

## Etiquette for a Muslim Funeral – Lastingpost.com

---

### Introduction

Muslims are adherents of the religion of Islam. An Islamic funeral follows specific rites although these may be subject to some local variations. These rites consist of four steps; the washing of the deceased's body, the wrapping it in a simple plain shroud (called the 'Kafan'), the funeral prayer and finally the burial. Cremation of the body is not normally allowed.

There are 1.6million Muslims in the UK and they represent the second largest faith group after Christians.

### The funeral

The burial takes place soon as arrangements can be made after the death as this frees the soul from the body according to Islamic custom. It is not unusual for the funeral to take place within twenty four hours of death.

The funeral prayer is made up of collective prayers for the forgiveness of the dead and is called the Salat al Janazah (Janazah prayer). The funeral prayer will often take place outside a mosque in a prayer hall or in a courtyard. The mourners line up standing in at least three rows with the prayer leader (sometimes the closest relative of the deceased and sometimes the Imam) standing in front facing away from them and towards the coffin.

The prayer is performed silently except for a few words. Unlike in the five daily prayers there will be no bowing or prostration. Often women will not attend the funeral service but if they do they will sit separately in designated seats.

At the end of the funeral prayer everyone pays their respect by filing past the body. The men will then accompany the coffin in a silent procession to the graveside. There the coffin is usually lowered into the grave by family members. Some cemeteries in the UK now allow Muslims to be buried without a coffin and in the Kafan only.

All mourners present at the burial pour three handfuls of soil on the roof of the grave whilst reciting "We created you from it, and return you into it, and from it we will raise you a second time." The grave is then filled in.

The Imam will say a few final prayers asking for forgiveness of the deceased person and reminding the deceased of their profession of their faith. The people attending will then disperse leaving the immediate family at the graveside a little longer.

Traditionally, a meal is served at the Mosque for all those who attended the funeral service.

## **Mourning period**

The mourning period for a deceased Muslim is three days, except in the case of a widow mourning her husband, in which case she may mourn for four months and ten days. Family and friends should pay condolence visits during this period of mourning. They customarily bring food to the family.

Non Muslims may express their sympathy to family members by asking Allah to show mercy on the deceased and encouraging acceptance of His will.

## **Sending flowers**

The religion of Islam emphasises simplicity and moderation and gifts of flowers are not usually made. The donation of money to good causes so that the living may benefit is more appropriate.

## **Modest attire**

The dress code for men and women is conservative clothing and subdued colours. Men should wear smart trousers and a shirt. If women attend they should wear an ankle length skirt, a long sleeved and high-necked top as well as a headscarf. Everyone attending the funeral will remove their shoes before going into the prayer hall. For this reason socks or stockings should be presentable.

Please note that information which we provide through Lasting Post is in outline for information or educational purposes only. The information is not a substitute for the professional judgment of a Solicitor, Accountant or other professional adviser. We cannot guarantee that information provided by Lasting Post will meet your individual needs, as this will very much depend on your individual circumstances. You should therefore use the information only as a starting point for your enquiries.

## **END**

Last updated: 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2009