

## **BE PREPARED: The Funeral**

**Different faith traditions, ethnic groups, and regions will have their own particular funeral practices, but some elements are common. (As a pastor in northern Maryland, I was surprised at the different tweaks used by a funeral home in Shrewsbury, PA, just up the road a piece!)**

**My experience is as a United Methodist, but the comments here are, again, fairly general.**

**Most of us don't make ALL our own funeral arrangements, though I have certainly heard of (and attended) services that were planned in advance, to the last sentence, by the deceased. Personally, I'm not a great fan of the "total preparation" plan, because the funeral is not for the deceased; it's for his or her family and friends. With that said, some direction is often helpful, as the person making the arrangements is likely to be**

- 1) upset and/or distracted**
- 2) very busy**
- 3) unaware of the practices of the faith or tradition of the deceased**
- 4) overwhelmed by the whole array of choices at a funeral home**
- 5) unable to agree with others who are participating in the planning**
- 6) or, you fill in the blank.**

**Funeral arrangements are not at the top of anyone's list, and having to do it after a loved one is gone adds to the pressure. The less time we have to do things, the more often we end up making choices we wish could have had more thought.**