

Understanding the Grieving process



What Grief can look like:

- 1) **Shock** or disbelief that the loss has occurred
- 2) **Denial**, in which the person refuses to accept the loss has occurred
- 3) **Bargaining**, in which the person attempts to reconcile the loss by making deals with other people, and even with God
- 4) **Guilt**, often marked by statements of 'if only I...'
- 5) **Anger**, sometimes directed toward the lost person, or God
- 6) **Depression**, which may come and go through the grief process
- 7) **Resignation** usually follows, a sign that the loss has been accepted and the person is ready to move on
- 8) **Acceptance**, and understanding that life will never be the same although it can go on with meaning and hope

Do....

- Give yourself and people you care about time and permission to grieve in your and their own way
- Sort out the different problems associated with grief, and handle those easily remedied first
- Talk about the loss and encourage others to do so
- Draw on relationships with friends and family
- Consider getting support or counseling
- Turn to God in the knowledge that He knows and understands what you are going through

Don't...

- Assume there is a right and wrong way to grieve
- Be pushed or pressured to stop grieving. You will know when it's time to move on
- Be silenced by the loss. Talk about it openly with others
- Punish yourself or things you could have done or did not do
- Tell someone who is grieving that you know how they feel
- Worry if some attributes of a person's grieving makes you feel uncomfortable
- Take over the grieving person's life
- Stop visiting and seeing the grieving person

- Preach at them
- Tell them to call or come over anytime unless you mean it
- Cut yourself off from family, friends, church, or God

Some helpful Steps

1. Connect: to the loss
 - a. The choice to connect or disconnect is present right from the start.
 - b. "In choosing to face the night, I took my first steps into the sunrise." Jerry Sittser
2. Connect: to God
 - a. As we move to connect with our loss, sometimes we find ourselves grappling with how we feel about God. Is God there? Is God good? Yes. In every situation God longs to connect with us. If we push into Him with all our fears and doubts rather than pulling away, we stand to encounter God of all comfort, 2 Corinthians 1:3, 'our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble' Psalm 46:1.
3. Connect: to your emotions
 - a. The human soul has been created with the ability to feel an incredible depth and range of emotion. In the bible we see men and women pouring their hearts out to God, not burying their feelings, nor attempting to fast-forward uncomfortable emotions. Don't worry about what you should be feeling, your journey through grief is as unique as you are.
 - b. It is helpful to keep an honest journal of your grief journey. We all need a place to pour out our many and varied emotions with words or pictures.
 - c. "Sorrow is not a state but a process." C. S. Lewis
4. Connect: to community
 - a. God intends for us to be connected to community in the good times and the bad. It can be tempting to isolate ourselves when we are hurting, but the Bible instructs us to 'weep with those who weep', Romans 12:15. We need to be involved with those who are suffering and to allow others to support us when we are faced with grief.
 - b. When a close friend asks 'How are you?', try allowing yourself to answer the question with honesty.

*Remember Grief has no blueprint, Grief is not linear and is unique to each person. Grief is about learning to stand in the pain while staying connected to Hope.

We can confidently expect there is good to come, healing to come, restoration to come - both here and in heaven where there will be 'no more death or sorrow or crying or pain,' Revelation 21:4.