



Helping the Hurting

PRACTICAL WAYS TO LOVE A SUFFERING FRIEND

A friend loves at all times, and a
brother is born for a time of adversity.

PROVERBS 17:17 NIV

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Why I Wrote This Guide

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."

Proverbs 17:17 NIV

Suffering comes in many forms, some as immediate crises and others as slower progressive losses.

We all want to help our hurting friends, whether their suffering is due to the death of a loved one, a divorce, serious illness, depression, a family member with special needs, job loss or something else. But often we don't know what to do. Some of us choose to disengage because our own lives are overwhelming while others say insensitive things or try to help in ways that don't feel supportive. I've experienced all those things and I've done most of them as well, which is why I wrote this guide - to help us all love others well.

When I went through seasons of pain: being bullied as a child, losing a son, going through an unwanted divorce, and dealing with chronic pain, God used the people around me in powerful ways. Countless times the text of a friend, the unexpected meal dropped on my doorstep or the invitation for dinner on a holiday kept me going.

Grief is messy. None of us can perfectly engage in the pain of someone else. But we can try. True healing comes from the Lord alone, but we can be a tangible reminder of His presence and love to others. It's never too late to offer help or send a note of encouragement, even if the crisis or loss began long ago. They'll appreciate your reaching out, and it may come at the perfect time, so don't let guilt stand in your way. And don't feel like you have to do everything for someone. You can't. But be willing to be inconvenienced at times and prayerfully consider what you can do.

While we all experience pain, trauma, and loss differently, I'm praying this guide will give you practical ways to walk with your friends. Consider both what their "love language" is, if you know it, as well as your own. **Feel free to print out this guide and ask your hurting friends to circle what would be helpful to them, what resonates with them and to prioritize their needs.**

*May this guide help you love well
even when it's difficult or uncomfortable,*

Vaneth



Show Up

“When Job’s three friends ... heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him... They began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him because they saw how great his suffering was.”

Job 2:11-13 NIV

Job was a godly man who experienced great loss. He lost his children and all his possessions in one day and shortly afterwards his health was destroyed. While he was still reeling, his friends showed up. They saw him mourning and entered his pain by grieving with him, sitting silently beside him for days.

Most of the book is an object lesson in what NOT to say when a friend is suffering since his friends eventually blamed Job for his own pain—yet their initial response has much to teach us. Showing up, ministering to Job with nothing more than their company, they highlight the power of presence. Yet so often, we resist showing up because we don’t know what to say.

Pastor Rick Warren once said, “Just show up and shut up. You can’t talk people out of their pain. Some pain is beyond words. When it’s the right time, your hurting friend will say something. When it’s the right time, then you’ll be able to say something too.”

Your friend doesn’t need a lot of words in those first moments of loss. They just need someone to be there in their pain. They may cry, scream, get angry, talk incessantly, or say nothing—let them do any or all those things without judgment. Your silence is fine, often welcome, but it’s your presence that means everything.

Ways to show up for your suffering friend:

- Go to their home and sit with them.
- Consider bringing comfort food- chocolate, sweet or salty snacks, pizza, a smoothie, or something healthy and homemade.
- Ask if they’d like you to stay or if they’d prefer time alone. If you stay, offer to do simple tasks like clean the kitchen, do laundry, or make lunch.
- Go with them to a doctor’s appointment or visit them in the hospital.
- Sit with them in the waiting room.
- Attend the funeral.
- Keep them company on that painful anniversary.
- Spend the night after friends and family have gotten back to their lives.



Check in Regularly

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Galatians 6:2 NIV

Learning to walk beside a suffering friend is not easy. Much of our pain won’t end with a tidy bow and for many it will last a lifetime. We must learn to carry their grief rather than trying to fix it or solve it. Don’t get discouraged if it feels that your efforts aren’t changing their attitude. We want them to feel better – but loss is a marathon, not a sprint. Healing is a slow process so let go of expectations to change them by your words.

Simply checking in with someone is a reminder that God sees them in their hurt. When we ask, “how are you really?” we communicate care to

our friends. Also share what’s happening in your life – be genuine and vulnerable about your own struggles and don’t forget to point out the things they’re doing well.

Be consistent and don’t give up. Keep checking in and give them time and space to talk. There’s often a flood of support at first and then it slowly dissipates even though the pain and needs may have intensified. Many griefs come with a loss of motivation to get out of the house or to see people. Remind them that you’re in it for the long haul by continuing to reach out, even when they’ve declined your invitations.

Ways to check in regularly with your friend who is hurting:

- Stop by their office for a few minutes.
- Invite them out or to your home for coffee or a meal.
- Offer to join them at a social event like a reunion, party, or school event for their children.
- Save a seat for them at church and have lunch afterwards.
- Suggest a time to go for a walk. It’s often easiest to talk then.
- Set up specific, regular times to get together. Offer to pray or do a Bible study together.
- Connect with them on the weekends or at nights, whenever they might feel most alone.
- Call, text or leave a voice memo to check-in or say what you’re praying for them.
- Ask how you can best support them. Do they prefer texts, calls, video, or meeting in-person?
- Write down anniversaries and remember to connect. These are often particularly painful.



