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Proper **Etiquette** for Sending **Funeral Flowers**

By: Debby Mayne "The Spruce"

Do you ever wonder whether or not to send flowers for someone's funeral? In the past, you were likely to see rows of funeral wreaths in the visitation room. Now, however, there might be a couple of wreaths, but you'll see more casual flower arrangements, live plants, and cards showing that a charitable donation was made in honor of the deceased.

After someone passes away, whether it's a friend, family member, or the loved one of a friend or family member, you may still want to send flowers.

Knowing what type of floral arrangement to send depends on a number of factors, including your relationship to the deceased or survivors. Although there are no hard and fast rules about sending flowers anymore, there are some guidelines that can help you decide what to do.

REASON TO SEND FLOWERS

The purpose of flowers at a funeral is to celebrate life. Whether the floral arrangement is formal or informal, it should provide comfort and help lift the spirit of the family of the deceased. However, avoid anything too light or silly, such as balloons or stuffed animals on a stick in the arrangement. If possible, include a handwritten note.

REGARDING FAITH

You will also want to take the faith and culture of the deceased into consideration before sending flowers. What may be appropriate for one culture may be inappropriate for another. If you aren't sure, ask the closest family member you know.

Common practices according to faith:

- *Catholic* – Most flowers and arrangements are acceptable.
- *Protestant Christian* – Most flowers and arrangements are welcome at both the memorial service and the funeral.
- *Mormon* – Most flowers are appropriate. However, avoid arrangements on a crucifix or cross.
- Eastern or Greek Orthodox – Most flowers are accepted, and white flowers are favored.
- *Jewish* – Although you may send flowers to the family members' homes, flowers at the funeral home are not typically displayed. Some of the more contemporary Jewish funerals allow flowers at the entrance of the synagogue. If you are in doubt, you should probably refrain from sending flowers and opt for a fruit basket sent to the home of the family instead.
- *Baha'i* – Most flowers and arrangements are appropriate.
- *Buddhist* – Most flowers and arrangements are appropriate.
- *Hindu* – Although floral arrangements are acceptable, garlands are more common at a Hindu funeral.
- *Muslim* – The appropriateness of flowers varies in the Islamic religion, so ask family members before sending them. Many people of this religion prefer that you send money to a charity in lieu of flowers. If you choose to order flowers for an Islamic funeral, keep the arrangement simple and elegant.

MEMBERS OF THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Husbands, wives, children, sisters, brothers, parents, and grandparents may order any type of floral arrangement they like.

However, there are certain types that are reserved for immediate family members. Keep in mind that flowers from family are typically placed closest to the casket during the viewing or wake. In some cases they may be inside the casket with the deceased.

A casket spray or wreath is generally from the immediate family. Other arrangements from the spouse, children or parents may include table arrangements, swags inside the casket lid, and heart-shaped arrangements.

EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS

Other members of the family such as aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and even close friends also have a wide range of options. The traditional standing spray is often chosen for the most impact. Informal arrangements are good options because they can go home with the immediate family or taken to the cemetery.

CLOSE FRIENDS AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATES

Close friends and business associates of the family of the deceased may want to send flowers to show that they are thinking of them during their time of grief. Some of the best options for friends include standing sprays, wreaths, basket arrangements, bouquets in vases, and live plants that can go home with the family after the funeral. Friends have the option of sending the flowers directly to the funeral home or to the home of the family member.

It is also appropriate for business associates to have the flowers delivered to the office of the family member. When ordering flowers to be sent to someone's home or office, you may want to choose a vase or basket that can be used later. Typically wreaths, standing sprays, and flowers in disposable containers are designed for funeral home display.

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