

My loved one is grieving



WHAT CAN I DO?



Someone you know has experienced a devastating loss. You wonder what can you say or do to help them through. You are eager to help but want to assist in ways that are appropriate. Doing nothing is not the best option. Here are some suggestions to help.

~Silence is powerful

Sometimes it's best to remain quiet. Hold their hand, give them a hug, cry with them, or sit still beside them. Saying "I'm so sorry." is always appropriate.

~Avoid comparisons

Try not to compare your experience with theirs. Do not say "I know how you feel." Unless you have lost a loved one, you may not know how they feel.

~Listen, don't advise

Grief is an intensely personal experience. Suggestions regarding how the bereaved need to grieve can be hurtful. When they want advice, they will ask for it in their own time.





~Theology is important but,

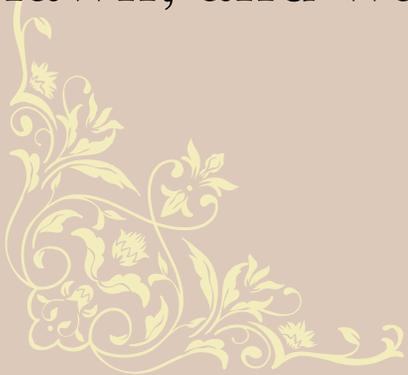
be sensitive to the timing. *"This is part of God's plan."*
"God will work this together for good." They are in a better place. These truths may be hard to bear when the grief is fresh. It may be that later when the deep grief begins to subside such words will bring comfort.

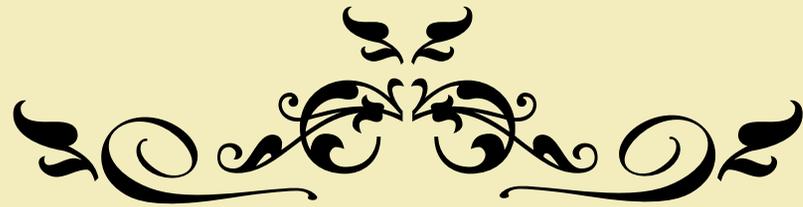
~Stay calm

Don't be moved when they lash out. Grief can be heart-wrenching to witness. Prepare yourself; it is difficult. Keep in mind it is not about the onlookers but about the grieving person. Try not to "fix" what only God can.

~Serve

They may not be able to articulate their needs, so try to anticipate them. Set dates and times and show up. Help with the children. Offer to pick up out-of-town family members. Run errands. Deliver a meal. Pack their freezer or fridge, make phone calls for them, cut their lawn, and walk the dog.





~Follow their lead

Allow them to talk about their loved one if they wish. Do not suggest they rehearse what happened. Avoid asking, "How are you?"

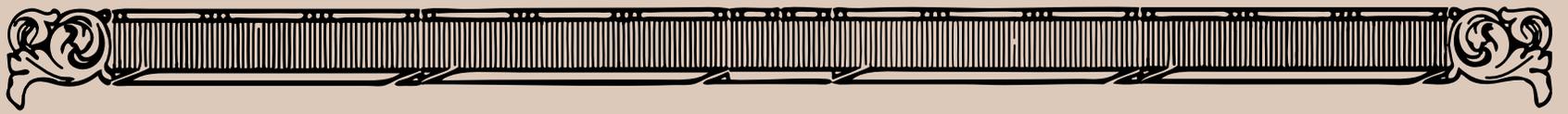
~Ask permission

before you pray. Make the prayer generic; pray for comfort, hope and healing. Avoid making predictions for the future.

~Love don't judge

Those who are devastated are more in need of kindness than ever before. They are reacting not thinking clearly and may not be on their best behavior. Consider their pain and forgive them.





~Be a blessing

FOLLOW the requests of the family regarding charitable donations or flowers.

GIVE a gift

- A soft, warm throw
- A blank journal and quality pen
- Soothing bath products or candles
- Books on grief
- Delectable food items: chocolate, gourmet baskets, fruit, specialty coffees and teas.
- A nicely framed photo of their loved one
- A letter describing beautiful memories of their loved one
- “Thinking of you” cards sent at intervals to let them know they are not forgotten. Memorializing anniversary days are especially meaningful.

ALLOW them time to unwrap the gift at their leisure.

