

Faith keeper

When notice is given of a person's passing, the family may contact a Faith keeper of their clan. The Faith keeper asks what arrangements have been made and asks if the family is going to have a fire by their home.

The Fire

The significance of the fire is to give comfort to the bereaved family. It is also a beacon for the spirit of the person who has passed. The person who has passed travels to various places from their past life. When it is time to come back to the rest of their family, their fire guides them back.

The fire can be made traditionally, using flint. The only thing that should be thrown in the fire is wood. Responsibility to look after the fire is given to someone, not necessarily a family member. This person can also appoint others to assist him. These people are the fire keepers. The fire keeper reminds those to visit only wood should be thrown in the fire; no paper, cigarette butts, or garbage of any kind.

Food Preparation

When a person passes, the other two clans are responsible for food preparation. For example, if someone from the Wolf clan passes, the Bear and Turtle clan are responsible. The other clans take care of food preparation (cooking and serving) for the wake and funeral services.

10-day feast

The 10-day feast starts during the afternoon of the ninth day, usually around 4:00 p.m. Words of condolence are given to the bereaved family. The bereaved family also has the opportunity to thank those who have taken care of the fire, have cooked and served foods, and have sung during the wake. The fire keepers and the other clans, who have done their very best, are released to carry out their everyday duties.

A speaker then announces that the bereaved family is responsible to distribute any items accumulated by the person who has passed to family and friends.

The spirit plate is prepared by a family member and set at the head of the table. In the morning, it is taken out at daybreak. It takes one whole day for the spirit to arrive to the place of the Creator so the spirit plate will be their nourishment.