

# 10 Ways to Help a Grieving Person

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## **1. Contact the person**

Make a short visit, write or phone your support. This is not the time for long visits or a Bible study.

## **2. Encourage the person in his/her own expression of grief**

Avoid negative responses such as, "You should not feel that way!" or "Christians don't carry on like this!"

## **3. Listen without judging**

Talk less and listen more. This allows the person to express feelings, no matter how jumbled the thoughts may be.

## **4. Beware of trying to explain the reason for the loss**

Only God knows everything. Our explanations will not engender comfort.

## **5. Acknowledge the person's own grief journey**

Each individual experiences emotional, physical, mental and spiritual reactions which vary from person to person and time to time - even in the same family. Do not try to force a person into a mould.

## **6. Speak of God's comfort**

Grief is a time when one may feel totally alone - not even God seems to be present! Gently share the promise that God will "never leave nor abandon" the grieving. Pray briefly, then leave.

## **7. Choose literature carefully**

Do not give the bereaved anything to read in the first few weeks - it may only inoculate the person against the helpful value of material at a later date.

## **8. Provide practical support**

Do not say, "Let me know if there is anything I can do." Think of actions and do them: clean the car, prepare food, wash and iron, do the shopping, mow the lawn, polish shoes for the funeral.

## **9. Do not insist on the person coming to worship if they are not ready**

God knows the heart, and the person may commune with their Lord alone for some time, before being ready to fellowship with others again.

## **10. Maintain contact**

It's easy to forget to keep in touch. Your visits or phone calls in subsequent months may be a very significant support to the person.

Normal grief may last a few months or several years. By simply walking beside the person, listening and supporting, you will minister in the name of Jesus.