



## What You Can Do To Help a Person Who's Grieving

- **Support** - Remember, you cannot fix their pain, only let them know they are not alone (bring supper, mow lawn, fix faucets, clean their office, flowers from your garden at home, change their oil in the car, take up a collection for a grave stone). This should be on-going, not just the first couple of months.
- **Be patient** - Let the bereaved set his/her own pace. They may not want to talk about it, but later they may.
- **Be available** - Try to anticipate the times that might be the toughest (Birthday, Mothers/Fathers Day, anniversary, graduation, death day).
- **Don't give advice** - Don't tell them what they should be doing, or what you've read, or how your cousin handled his/her grief.
- **Don't make judgments** - Don't tell bereaved people they are doing something they shouldn't. Don't decide for them about their choices. Do not tell them they need to keep busy, or should date, etc...
- **Don't stay away** - Don't avoid mourners because their pain makes you uncomfortable, or that you don't know what to say.
- **Their children are grieving too** - A card from relatives or the people at "mom's/dad's workplace" is helpful to both the children and a surviving spouse.
- **Don't impose your religious beliefs** - Do not assume that you have something to offer them theologically. They will ask you if interested.
- **Listen, listen, listen** - Let them tell you their stories over and over. They need to do this. Act like you've never heard it before.
- **Don't judge their emotions** - Don't tell them not to be angry, or guilty, or be surprised that they look happy, or that they seem ungrateful. Grief is a boiling pit of emotions that need to be spent.
- **Do mention the deceased's name** - Don't let the deceased become a taboo subject.
- **Maintain the same level of relationship with the bereaved** - do not become their best friend after someone dies. This is intrusive. They will be most intimate with their inner circle.
- **Don't tell them about your own grief** - They have all they can handle, they don't need to compare their grief with anyone else's.

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