

How to Help the Grieving

Loving Relating Encouraging -----In Grief Ministry

The Purpose of LRE:

To **consistently** love others **unconditionally** and with the love of Jesus Christ, expecting **nothing** in return.

Who said: People don't care how much you know about them when they know how much you care?

Be Authentic:

1. Act out of a heart for God
2. Ministry grounded in authority of scripture and spiritual passion
 - a. "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us." Rom 5:8
 - b. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? And Jesus said, Love the Lord your Godand your neighbor as yourself." Matt. 22:36-39
 - c. "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the 99 in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?" Luke 15:4
 - d. "...carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Gal 6:1-2
3. Listening is critical to any ministry
4. They have a story to tell
 - a. Why should we care enough to act? Out of our love of God comes a desire to BE God's hands and feet in loving others.

Goal:

To help our friends who've suffered loss in the best way possible

Don't:

- Don't lead; follow
- Feel like you have to problem solve for them
- Feel like you have to say 'all the right things'
- Talk more than you listen
- Don't promise what you can't/won't deliver
- Do anything out of obligation
- Ask "how are you?"
- Say you 'understand' or "I know how you feel"
- As an individual, take on too much; never feel obligated to act

Do:

- BE PRESENT

- Pray for God's blessing upon your conversation or interaction **before** you have it
- Show empathy and sincere care
- Listen carefully
- Acknowledge their feelings (I can see why you feel that way); 'mirror' their comments
- Desire to reach out and love them out of God's love & grace for you
- Pray with them or ASK if you can pray with/for something specific
- Pray God GIVES: Peace (that transcends understanding, Phil 4:7), strength, purpose, courage etc. That God will 'come along side and carry them'
- Pray God TAKES: Pain, brokenness, extreme heart break and sense of loss, etc
- Go and Do what you feel God leading you to in any situation
- Ask "how is today going for you?"
- Acknowledge important time points
 - Each week following loss is grieved for several months (i.e. every Monday is one more week counted)
 - The Anniversary of loss
 - Birthday of deceased
 - Every holiday (Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc) Take **the 'adjective' out of the holiday. Birthdays aren't 'happy', Christmas isn't 'Merry' etc; acknowledge but don't 'wish' them happy or merry, etc.**
 - Write notes to them around those holidays to let them know you're thinking of and praying for them
 - The day of the month of loss (i.e. 21st of every month)

Grief areas:

1. Loss of child: Parents struggle to function little lone parent their other children.
 - a. Offer to take other children for activities
 - b. Run errands for them
 - c. Clean their house
 - d. Baby-sit
2. Loss of spouse
 - a. The emptiness of a lonely house
 - b. Many things needing done that spouse always did (i.e. fixing things, cooking, etc)
 - c. Run errands
 - d. Clean house
2. Loss of parent
3. Sudden unexpected loss
 - a. Brings greater shock of loss
 - b. No time for closure in relationships
 - c. No time to say "goodbye"
 - d. Guilt may (will likely) accompany the loss

4. Long illness
 - a. Death may be seen as a gift rather than a loss
5. Suicide
6. Divorce
7. Other _____

Opportunities of Support for the grieved: Some may depend on familiarity with family

1. Provide aid and comfort to the family in the early stages by bringing water, snacks, etc.....ask extended family if there are any logistical things you can help with. Offer to put together picture collages for memorial service.
2. Let them know you are praying daily and intentionally for their needs.
3. Hugs & pats on the back or arm show unspoken care and concern
4. Spiritual cards and notes of encouragement
5. When God leads you to call or act, *then call or act*. Meet God's time
6. "I just want you to know that you've been on my heart and I'm praying fordaily" "Is there something specific I can pray for you?"
7. "Is there anything I can do for you?....anything that needs done that I can do"
8. At church: if there's a chance to "lay hands" during prayer time....Do it!
9. Food is appreciated as people deep in grief can't think far enough ahead to plan a menu. Bring by meals so they can focus on healing.
10. **Text** scripture and notes of encouragement. It allows the person to know you are reaching out but doesn't require them to interact.
11. "bag of goodies" with a note of encouragement or scripture

The grieved:

1. Are warmed to know they are not going through this alone.
2. If they're up for a phone call they'll take it; if not they won't answer but a number on caller ID or a voice message shows you care
3. Can't think and process beyond the moment.....knowing people are intentionally praying will be felt and appreciated
4. Don't ask how 'it' happened; explanations take the person back to the moment to relive the events over and over again. Dead is dead to the person and the 'how' is irrelevant. You may have heard it once; they may have been asked it 100 times.
5. The farther removed from us the person is the greater the impact of reaching out. We *expect* our pastor, family and friends to reach out.....but folks we know less well show us God's grace and love in entirely new ways.
6. Deal with a great sense of other's lives moving forward while they're 'stuck in a ditch'. Imagine going 100mph down the road in a sports car and having the car slammed into park.....that's what their world feels like
7. Can be hurt when people we know drop off the 'face of the earth'. Not knowing what to say may seem reasonable to you, but the outcome to the person is increased pain compounding their existing pain.