

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

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Grief

I am certainly no expert on grief. Many of you reading this letter know far more than I how to cope with the pain, live through it, and rebuild with valuable memories. Please feel free to send us advice that may be helpful in our service as chaplains.

The great majority of our chaplain calls involve death at a residence or a death notification. In both cases, we see family members in their initial stage of grief over their loved one who has died. It is extremely important for us to say and do what is appropriate in each situation. The following is a list of recommendations for those who know someone in the initial stages of grief:

1. Pray for compassion and wisdom to know what to say and do.
2. Listen. Ask appropriate questions.
3. Practice the ministry of presence. Just being with someone without saying much is helpful.
4. Empathize; mentally put yourself in the position of the bereaved person.
5. Do not tell your own story. It is not about you.
6. Do not use platitudes like, "I know how you feel," or "She is in God's hands now," or "At least he had a long life," or "Be thankful for your other children."
7. Do not say, "If there is anything I can do, please call."
8. Offer specific services if you notice a need. A chaplain might offer to clean up any blood on the floor.
9. Do not bring a big meal. People under stress do not normally want to enjoy a full meal in their initial stages of grief.
10. Bring snacks like a fruit/vegetable tray, cheese, crackers, juice, things that do not require much preparation or clean-up.
11. Pray silently for the family and pray aloud if they grant permission.

The Trauma Intervention Program has an expanded list in their Citizen Resource Guide, available online.

CWC Chaplains see people on their first day of trauma. We help the bereaved family understand next steps such as selection of a funeral home. We usually leave with the family a CWC Tri-fold that has a list of funeral homes in Clark County, considerations following a death, a general information guide for agency notifications, and contact information for GriefShare and the SWW-CISM team. I often leave a small New Testament. I may follow up in my private prayers before God.

Grief is defined as deep sorrow, especially that caused by someone's death. Deep sorrow over loss of a loved one may result in loss of appetite, sleeplessness, loss of energy, inability to concentrate, anger, guilt, fear, or loneliness. Grief may be short or long in

duration. The bereaved person's life must be restructured. Grief covered over too quickly can reemerge in negative ways. Deep Grief allowed to persist over time can be debilitating.

GriefShare is for people grieving the death of a family member or close friend. Groups meet weekly to help the bereaved face their challenges and rebuild their lives. Normally several churches in Clark County are hosting GriefShare support groups at any one time. Current lists are available at www.griefshare.org

If the bereaved cry out to God for help, He will respond.

"Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also." NAU Psalm 31:9

"My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me according to Your word." NAU Psalm 119:28

"In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help; He heard my voice... And my cry for help before Him came into His ears." NAU Psalm 18:6

"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit." NAU Psalm 34:18

"God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..." NAU Psalm 46:1

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." NAU Psalm 147:3

"Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." NAU Hebrews 4:16

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." NAU 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Chaplain Al Walter

We appreciate your prayers which are highly valued. If you would like to give financially you can use the enclosed envelope or give online at: <https://911chaplain.churchcenteronline.com/>. We are non-profit 501(c)(3) ministry. - The Chaplain Team

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