

What is The Religious Significance of Your Burial Position?

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If you visit different cemeteries you may notice that the grave markers face different directions. Some markers may face east or west while others may not face any particular direction. In many cases, there may be a religious reason behind the grave marker's direction. But while there are many reasons as to why a grave may face a certain direction, there is no single overarching rule.

Ancient religions often buried their dead facing east. It is often thought that this was so they could face the rising sun. It may have also symbolized new life or rebirth.

Many Christians bury their dead facing east as well, with several possible rationales for this. Once again, facing east can symbolize meeting the new day or the next life. Additionally, Christ is considered the "Light of the World" and scripture teaches that Christ will come from the east again. Scripture also states the Star of Babylon rose in the east. Many churches put their altars facing east as well.

While there are no Jewish laws regarding the direction of burial, there are some traditions. Bodies are often buried with the deceased's feet facing the cemetery entrance. This may symbolize that the deceased is ready to leave the graveyard once the resurrection begins. In other cases, the deceased may be buried so their feet face Israel. This is because Jewish custom believes that once the resurrection begins, all people will go to the land of Israel. Jewish people may also be buried facing west due to the design of the tabernacle. The Jewish faith holds the belief that God's glory enters the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle from this direction.

In Islam, the main rule is that it is expected for graves to be perpendicular to the orientation of the Qibla, or Mecca. Mecca is the center of the Islamic faith and the deceased should face Mecca as they wait for the resurrection.

While not all cemeteries follow these religious rules, some do. This is more likely to be the case with older cemeteries or those with a religious affiliation. However, today, many cemeteries may make their decision based on the ease of upkeep and for aesthetic reasons rather than for religious reasons.