

CDM Kampungku

November 2024

Reaching out - making a difference

Prayer and accompaniment for the grieving



Opening prayer – Spontaneous

Introduction:

Coping with the loss of a spouse, sibling, or parent can be one of the hardest challenges that many of us face. The loss of a child, however, can be particularly intense. Even though death is understood to be a natural part of life, we can still be overcome by shock and confusion, leading to prolonged periods of sadness or even depression.

During his June 17 Angelus, Pope Francis spoke about grief and losing a loved one. He said:

“Death is an experience which touches all families, without exception. It is part of life; yet, where familial love is concerned, death never seems natural.”

He goes on to encourage us to stay faithful, with a most beautiful, reassuring message, knowing that we will one day be reunited with our loved ones:

“In this faith, we can console one another, knowing that the Lord has conquered death once and for all. Our loved ones are not lost in the darkness of nothing: hope assures us that they are in the good and strong hands of God...”

Understanding the bereaved

Every one reacts differently to death and each person must be given space to experience their own personal coping mechanisms. Sometimes, we feel helpless when someone we know experiences grief and who is going through a very difficult time.

- The desire to help is great, but what can we do?
- How do we accompany someone through the stages of grief?
- How do we as a church support those who have lost loved ones?
- How can we help them carry this burden?

The ways we can reach out to the grieving

1. Pray

It is the first act of kindness for those suffering grief.

- Pray for the strength and wisdom to support the bereaved
- Pray for the family, that God will bring them peace of mind and heart.
- Pray for the soul of the deceased.
- Pray that the Lord is merciful and kind to them.

Know that these prayers are felt by those whose hearts are grieving the most.

2. Be present

It means simply to be there with the bereaved and **if needed** to assist with other practical matters at hand.

- Be generous with your time
- Offer help for funeral arrangements – eg funeral mass, venue etc
- Arrange for food
- Assist with care of household pets
- Be there in the aftermath, when initial support dwindles.

3. Listen and Encourage

Grief is very personal; it is not very neat or linear (arranged along a straight line). It doesn't follow any timelines or schedules. The stages of grief – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance are not progressive steps.

- Don't stop or interrupt the bereaved if they want to talk about their loss.
- Listen with intent
- Offer encouragement – a hug, a loving touch

- Birthdays and anniversaries of the deceased are especially poignant moments – flowers, a card or a note of remembrance may be welcomed and appreciated.

Keep in mind

Heavy sentiments can be a difficult part of grief to handle sometimes. These include:

- Fluctuations of emotions from ‘normal’ to crying uncontrollably.
- A song, a sound or smell may trigger memories leading to emotional breakdowns.
- Anger may be directed towards God, even leading some to leave the church.
- There are no "right" or "perfect" words to say to someone who's grieving.
- It's often not about what you *say* but what you *do*.
- Sometimes, the best thing to do is to be quiet and just listen.

Hope and faith can be restored when surrounded by love, understanding, patience and grace.

If we allow ourselves to be sustained by this faith, the experience of grief can generate even stronger family bonds, a new openness to the pain of other families, a new brotherhood with families that are born and reborn in hope. To be born and reborn in hope, this gives us faith.” –
Pope Francis

Our BEC exercise

1. Discuss or share with the group, the person or persons who made a positive impact on you when you were grieving. (Other family members, friends, the church, even strangers)
2. What did they do to help you with the grieving process?
3. Would you be able to bring the same support now for others in need?

Note:

- *Spend a few minutes to gather your thoughts*
- *Allow each person to have their say*

Closing prayer:

Dear Lord, guide us to be Your hands and feet in this world. Help us see opportunities to assist those in need and give us the courage to act. Let our actions bring light to those in dark places, hope to those who are despairing, and love to those who feel forgotten. Amen.