



Principles for helping the grieving

good
grief



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MONDAY – How to Support Someone who is Grieving



2 Corinthians 1: 3-4 (NIV) *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

When someone you care about is grieving after a loss, it can be difficult to know what to say or do. The bereaved struggle with many intense and painful emotions, including depression, anger, guilt, and profound sadness. Often, they also feel isolated and alone in their grief; since the intense pain and difficult emotions can make people uncomfortable about offering support.

You may be afraid of intruding, saying the wrong thing, or making the bereaved feel even worse at such a difficult time. Or, maybe, you think there's little you can do to make things better. That's understandable. But don't let discomfort prevent you from reaching out to someone who is grieving. Now, more than ever, your loved one needs your support. You don't need to have answers or give advice or say and do all the right things. The most important thing you

can do for a grieving person is to simply be there. It's your support (spiritual, physical and practical) and caring presence that will help your loved one cope with the pain and gradually begin to heal.

Some keys to helping a loved one who's grieving include:

- Don't let fears about saying or doing the wrong thing stop you from reaching out.
- Let the person experiencing grief know that you're there to listen.
- Understand that everyone grieves differently and for different lengths of time.
- Offer to help in practical ways.
- Offer spiritual support.
- Maintain your support after the funeral

Reflection: Who do I know that is grieving and needs my support?



Prayer: Lord, I ask You to fill the huge hole in the hearts of all who are grieving the loss of a loved one with Your healing light. Show them ways to build their faith and guide them out of their present darkness into Your loving light once more. AMEN.

Associated Video Support: Supporting a Grieving Friend - Esther Perel & Julia Samuel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBqv1KaoLWk>

TUESDAY – Understanding the Grieving Process



Psalm 34: 18 (NIV) - *“The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”.*

The better your understanding of grief, the grieving process and how it is healed, the better equipped you will be to help a bereaved friend or family member. Here are a couple of aspects to keep in mind.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grief does not always unfold in orderly, predictable stages. It can be an emotional rollercoaster, with unpredictable highs, lows, and setbacks. Everyone grieves differently, so avoid telling your loved one or friend what they “should” be feeling or doing.

Grief may involve extreme emotions and behaviours. Feelings of guilt, anger, despair, and fear are common. A grieving person may yell to the heavens, obsess about the death, lash out at loved ones, or cry for hours on end. Your loved one needs reassurance

that what they feel is normal. Don't judge them or take their grief reactions personally.

There is no set timetable for grieving. For many people, recovery after bereavement takes 18 to 24 months, but for others, the grieving process may be longer or shorter. Don't pressure your loved one to move on or make them feel like they've been grieving too long. This can actually slow the healing process.

Reflection: We all experience pain in this life, and the only thing worse than the pain of losing a loved one is the pain of never loving or being loved in the first place. In a way, the pain of grief is a gift to us because it is evidence of the presence of love.



Prayer: Lord, keep and carry those grieving in their sadness and loss. Cover them with Your great wings of love, give their weary hearts rest and their minds sound sleep. Lord, lift their eyes so that they may catch a glimpse of eternity, and be comforted by the promise of heaven. AMEN.

Associated Video Support: Mercy Me - The Hurt & The Healer
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqBMNSuF7g&list=PLE4CCC95E5A374862>

WEDNESDAY – Know what to Say to Someone who is Grieving



Matthew 5: 4 (NIV) - Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

While many of us worry about what to say to a grieving person, it's actually more important to **listen**. All too often well-meaning people avoid talking about the death or change the subject when the deceased person is mentioned.

We have to realise that the bereaved need to feel that their loss is acknowledged, it's not too terrible to talk about, and their loved one won't be forgotten. One day they may want to cry on your shoulder, on another day they may want to vent, or sit in silence, or share memories. By being present and listening compassionately, you can take your cues from the grieving person. Simply being there and listening to them can be a huge source of comfort and healing. However, we must also be willing to just sit in silence; as often comfort comes from simply having a friendly face around.

While you should never try to force someone to open up, it's important to let your grieving friend or loved one know that you're there to listen if they want to talk about their loss. Talk

candidly about the person who died and don't steer away from the subject if the deceased's name comes up. And when it seems appropriate, ask sensitive questions—without being nosy—that invite the grieving person to openly express their feelings. By simply asking, "Do you feel like talking?" you're letting your friend or loved one know that you're available to listen. A good friend in Cape Town had lost his wife to cancer a couple of years ago. We went to visit him some time later and only three days after our arrival, when we were travelling with him in his car, did he suddenly pull to the side of the road and start to speak openly about his loss.

