

A guide to planning a post funeral reception

Funerals can often be sombre, tiring and emotional affairs and as such it is customary for a post funeral reception to take place to provide an opportunity for loved ones to come together in a more casual and positive atmosphere to share stories, eat, drink and comfort each other. It is also a good opportunity for friends and family members who have not seen each other for a long time to have a catch up. In this guide we will provide a walkthrough of all the key aspects of planning a post funeral reception.

Choosing a venue

A post funeral reception can be anything from a small gathering of people at a loved one's home to a large gathering or party. The venue that you choose is entirely up to you, but it needs to be both affordable and practical, and there are many different options available.



In the past, funeral receptions tended to take place in more traditional venues such as church halls and parish rooms, as most funerals were conducted in the local church and these buildings were ideally located nearby.

Although such venues continue to be popular choices, in more recent years religion has started to play a smaller role in funeral planning and because of this there has been a swing away from these traditional venues in favour of more contemporary buildings. This means that when planning a post funeral reception there is now a wide variety of different venues that you can choose from. For example you could choose a restaurant, a pub or social club or even someone's home. However, you should consider the cost of the venue and the location when deciding.

Funeral receptions are all different and while some people pass away with lots of close friends and family, there are equally times when only a small number of people are able to attend their funeral and subsequent reception. The number of people that are attending the reception will be important when deciding on a venue; if you book somewhere that is too large then your reception might seem empty and you may have been able to host the event somewhere smaller and less costly, and if you book



somewhere that is too small then you may not be able to fit everyone in who wants to attend.

Location can also play an important role in deciding on a venue. If there are large numbers of people attending then it might be most practical to find somewhere which is located near to where the funeral was held. If elderly or less mobile people or people without transport are attending the funeral then finding a venue nearby can be particularly important. Alternatively, you may decide to arrange for transport to take people from the funeral to the reception, for example via a mini bus or coach.

You should also consider the cost of the venue. Many bars and social clubs will hire out a room for a small charge or even for free so long as they think they will make enough money from the sale of drinks. Again, you should consider how many attendees there will be and how far your budget will stretch.

You might also wish to consider what the person who has passed away would have wanted. There might be a venue that was particularly important to them and held happy memories, such as their local pub, the venue where their wedding reception was held, or somewhere with a favourite view. Choice of venue is a great way to personalise a loved one's funeral.

Once you have made a shortlist of venues that you think would be suitable then you should enquire about the finer details. Key questions you should ask include:

- How much will the venue hire cost?
- What amenities are there?
- Will tables and chairs be provided?
- How many staff will be there to serve guests?
- Do you have the necessary licenses for food and alcohol?

Depending on your guests needs, you might also want to enquire about things like disabled access and parking facilities.

Walter Craven Limited

Craven lodge

Broadgreen Road

Liverpool

L13 5SG

t: 0151 228 3900

f: 0151 252 1853

website craven-funerals.com

Catering

Funerals can be exhausting, both physically and emotionally. Some attendees may have travelled a long way, and so food and drink can be a nice way to not only turn the mood but also to provide refreshments for guests who may not have had a chance to eat breakfast or lunch, particularly if you have had the interment following the service.



Food can also serve as a nice way of remembering the person who has passed away. Perhaps they had a dish that they were known for particularly enjoying, or perhaps they held roots in another country and you could have an international themed buffet.

Whatever you decide to serve your guests, you should be careful to have enough food prepared to serve everyone and a plan of how you can stretch refreshments if food begins to run out, perhaps by preparing extra. If you hire a caterer then you should consult with them as to what they will do in this situation.

Catering can be one of the more costly elements of a funeral reception, but you may be able to get around this by preparing food yourself, or asking friends or relatives to do so. However, depending on the size of the funeral it might not always be practical.

If you do prepare food yourself then simple light-snacks such as sandwiches, crisps, cocktail sausages, sausage rolls, cheese and crackers are always good options for buffet food and some comforting desserts such as cakes, tarts and cookies tend to be well received. You should also prepare some vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options for anyone with particular dietary requirements.

When it comes to drink, you should check with the venue as to whether or not they have an alcohol licence and also whether they have a bar that guests can purchase drinks from. You should be aware that in some venues alcohol may not be permitted. The religion of the deceased may also prohibit alcohol consumption so you should think carefully about your decision.

Entertainment and special touches

Although many funeral receptions are solemn, some people choose to have entertainment and also to decorate the venue in a particular way, wishing to celebrate the life of the person who has passed away as well as mourn their passing. There are lots of ways that you can personalise a post funeral reception.



Music is a popular choice and you might wish to play specific music that your loved one liked. You could hire a musician to perform, or simply bring along a CD or MP3 player. You might even wish to have performers such as Irish dancers attend.

You could also consider putting together a visual display. Preparing a video reel of home videos or photographs can be a nice way to remember your loved one. If you wish to do this then you should enquire with the venue as to whether they have a projection screen or see if you can source one from elsewhere.

Alternatively, you could put together a memory table. This is a table filled with photographs, letters, old school reports and other visual items from your loved ones life. You might also wish to put together a memory book for attendees to put down their memories of the person who has passed away in writing. This can be particularly valuable if they were elderly and had friends of a similar age, as you will be able to capture their memories.

Inviting people to your event

The number of people that attend the reception can make a huge difference, so if you have accurate numbers you will be better equipped when it comes to knowing what size venue to hire and how many people you should cater for.

Sending invitations by telephone, through the post or by email are all good options for telling people about the event. However, close family and friends might expect a telephone invitation rather than a less personal invitation through text or email.

You should be sure to include specific times, so that those attending know when they should leave and you can avoid any embarrassment.

You might choose to put a notice in the local paper regarding the funeral, but you can also choose to add details about the reception too and who is invited. For example, you might wish to only have close family at the service but to open up the reception to a wider group of people.



Speak to a funeral director

Funeral directors have lots of experience of planning funeral receptions and have good contacts with local venues. They will be able to advise you on most aspects of a reception; however you should always consult with friends and family who knew your loved one to make your reception personal to them.

If you are planning ahead or have recently lost a loved one and wish to plan a post-funeral reception then please do not hesitate to get in touch with Cravens through our [website](#) or through our 24 hour telephone service: 0151 228 3900.

For more information on modern funerals, click [here](#) to read our article on how funerals are changing.