

Planning Ahead with Love

A Pre-Need Funeral Planning Guide for Our Neshamah Family

From Rabbi Amy Rader | The Neshamah Institute | niboca.org

Shalom,

Talking about death is not easy. In Jewish tradition, though, planning for the end of life is considered an act of deep love. When we make these decisions ahead of time, whether for ourselves or for someone we love, we spare our families from making painful choices in the fog of grief. We give them the gift of clarity, so that when the time comes, they can simply be present, mourn, and remember.

This guide walks you through the essential steps of pre-need funeral planning. Keep it somewhere your family can find it. Fill in your choices as you make them. And please know that you never have to do any of this alone. I am here to walk with you through every step.

Step 1: Find Your Rabbi

Your rabbi is your guide, your advocate, and your comfort through this entire process. Ideally, your family should know which rabbi to call before they ever need to make that call.

- Choose a rabbi who knows you, or take time now to build that relationship. A eulogy is far more meaningful when the rabbi can speak about who you truly were.
- Share this guide and your wishes with your rabbi in advance.
- Make sure your family has the rabbi's name and phone number written down alongside your other documents.

At Neshamah, I officiate funerals and memorial services for our whole community, members and non-members alike, because we have no membership at all. If you would like to talk through your wishes, or if you simply have questions, reach out anytime. Everything at Neshamah starts with a conversation. We're here whenever you're ready.



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19140 Lyons Road, Boca Raton, FL 33434 | (561) 368-1199 | rabbi@niboca.org | niboca.org

Step 2: Decide on the Type of Burial

The next major decision is whether you wish to have a traditional Jewish burial in the ground. Understanding what tradition offers can help you make a choice that feels right for you and your family.

Traditional Jewish In-Ground Burial

Traditional Jewish burial, called *kevurah*, returns the body to the earth simply and naturally, fulfilling the verse "for dust you are, and to dust you shall return." A traditional burial typically includes:

- **Tahara:** Ritual washing and preparation of the body by the chevra kadisha, the sacred burial society
- **Tachrichim:** Dressing the body in simple white linen or cotton garments, the same for every person, rich or poor
- **Aron:** A plain, all-wood casket with no metal, allowing natural return to the earth
- **Shemira:** A guardian who stays with the body from death until burial, so your loved one is never alone
- **Timely burial:** Burial as soon as possible, usually within a day or two, out of respect for the deceased

Other Options

Some families consider mausoleum entombment or cremation. Traditional Jewish law calls for in-ground burial, and I encourage every family to have a conversation with me about the choices before them. There is no judgment here, only guidance. My role is to help you understand the tradition and to honor your loved one with dignity, whatever path your family chooses.

Step 3: Select a Cemetery

If you choose burial, selecting and purchasing a plot in advance is one of the most practical gifts you can give your family. Prices are lower pre-need, and your family will not have to shop for cemetery property on the hardest day of their lives.

Questions to ask when visiting a cemetery:

- Is this a Jewish cemetery, or a Jewish section within a larger cemetery?
- Are there sections that align with your level of observance?
- Can spouses or family members be buried together? Are interfaith couples welcome?
- What are the total costs, including the plot, opening and closing, the liner or vault, and perpetual care?
- What are the rules about monuments, footstones, and unveilings?



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Step 4: Chapel Service or Graveside Service?

There are two common formats for a Jewish funeral, and neither is more "correct" than the other. The difference is mostly about setting, length, and the needs of your family.

Chapel Service

The service begins indoors, in the funeral home's chapel or at a synagogue. Mourners gather in a climate-controlled sanctuary with seating for a larger crowd. The eulogies, psalms, and prayers take place there, and then family and close friends proceed to the cemetery for the burial itself. A chapel service is often the right choice when you expect many attendees, when weather or mobility is a concern, or when the family wants a fuller, more formal service.

Graveside Service

The entire service takes place outdoors at the grave. It is typically shorter, simpler, and more intimate, with the eulogy, prayers, and burial flowing together in one place. Many families find the graveside setting deeply moving in its directness and simplicity. In South Florida, do keep our heat and summer rain in mind when choosing this option, especially for older attendees.

Both formats include the same sacred core: the eulogy (hesped), Psalm 23, the El Malei Rachamim memorial prayer, the Mourner's Kaddish, and the mitzvah of family and friends helping to fill the grave. I will shape either service to reflect the person you love.

Local Funeral Homes

These funeral homes serve the Jewish community in Boca Raton, Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, and Broward County. Neshamah does not endorse any single provider. I encourage you to call two or three, ask about pre-need pricing, and choose the one that treats you with the most care.

Name	Location	Phone
Kronish Funeral Services	Boca Raton (serves Palm Beach and Broward)	(561) 717-2874
Guterman Warheit Memorial Chapel	Boca Raton	(561) 997-9900
Glick Family Funeral Home	Boca Raton	(561) 672-1880
Beth Israel Memorial Chapel	Boynton Beach	(561) 327-4965
Beth Israel Memorial Chapel	Delray Beach	(561) 404-0047
Star of David Funeral Chapel	North Lauderdale (Broward)	(954) 722-9000



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Menorah Gardens and Funeral Chapels	Southwest Ranches (Broward)	(954) 434-1531
Levitt-Weinstein Memorial Chapels	Broward County	(754) 201-4134

Local Jewish Cemeteries

Name	Location	Phone
Eternal Light Memorial Gardens	Boynton Beach	(561) 600-9218
Star of David Memorial Gardens	North Lauderdale (Broward)	(954) 722-9000
Menorah Gardens Cemetery	Southwest Ranches (Broward)	(954) 434-1531

Phone numbers were verified in July 2026. Please confirm details when you call, as providers occasionally change hands or numbers.

Keep This Information Together

Once you have made your decisions, write them down and tell your family where to find them. At a minimum, record:

- The rabbi to call, with phone number
- The funeral home you have chosen, and whether arrangements are already paid
- The cemetery, section, and plot numbers, with the deed location
- Your wishes: traditional burial, chapel or graveside service, who should speak
- Hebrew name and parents' Hebrew names, for the service and the headstone
- Location of your will, advance directives, and important documents

Planning ahead is not morbid. It is one of the most loving things you will ever do for the people you leave behind. If this guide raises questions, or if you simply want to talk it through over a cup of coffee, please call me. Everything at Neshamah starts with a conversation. We're here whenever you're ready.

With love and blessings,

Rabbi Amy



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