

Community Grief

Ideas about helping a community through its grieving process:

- 1. We pull together in times of grief.** Gathering for a community memorial service may help—as do small group gatherings. Connecting online to remember those affected is also a good option. We must work to take care of one another.
- 2. We want to do something in our grief.** Why do we take food and send flowers during a time of grief? Because it is our way of doing something with our grief. It is our way of saying to the family, “We’re with you.” It is our way of saying to the community, “We care.” In our helplessness, doing something helps ease the pain.
- 3. We want to identify with the grieving.** The folks in our community had a lot of stories about those who had died. Letting people tell those stories provides a measure of healing as they identify with others who grieve, as well.
- 4. We want some assurance that we will get through this.** We cannot give easy, glib answers to the questions people have during times of grief, but we can assure them that God is with us in our grief, and that we will move through this time of grief. We must acknowledge grief while holding up hope—sometimes a fine line.
- 5. We need anchors in the midst of our grief.** Gathering at the table for a meal to share stories or set up an online chat or video chat. You can pray together. Prayer is an anchor that also gives hope.
- 6. We do not want our grief used as a pretext for other agendas.** Community grief provides an opportunity to share the love and hope with others. The focus is on our grief and our hope, not on other agendas.
- 7. We want others to acknowledge our loss.** We want others to show respect for our loss. Perhaps a remembrance service in person or posting people’s names on a website – there are many ways to acknowledge a community’s grief instead of suppressing it within. Open acknowledgement opens the door to healing.

Grace & Peace to those who are grieving as a community and in our communities.