When communicating with someone who is grieving, it is also important to be able to acknowledge the situation and express your concern for the bereaved. It is also important to be genuine in your communication by not trying to minimize their loss, provide simplistic solutions, or offer unsolicited advice. And always offer your support in whatever way you can.



Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, embrace in Your loving arms all who are grieving the loss of friends and loved ones. Be with them in their sorrow, uphold them with Your strength. Through the love shown by others and Your presence in their hearts, may they know that they are never alone. AMEN

Associated Video Support: Lauren Daigle - Hold on to me
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1EwKwayzLM>

THURSDAY – Providing Practical Assistance



Psalm 127: 3 *He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.*

It is difficult for many grieving people to ask for help. They might feel guilty about receiving so much attention, fear about being a burden to others, or simply be too depressed to reach out. A grieving person may not have the energy or motivation to call you when they need something, so instead of saying, “Let me know if there’s anything I can do,” make it easier for them by making specific suggestions such as, “I’m going to the market this afternoon. What can I bring you?”

If you’re able, try to be consistent in your offers of assistance. This helps the grieving person to know that you will be there for as long as it takes and that they can look forward to your attentiveness without having to repeatedly ask for it.

Each person will be judged by the service he has rendered to those who are in need (Matthew 25: 31–46). People who have lost loved ones are among the neediest in

any community. They may need food, their house may need to be cleaned, routine chores must be done, and children may require special care. These needs may continue for days, weeks and even sometimes for months. Perhaps the truest test of one’s Christianity is not what we say to those who are hurting, but what we do to help meet their needs.

Eventually, your service may include encouraging someone who is grieving to overcome their negative emotions and to engage in activities that will help them work through their grief - to seek God’s help, to seek the help of others, and to learn how to help themselves. Your aim for your grieving friend of a loved one, should be to encourage them to adjust to the changes in their life. However, at first, you will serve simply by helping the grieving to survive and have the time and space to mourn.



Prayer: Dear God, please help all those who are hurting and grieving right now. Be with them and guide and place Your loving arms around them, so that they may experience the strength that is the result of Your loving presence in their lives. AMEN

Associated video support : Tips to Get Through the Grieving Process - Dr. Phil

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ra9bDI-U3OA>

FRIDAY 7 – Providing Ongoing Support



Colossians 4: 6 (NLT) *"Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."*

We all need to remember that our friend or loved one will continue grieving long after the funeral is over and the cards and flowers have stopped. As we have already seen, the length of the grieving process varies from person to person, but often lasts much longer than most people expect. Your bereaved friend or family member may need your support for months or even years.

As a result, stay in touch with the grieving person, periodically checking in, dropping by, or sending letters or cards. After the initial shock of the loss has worn off, your support is more valuable than ever. The bereaved person may look fine on the outside, while inside their suffering continues. In fact we need to be sensitive to the fact that for them, life may never feel the same. This is especially so on special days, birthdays, and anniversaries which will almost surely reawaken grief. It helps no end if the bereaved knows that we are sensitive to these occasions.

While it is most essential to stay nearby and important to serve those

who are bereaved, it is also necessary to be careful what you say when you try to comfort them. As we read in **Ephesians 4: 29 (NIT)** - *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

In general we should offer comments that "build up" - words that will help and not hurt. Sometimes, a simple "I am so sorry" will suffice. Don't say, "I know how you feel," since it is impossible to know exactly how anyone else feels. Try to speak encouraging words about the one who has died and share what he or she meant to you or a precious memory you have.

And finally, never forget to pray continually. Prayer is always helpful (**Luke 18: 1 (NIV)** - *Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up* (The Parable of the Persistent widow). Pray for the bereaved and let them know of your continual prayers.



Prayer: Almighty God, source of all mercy and giver of comfort, be with all those who, for whatever reason, mourn today. Let them place all their sorrow before You so that they may know the healing power of Your love through Your son. Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

Associated video support : Grieving & Healing: Pastor Rick Warren
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-Zlvk2pIYA>