

How to Help Those in Grief.

Have you heard this statement before ... *“If there's anything I can do, let me know.”*

What to do instead:

Look for an immediate need and fill it.

Offer to answer the phone and offer to call those who need to be notified.

Meet incoming relatives at the airport, train or bus depot.

Offer a spare room to an overnight visitor.

Provide transportation as needed.

If there are children, offer to baby-sit

Help with younger children while funeral arrangements are being made.

When extended family lives far away offer to stay with the family until their extended family arrives.

Provide food.

Preparing a meal looms as a Herculean task. Casseroles, salads and desserts are welcome support.

Mark your dishes and come back later to pick them up or use containers that can be discarded.

Take dishes that can be frozen if the family cannot use the meal immediately.

Coffee, soft drinks, juice boxes and bottled water are welcome items.

If young children are in the home think about what they might like to eat or offer to take the children to their favorite fast food place.

Send flowers or make a donation to the family's favorite charity.

When families say “no flowers” consider sending a planter or potted plant to the home a few weeks after the funeral. Or deliver a single rose or a bouquet from your garden or roadside stand to brighten the day for your friend.

Making a donation to a charity or foundation in the name of the deceased is a thoughtful way to honor them.

Reach out and touch

Comfort with a warm hug or a handclasp.
A simple touch can communicate when words fail.

Listen

Listening can be one of the best ways to help a person work through feelings of grief.
The message: "If talking helps, I am only a phone call away."
Don't be afraid of causing tears by encouraging a friend to talk about their loss. Crying expresses grief in a normal way.
Silence may be appreciated. Just sitting with someone and sharing the silence is another way of listening.

Send a Note

Sending a note or making a phone call is a way of telling the grieving person you care. A condolence letter is easy to write if you keep a few special things in mind:

- Recall a shared event such as a dinner or picnic, or special quality of the deceased.
- Write about the things you enjoyed doing with the deceased, or their sense of humor, ability to _____, the only person I know who could _____. These can be light or serious.
-

Encourage the bereaved to get out of the house.

Being invited out to lunch or dinner can be a welcomed opportunity.

Be sensitive to the times, call and ask, "Do you still have company?" if the answer is no, say you'd like to take them out to lunch/dinner and that you will pick them up.

Give of your talents and experiences:

- Home repairs may be needed
- Lawn may need mowing or snow removed
- Legal help
- Laundry, ironing or mending

Help in the days ahead.

It is after the relatives and friends leave and the house is empty and people have swung back into their daily routines that friends are needed most.

Grief and loneliness last for many months.

Remember to stay in touch

See your friends more often than you did before.

Weekends and holidays are especially difficult.

Make a special effort to include a bereaved friend in your family activities.

Encourage the person to become active again.

Courtesy, Archdiocese of Omaha, Family Life Office