

# BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

## Christmas Bereavement

Holidays may result in a renewed sense of personal grief—a feeling of loss and being lost, unlike that experienced in the routine of daily living. All around us the sounds, sights and smells trigger memories of the one who has died.

During bereavement **care, compassion and choices**, allow us to grow and integrate grief into our life. We find new spirit, new meaning, and enduring bonds with those who have died.

- Do something special in memory of the person who has died.
- Light a special candle on Christmas Day.
- Make or buy a special decoration to hang on the tree in memory.
- Make a toast to the person, share memories. Don't be afraid to laugh as you remember some of the good times.
- Play a special song or music.
- Write a letter or a card to the person who has died, don't be concerned if you want to talk out loud to them...do it.
- Some bereaved parents buy a small gift for the age that their child would be; had they lived; and put it under one of the charity, church or supermarket trees.
- Some people like to visit the graveside, memorial or a special location to sit and remember.
- Plan your time so that you are under as little stress as possible. Plan your 'escape' if need be, don't over commit. Rehearse a simple explanation of why you may not attend a function.
- Ask for some assistance with preparations including going shopping—many people experience panic attacks in supermarkets. If this is a problem for you, learn some simple breathing techniques to assist with the panic and take someone as support when you go out—the panic will settle with time.
- You may need to change the routine and the traditional way you do things. Perhaps have a picnic lunch, go bush, go to the beach, change the venue, spend it quietly, go to a different church service, help out at a charity lunch.
- Let your friends and family know that you need to take things slow and that may mean taking each day as it comes.
- Share the memories with someone else, the photos and the stories. You may cry and you may laugh, it is much healthier for you to express your feelings then push it all down.
- Do something special for yourself—treat yourself to a massage, indulge in a favorite food, buy yourself a present.
- Ensure some quiet time, if you want to - you can simply sit with your memories and your grief.
- Seek professional help if grief becomes unbearable. Call Lifeline 13 11 14

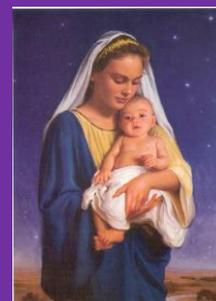


**Let the real work of Christmas begin! Let's begin it together!**

Give them a call, write them a card. Invite them over for a quiet get together. Speak up and acknowledge their loss. Have the courage to mention the name of their loved one. Let them know that your thoughts and prayers are with them. When memory triggers everywhere a missing face, an empty chair and silent thoughts that Christmas is very different this year.

*When Christmas awakens  
the pain of grief, and  
intensifies your sense of  
loss...*

*May your broken heart  
pour out love  
Sharing memories that  
comfort you.*



*When the song of the  
angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is  
gone,  
When the kings and wise  
have gone home,  
When the shepherds are  
back with their flock,  
The real work of Christmas  
begins:*

*To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among  
others,  
To make music in the heart  
(Howard Thurman)*