GENERAL

how to write a resolution for a funeral

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How to Write a Resolution for a Funeral: A Step by Step Guide

When a loved one passes, the funeral becomes a moment of reflection, remembrance, and closure. A resolution—often called a funeral resolution or memorial resolution—serves as a concise, heartfelt tribute that honors the deceased's life while offering comfort to those in mourning. Crafting this resolution is both an act of love and a way to shape the narrative of the person's legacy. Whether you are a family member, close friend, or community leader, this guide will walk you through the process of writing a respectful, meaningful resolution that resonates with everyone who attends.

What Is a Funeral Resolution?

A funeral resolution is a written statement presented during a service that encapsulates the essence of the deceased's life, values, and impact. Unlike a full eulogy, a resolution is typically brief—often no longer than a few paragraphs—yet it carries the weight of a collective remembrance. It can be read aloud by a clergy member, a close relative, or a designated speaker, and it is usually printed on a small card or displayed on a screen for all attendees to read.

Key characteristics of a funeral resolution include:

- Conciseness: It delivers a powerful message in a short format.
- Personal Touch: It reflects personal anecdotes or memories.
- Respectful Tone: It honors the deceased's dignity while offering comfort to the bereaved.
- Universality: It speaks to a broad audience, recognizing shared feelings of loss.

Why Write a Resolution for a Funeral?

Creating a resolution can serve several vital purposes:

1. Consolidation of Memories: It brings together diverse memories into a single narrative that everyone can appreciate.
2. Emotional Support: Hearing a heartfelt resolution can soothe grieving hearts and foster a sense of community.
3. Legacy Preservation: It preserves the deceased's values and life lessons for future generations.
4. Guidance for the Service: It provides a clear framework for the ceremony's tone and flow.

Key Elements of a Funeral Resolution

While the structure of a resolution can vary, certain elements are almost always present. Including these components will help you craft a resolution that feels complete and respectful.

Personal Details

Begin with the basic facts—full name, birth and death dates, and sometimes the place of birth or significant life events. This anchors the resolution in reality and gives listeners context.

Tribute & Memories

Share a brief anecdote or characteristic that illustrates the deceased's personality. Focus on moments that highlight their kindness, humor, or resilience. Keep the story short but vivid.

Religious or Cultural References

Incorporate prayers, scriptures, or cultural sayings that resonate with the family's beliefs. These references provide comfort and reinforce shared values.

Closing Words & Wishes

End with a heartfelt farewell, a wish for the deceased's peace, or an affirmation of the lasting impact they have on those left behind. This closure offers a sense of finality and hope.

Step by Step Guide: How to Write a Resolution for a Funeral

Below is a practical workflow that takes you from gathering information to delivering the final resolution at the service.

Step 1: Gather Information

Collect essential data such as:

- Full name and any nicknames
- Dates of birth and death
- Major life milestones (education, career, marriage, children)
- Personal qualities and interests
- Favorite quotes or sayings
- Any religious or cultural customs relevant to the funeral

Talk with family members or close friends to gather anecdotes and insights that may not be obvious from public records.

Step 2: Choose a Tone

The tone of the resolution should reflect the personality of the deceased and the preferences of the family. Common tones include:

- Reflective: A calm, contemplative style that emphasizes the depth of the person's life.
- Celebratory: Highlights achievements and joyful memories, suitable for someone who lived an adventurous life.
- Spiritual: Emphasizes faith, prayers, and the belief in an afterlife.

Ask the family if they prefer a formal or informal tone, especially if the deceased was known for humor or wit.

Step 3: Draft the Resolution

Using the gathered information, draft a concise narrative. A typical resolution might look like this:

"We gather today to honor the life of John A. Thompson, born May 12, 1945, who passed on April 15, 2024. John was a devoted father, a loving husband, and a lifelong teacher who inspired countless students with his patience and passion. His love for gardening, his laugh that could light up a room, and his unwavering faith were gifts he shared with all of us. May we remember him with gratitude, cherish the lessons he taught us, and carry his legacy forward in our hearts."

Ensure the draft stays within 150–200 words for easy reading during the service.

Step 4: Review & Edit

Read the draft aloud. Ask yourself:

- Is it clear and easy to understand?
- Does it capture the essence of the person?
- Are there any phrases that might be misinterpreted or cause discomfort?
- Is the tone appropriate for the audience?

Share the draft with a trusted family member or close friend for feedback. Make revisions as needed, but avoid over editing. The resolution should feel authentic, not polished to the point of losing its emotional resonance.

Step 5: Finalize & Share

Once finalized, print the resolution on high quality paper or a small card. If the service will be conducted in multiple languages, consider providing translations. Place the resolution on a small podium or hand it to the officiant so it can be read aloud. If the family wishes, the resolution can also be included in the funeral program or shared digitally with attendees.

Tips & Common Pitfalls

Below are practical tips to help you avoid common mistakes and ensure your resolution is both heartfelt and appropriate.

Tip 1: Keep It Concise

Remember that a resolution is a brief tribute. Aim for 150–200 words. Overly long passages can lose the audience's attention and dilute the message.

Tip 2: Use Respectful Language

Avoid slang or colloquialisms that might not translate across cultures. Stick to clear, respectful language that honors the deceased's dignity.

Tip 3: Include Personal Anecdotes

Even a single, vivid memory can make the resolution memorable. Choose anecdotes that reflect the person's core values or a defining moment.

Tip 4: Avoid Controversial Topics

Steer clear of politics, religion disputes, or any sensitive issues that might cause division among attendees. The resolution should unify, not divide.

Sample Resolutions

Here are three examples of funeral resolutions that illustrate different styles and contexts. Feel free to adapt them to suit your needs.

Sample 1: Traditional

"We are gathered to remember the life of Mary Elizabeth Carter, born March 3, 1950, who departed this world on June 10, 2023. Mary was a devoted mother, a nurturing grandmother, and a pillar of our community. Her gentle spirit and unwavering faith guided those around her. As we honor her memory, let us find comfort in the love she shared and the legacy she leaves behind."

Sample 2: Modern

“Today we celebrate the vibrant life of Alex Rivera, born July 22, 1985, who left us on February 18, 2024. Alex was a fearless traveler, a creative soul, and a friend to many. He taught us that life is a series of bold choices. In remembering Alex, let us live with the same curiosity, kindness, and courage he embodied.”

Sample 3: Religious

“We gather in faith to honor the passing of Reverend James K. Lewis, born September 12, 1942, who departed on November 5, 2023. Reverend Lewis was a shepherd to countless souls, a man of prayer, and a beacon of hope. In this moment of mourning, we turn to the words of Psalm 23, trusting that he is now in the embrace of our Lord, forever at peace.”

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: How long should a funeral resolution be?

A: A well crafted resolution typically ranges from 150 to 200 words. This length allows for a meaningful tribute without overwhelming the audience.

Q2: Can I use a template?

A: Yes, many funeral homes and online resources offer templates. However, personalize the template to reflect the unique qualities of the deceased.

Q3: Should I involve others in writing the resolution?

A: Involving close family or friends can provide diverse perspectives and ensure the resolution reflects a shared memory. However, it’s important that the final draft remains cohesive.

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