

MUSLIM FUNERAL TRADITIONS

The Islamic funeral is rooted in tradition, and it's important to choose a funeral provider that is familiar with the rituals and customs that families desire in order to show respect to their loved one.

Islamic funeral customs

Islamic families and communities are generally very close, and this means that many attend the funeral to show their support, pay their respects and grieve the loss of a loved one. In keeping with Islamic traditions, the funeral and burial happen as soon as possible in order to free the soul from the body.

The departed are washed by adult members of the family—men by men, and women by women. Then, they are ceremonially wrapped in white cloth and buried within three days of the time of death. It's a specific process that includes an odd number of washings and a number of steps dictating which body part is washed in what order. Because of both the wrap and the desire to bury the dead as soon as possible, Muslim funerals generally don't have a viewing, though this may be done by certain members of the community directly after the body is wrapped.

Most Muslim funeral traditions focus on respect and allow for more grieving time to help those in mourning recover from the loss. A Muslim funeral is a very formal, traditional service that generally takes place in a mosque with little deviation over time and a series of customs that must be observed. After leaving their shoes at the door, men and women sit on the floor in separate areas. Women must cover their heads with a veil or scarf and wear loose, modest clothing.

The service is brief and consists of ritual chanting and recitation from the Quran. Before the body is taken away for burial, visitors and mourners file past to pay their last respects. Those attending are encouraged to [dress](#) formally and not wear any potentially conflicting religious attire (for instance, rosary beads if an attendee is Catholic).

Family and friends customarily bring food to the family to keep them from having to attend to these details. [Comments to the bereaved](#) should be short and tasteful. It is appropriate to [send flowers](#) after the funeral.

Islamic burial

Cremation is largely discouraged because of the Islamic belief in resurrection of the physical body. Muslim burials place the body facing Mecca—toward the northeast in North America. Muslim graves typically feature only a flat marker with Arabic writing. Monuments, elaborate markers and flowers are discouraged. Instead, one should humbly remember Allah and pray for the deceased.

At the graveside service, the first Surah from the Quran is read, followed by the prayers of those present. Then, three fistfuls of dirt are thrown by the attendees.

It should be noted that because of the cultural associations of grieving females wailing at funerals, women are (for the most part) typically not involved in the funeral procession. There is a specific process of “weeping” that may be observed for no more than three days.