

Signs of God information sheet.

Conducting a funeral service at which a BSL/English Interpreter is present.

Information for the interpreter:

The Interpreter will need to prepare for the service beforehand. Ideally the following should be sent to the interpreter before the funeral.

It is unlikely that the interpreter will have a copy of your church's prayer or hymn book, or a Bible so please send

a full text of:

Order of service

Hymns

Readings

Poems or songs

And text or notes of:

Minister's sermon

Tributes by friends/ family

Extra prayers - If it is your custom to pray extempore, please keep sentences short and allow occasional short pauses in the prayer.

If you are unsure of the suitability of any material you would like to use in the service, contact the interpreter or *Signs of God* for advice.

The Sign Language Interpreter will be a professional who will seek to work with you in every way. He/she may not be a practising Christian. You may wish to invite him/her to join you for prayer before the service, but he/she may not accept.

Practical considerations:

Please discuss with the interpreter where he/she should stand, ideally near you. Deaf people need to see you and the interpreter clearly.

It is not usually acceptable to interpret across the coffin to the Deaf people, or for the interpreter to stand with his/her back to the coffin.

If a large number of Deaf people attend a funeral, the interpreter will either need a platform to stand on to be seen or you could ask people to remain seated throughout so that Deaf people further back can see.

If you usually move to the coffin during the service, please discuss with the interpreter what he/she should do at that time.

In a crematorium: Deaf people cannot look in two directions at once, so please pause at the committal to allow Deaf people to watch the action (curtain closing, coffin lowering etc)

If any of the tributes are to be given in Sign Language, the interpreter will need a microphone in order to provide the spoken English interpretation.

Liturgical considerations:

If you are planning the service, please consider using visual symbols such as flowers or candles.

Funeral liturgy traditionally uses a lot of metaphor. Consider simplifying the service and using fewer metaphors.

The use of an interpreter may mean that the service will take slightly longer than usual. You may wish to make your order of service slightly shorter than normal. (In the case of a service at a crematorium consideration should be given to booking a double time-slot.)

Delivery – an unhurried (but not slow) pace is best and most helpful for the interpreter. Please be especially aware of your speed when *reading* material since people usually read more quickly than they speak in a formal setting.

Please try not to stand with your back to the congregation when you are speaking. Although Deaf people will be using the interpreter, some may still like to lip-read you.

Signs of God

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