everything was covered. This guide brings together the questions worth having answers to, organised by topic, so your family can follow along during the call or simply feel reassured that nothing was missed.

1. Start With A Conversation, Not A Contract

The very first call is simply a conversation — a good funeral director will spend it understanding your loved one and your family's wishes before any package or pricing is discussed. All we need from you at this stage is your loved one's full name, age, where they passed, and their faith or preference. We take it from there and walk your family through every question below as a natural part of that first conversation.

2. Questions About What's Included

- What does the package cover from start to finish?
- Is transport of my loved one included, and how soon can that be arranged?
- Is manpower for the wake days included, or arranged separately?
- What's the process if my family needs to add something partway through?

3. Questions About The Casket

- What casket options are available, and can we see them before deciding?
- What materials and finishes are typically chosen by families in a similar situation?
- How is the casket prepared, and is embalming or preservation included?

4. Questions About The Wake And Venue

- Which venues are available for the wake, and what does setup involve at each?
- How long can the wake run, and can it be extended if relatives are still travelling?
- Who handles the permit application if the wake is held at an HDB void deck?
- What's included for seating, signage, and refreshments at the venue?

5. Questions About The Service Itself

- Can you help us find a pastor, priest, or celebrant if we don't already have one?
- What does a typical order of service look like for our family's faith or preference?
- Can you help print an order of service booklet, and how far in advance is it needed?
- Is there support for setting up a photo or video tribute at the wake?

6. Questions About Cremation Or Burial

- What's involved in arranging cremation or burial, and how far ahead does it need to be booked?
- What are our options for where the ashes or remains will rest?
- How soon after the service are ashes typically ready for collection?

7. Questions About Timeline And Flexibility

- How soon after engaging you can the wake begin?
- What happens if our family's plans change partway through — a longer wake, a different venue, more guests than expected?
- Is there someone we can reach directly at any hour if something comes up?

8. Questions About Documentation And Permits

- Do you help with registering the death and obtaining the certificate of death?
- Do you handle the tentage or venue permits on our behalf?
- What documents will our family need to have ready?

9. Questions Only Your Family Can Answer

Alongside what to ask your funeral director, a few decisions are really for your family to talk through together beforehand, so the first call goes smoothly:

- Roughly how many guests are expected, and over how many days
- Who in the family will take the lead on coordinating with us
- Whether there's a specific pastor, priest, celebrant, or venue your loved one would have wanted
- Who might be asked to deliver a eulogy or lead a tribute

10. If You're Planning Ahead, Not In The Moment

Some families reach out before there's any urgency at all — simply wanting arrangements in place ahead of time. If that's your family, a few extra questions are worth asking:

- Can arrangements be made now and adjusted later if circumstances change?
- How are pre-arranged plans paid for, and are they transferable if our family moves or changes our minds on the details?
- Who keeps a record of the arrangements, and how does my family access them when the time comes?
- Will whoever answers the phone that day already know what was agreed, or will we need to explain everything again?

11. Common Questions About This Guide

Do we need to ask every question here?

Not at all — pick whatever matters most to your family. A good funeral director will usually cover most of these naturally during the first conversation, without needing to be asked.

What if some answers depend on decisions we haven't made yet?

That's completely normal. Questions like exact wake dates or final guest numbers often firm up over the first day or two — your funeral director can revisit these with you as your plans settle.

Is it okay to bring this printed list to our meeting?

Yes, many families do exactly that. It's a helpful way to make sure nothing gets lost in an understandably emotional conversation.

12. A Simple Printable Checklist

- Contact your funeral director and start with an open conversation
- Ask what's included in the package, from start to finish
- Ask about casket options and what preparation involves
- Ask about wake venues, timing, and flexibility if plans change
- Ask how the service itself will be planned and who can lead it
- Ask about cremation or burial options and timing
- Confirm what documentation your family needs to have ready
- Talk through guest numbers, who will coordinate, and who will speak, as a family beforehand

A good funeral director should be answering these questions before your family even has to ask them. We're happy to walk through every one of them from the very first call.

Call us any time: [+65 9169 1859](tel:+6591691859)