



Shepherding Through Grief

This document equip leaders to respond with grace, truth, and love when those they shepherd are experiencing grief.

Scripture

- “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.” Ecclesiastes 3:1,4
- “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.” Romans 12:15

Introduction

Grief is the painful, yet natural and normal response to experiencing loss, especially the death of a loved one. It can also strike when one loses their health, job, home, or dreams. It may also occur when there is a life stage change such as children leaving the nest.

Grief can take on many forms including sadness, anger, anxiety, and depression. It even affects those with great faith. Jesus expressed grief at the death of Lazarus and demonstrated His concern in the gospels for those whose hearts were broken with sorrow. As His image bearers, we have the opportunity to show His care to others by extending His compassion when others are grieving.

Tips for Shepherding Through Grief

- Provide the gift of your presence by offering a focused, listening ear.
- Show empathy by trying to understand their emotions.
- Give them the permission to grieve by not trying to fix it or tell them how to think.
- Refrain from sharing platitudes or even multiple Bible verses; but when the time seems right, point them to the hope found in Jesus.
- Encourage them to pour out their hearts to God as the Psalmists did, even if they are angry.
- Know that grief is a process that must run its course, just as a wound takes time to heal.
- Let your patient care and kindness express the love of Christ.

Discussion


- Job’s three friends came and sat with him for seven days (Job 2:11-13). Do you recall when their presence ceased to be helpful?
- Describe a time when someone ministered to you in your grief.
 - Did you hear any clichés or platitudes that made you feel worse?
 - What provided the most comfort?

Shepherd Toward Transformation

- Divide into pairs or triads for sharing.
 - Is there anyone in your life or Core Group who is experiencing grief right now? How can you come alongside them as a caring friend?
- Close with a time of prayer.

Note: If a participant is extremely withdrawn, expresses harmful thoughts, or is drawn to risky behaviors, encourage them to reach out to their church and get professional help.

Other helpful resources: *Listening Skills*, *The Power of Listening*

 *Listening Skills*
The Power of Listening

“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 may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

2 Corinthians 1:3–4
