

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE IN YOUR GROUP DIES

Group Shepherd & Leader Resource

OVERVIEW & GOAL: Death is a part of life. We all experience and deal with death at some point in our lives, whether it's the death of a family member, close friend, co-worker, or even someone in our own small group. Death is not a fun topic, and it is also not one that we often feel equipped and prepared to address. When someone in our group dies, it's an opportunity for us to be the church - and we want to do that well. The goal of this resource is to provide you with some direction in what to do, what not to do, and how to best help and care for a group that is struggling with loss and grief.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1) PRAY & PRAISE

Both prayer and praise are two powerful starting points.

WHAT TO PRAISE:

- give thanks for those in your small group and the support of this group
- give thanks for the deceased, the relationship that they've been blessed with, the memories and example they have given/left
- give thanks for God's peace and comfort in the midst
- give thanks for the eternal hope we have in Christ

Second, pray for the group members.

WHAT TO PRAY:

- pray for them to experience God's comfort
- pray for people to be available in their life to help them talk through their grief
- pray that they will be encouraged and remain strong in their faith and in their relationship with God and what He can do
- pray that God will give them strength and courage to persevere through this time

2) TALK ABOUT DEATH.

Don't be afraid to talk about death and loss. Death ends a life, not a relationship, and those who are struggling with loss welcome the opportunity to freely share their emotions and memories with a caring, sympathetic leader. This is often helpful and encouraging to most people - even if doing so triggers a few tears. Let them talk about their loved one, and listen.

WHAT CAN YOU SAY:

- What did you love/like most about _____?
- What was your favorite memory with _____.
- How did you meet _____?
- Share a favorite photo you have of them.

WHAT TO AVOID

You want to avoid saying things that are not helpful to someone who is grieving (see below). While all of these statements come from a place of wanting to help and comfort, they often do neither of those things. If you are unsure what to say, simply do not say anything, just being there is enough.

- Romans 8:28.
- They are in a better place.
- God wanted them in heaven
- There is a reason for everything
- I know how you feel
- When my _____ died this is how I dealt with it.

3) BE PRESENT.

Being around someone going through loss can be uncomfortable. Often, we can assume that they want space to process their loss. The truth is, most of the time, giving people space is really just our excuse for not wanting to enter into their pain. The most important way we can help is to **be present**. This means just being there, to listen, to mourn with them, to comfort. Your presence means so much more than anything you can say or do.

WAYS TO BE PRESENT:

- call them
- Send them a text message
- visit them (if able)

4) DO SOMETHING - DON'T ASK.

People often ask, "how can I help?" But when you are grieving, you often do not know what you need, and asking someone who is grieving can add to their burden. So, just do something. Don't ask permission, tell them what you are going to do to help. If you aren't sure what to do, here are some suggestions:

WHAT CAN YOU DO:

- Shop for groceries or run errands
- Bring them a meal; organize a meal train to help
- Help with housework, like cleaning and laundry
- Watch their kids or pick them up from school
- Drive them wherever they need to go
- Look after their pets
- Help with funeral arrangements
- Stay with them at their home to answer phone calls and receive guests
- Go with them to a support group meeting
- Accompany them on a walk
- Take them to lunch
- Help with insurance forms or bills

AVAILABLE RESOURCES:

- **GRIEFSHARE:** This is a ministry for people grieving the loss of someone. It's a video and curriculum-based program that is facilitated by people who understand what you are experiencing and want to offer you comfort and encouragement as you grieve. Meetings are held on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month from 7-9PM and the 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoon from 1-3PM via Zoom. Contact care@thechapel.org for more information.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL HELP:

Grief: Finding Hope Again by Paul David Tripp: [Grief: Finding Hope Again | Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation \(ccf.org\)](#)