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**When you are not able to attend the funeral of your loved one**

**Suggestions from CRUSE[[1]](#footnote-1)**

How you can help yourself

* It may be possible for a friend, relative or someone from the funeral directors to record, video, or even live stream the event.
* You may be able to write or record a message to be read out or played at the funeral. Contact your funeral director for advice.
* If you cannot watch happenings in real time, you could set aside the time while the funeral is taking place (or later) to hold your own act of memorial at home.
* You could look at pictures, play some of the person’s favourite music, write a message to them, light a candle or follow any of your own cultural rituals.
* Ask those who have been able to attend to call you afterwards so you can hear their account of the event and take the time to share your memories of the person.
* If the funeral is delayed or reduced to a very short service, you could still set some time aside to have your own private goodbye including any of the ideas above.

How you can help someone else

* If you are attending the funeral, find out if it is possible to take pictures, record the event or even live stream it. They may like to record their own message to read out or play at the funeral.
* Offer to call them afterwards and let them know how it went.
* They may appreciate the chance to share their memories of the person who has died and hear your memories too.
* As time goes on after a funeral and people continue their lives, some bereaved people find that messages of support tail off. In times of social isolation, it will be even more important that they have someone to talk to, so try and stay in touch and let them know you are thinking of them.

**Suggestions from Winston’s wish on how to support children[[2]](#footnote-2)**

* Photographs can be taken to show children and young people to help them understand what happens at a funeral. Photographs that are helpful include: the outside of the place where the funeral is being held; the hearse; the coffin (or equivalent); any flowers or decoration; the interior of the place (with permission).
* Keepsakes from the funeral service can be very meaningful for children. For example, some flowers from the tributes to press and keep; a leaf from one of the trees in the grounds; a pebble from the surrounding area; the order of service.
* Children can participate by contributing to some of the choices within the ceremony. For example, they could choose a piece of music, select a poem, or suggest flowers.
* Children could write and/or draw cards to be placed on or in the coffin or choose a toy or something meaningful to be placed with the person’s body.
* They could also write a tribute to the person who died which can be read by the person taking the service or by whoever is able to attend.

**Suggestions from The Church of England[[3]](#footnote-3)**

* If the funeral is live-streamed, then you could watch online.
* You could read a poem or a reading from scripture
* Why not take a few moments to think, write, or draw some of your memories of the person? Later you may be able to share that with others at a special memorial service.
* [You can light a candle online by following this link](https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle): <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/light-candle>
* You could write a card to others who are missing the person you are grieving.
* Remember that when this crisis is over [and it will pass] there will always be services for remembering organised by the church and anyone can go to these services.
* It may also be possible for the local church to help you organise a formal or informal service to remember afterwards.
* You might choose to pray at home – [see below for some ideas](https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/prayers):

Dear God,

Thank you for x, for all that they meant to me and to others.

I so wanted to say goodbye, to be alongside my friends and family.

Help me to know you are there, Holding all my hopes,

Holding all those I Love, especially x,

And holding me this day.

Be close with your peace and hope.  Amen.

Loving God,

Life is so strange just now – I don’t know what to do.

Comfort me with your presence,

Be with all who grieve and give us strength and courage to face this

and all the days ahead. Amen.

God of love,

Surround all those I love,

Especially those I can no longer meet.

Be light in my darkness, Be hope in my fear,

Be love in every moment, and give me grace to face each day ahead.

Amen.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Other suggestions**

* Bake the deceased’s favourite cake. You could do this at the same time and then enjoy ‘together’ over facetime/skype and reminisce about the person who has died.
* Plant something that reminds you of the deceased. If they loved musicals plant an Edelweiss rose; if they were a bit prickly, plant some holly or some sunflowers if they were vibrant and lively.
* Watch their favourite movie.
* Play their favourite music.
* Do something that you would often do together like having a movie night; telling stories around the fire; have a BBQ; enjoying a cream tea; playing their favourite board game or doing a jigsaw or crossword.
* Go through family photos and make a collage of memories and put it in a frame.
* You may want to hold a ‘time to remember’ at home. Please contact our spiritual care team on 01902 774554 or spiritualcare@comptoncare.org.uk for more information.

These restrictions won’t last forever and at some point in the future it will be possible to celebrate your loved one’s life with those who loved and knew them in a fitting way.

1. <https://www.cruse.org.uk/coronavirus/funerals> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-funerals-alternative-goodbyes/?fbclid=IwAR2q5\_xYGEedqMM41T8wVVrl4aSIx9lJtBJLhQamLTT7accxZnjGByYiMXg [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/sadness-grief-and-being-there> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/funerals/prayers> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)