

So, here are a few things that you may want to decide yourself or guide someone else to do.

- 1. Choose a funeral home/director in advance. Having to find someone in real time means you can't "shop." Not all funeral homes are created equal, and you want to be sure the establishment will help you compassionately and thoroughly, will not thrust costs and services upon you that you don't want, and will charge you reasonably for the services you do want.**
- 2. Buy a burial site now. Don't wait until you need one; they only get more expensive. (The lots my father bought for \$100 each in 1954 in Silver Spring sell now for at least \$7000 apiece. I have four of them and am willing to let them go for less than the going rate!) Keep the deed with your other important documents.**
- 3. Decide with your family on whether to be buried or cremated. If cremated, what do you want done with the cremains? (Be reasonable.) If you are an organ donor or if you want to donate your body to science, that should be decided now, of course.**
- 4. Talk to your spouse, children, or trustee about a cost range. (You will be just as buried for \$10,000 as for \$20,000.) Be honest about the statement you want your funeral to make: Will it be "you"; that is, in keeping with the values you espoused and lived by?**
- 5. Think about what valuables you are willing to send with you. You may want to be buried with your wedding ring, for example, but a wedding or engagement ring with diamonds or Great Aunt Tillie's emerald brooch may better stay with a family member. If valuables are a part of the funeral outfit, have the pastor or a friend watch to be sure they are still in the casket when it's closed for the last time. (Just saying...)**