Engage Even When It's Difficult

"...weep with those who weep."

Romans 12:15 ESV

Engaging with people after they've experienced tremendous loss can be difficult and uncomfortable, and we're often afraid we'll say the wrong things. But our silence communicates indifference so don't back away. And don't hesitate to bring up their loss for fear it will be too painful — they are constantly aware of it. Acknowledging what's been hard (and continues

to be hard) gives them the freedom to keep talking about it.

Don't expect that you'll instantly change their outlook or "cheer them up." As Proverbs 25:20 says, "Singing cheerful songs to a person with a heavy heart is like taking someone's coat in cold weather or pouring vinegar in a wound."

How to engage even when it is difficult:

Do:

- Acknowledge the loss with words by saying things like:
 - *I'm so sorry, I'm heartbroken for you*
 - *I'm not sure what to say but please know I'm praying for you*
 - *This is devastatingly hard - I'm here to listen, share my own stuff, distract you or just cry with you.*
- Talk about their loved one, reminisce and even say, "I'd love to hear more about them."
- Take a genuine interest in their health by asking what's currently happening and how they're feeling.
- Ask "how are you doing today?" not just "how are you doing?"
- Actively listen, repeating back what they said so they can hear their own words. Listen without judgment or platitudes. Follow their lead as to whether they want to talk. Be okay with silence.
- Notice things they are doing well and encourage them specifically.
- Be sensitive to whether they want affirmation that they are brave, courageous, strong, or a role model OR the freedom to acknowledge feeling weak, afraid, tearful, angry, or anxious.

Do NOT:

- Start a sentence with the words, "at least." Those words feel minimizing.
- Ask prying questions.
- Try to trump their suffering.
- Offer unsolicited advice -it feels like veiled criticism.
- Make judgmental comments or compare their situation to others.
- Try to rush their healing. It takes as long as it takes.



Offer Practical Help

"...serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Galatians 6:2 NIV

Practical needs peak when people are in crisis and continue for a long time. While we cannot take away their pain, there are ways we can help carry their burdens in tangible ways. It may seem like an insignificant contribution as you walk their dog or drop off a meal, but these things make a difference and remind people of the Lord's care as well as yours.

It's tempting to say, "Let me know if you need anything," but people rarely respond to that

because they don't know what you're offering to do. Instead, suggest specific things such as "I'd like to bring dinner on Tuesday" or "Can you leave your laundry on the porch Friday morning" or "I have 2 hours Monday afternoon—are there errands I can do?" People often can't figure out what they need, so giving clearly defined ideas is a gift in itself.

Ways to offer practical help for your friend:

- Offer to bring a meal on a specific day. Or bring a freezer meal (but ask if they have space).
- Offer to pick up their laundry and bring it back clean and folded.
- Ask if they need anything on the way to the store.
- Offer a few hours on a specific day to run errands.
- Help them manage difficult details like planning the funeral, getting childcare or organizing meals.
- If they are the caregiver for family members, relieve them for an afternoon. Offer to learn any unique skills required in that care.
- Organize and clean out the fridge, a closet, or their house.
- Drive them to their doctor's appointment and wait for them.
- Offer to help with yard work, home repairs, car maintenance or computer issues.
- Offer financial counsel, help with budgeting or handling insurance issues.
- If they're weak or homebound, offer to wash their hair, give them a backrub or light massage.
- Organize pictures and help put together a scrapbook.
- Help them update their resume and job hunt.
- Organize a meal train or be the point person for ongoing needs.
- Invite their family over for the holidays. Offer to assist with shopping, decorating, or cooking or purchase a pre-made dinner they can have at their home.



Encourage with Written Words

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up just as you are doing."

1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV

It can be hard to hold onto hope in suffering. Even faithful believers find themselves wrestling with doubts and asking questions they would never have imagined before. Offering your hurting friend hope and encouragement through a written note, email or even a text can have a profound impact on them.

I know writing can feel intimidating but before you write, ask the Holy Spirit to guide your pen. Including meaningful verses, something you read in a devotional, or a personal note of how their endurance and trials have impacted you can be life-giving. You don't have to overcomplicate it. Just simple words that say: *I love you. I see you. I'm here.* can make all the difference.

How to encourage your suffering friend with words. See *What to Write* in the back for more specifics:

- Send a card with a few personal words such as:
 - *No words. Just praying*
 - *I love you. I'm so sorry you're going through this.*
 - *I desperately wish I could fix this. Please know I am going to walk through this with you.*
- Write a letter of encouragement. Share how their loved one's life touched you or tell them how their handling of this trial has impacted you. Write a special memory of the one who has passed away and include pictures if you have any. Write out a few verses that have helped you and include your own thoughts.
- Leave a voicemail or send a text with a prayer. Tell them if you are praying for them in that moment. Write out the words you are bringing before God. Your friend may need your encouragement at that exact moment!



Send or Bring a Gift

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV

Unexpected gifts have a way of cheering us up. For some, they feel like tangible reminders that people see them in their pain. A gift needn't be elaborate or expensive – just mailing or dropping off a simple item can show a friend that they aren't forgotten.

Gifts can be simple items that your friend likes such as their favorite coffee or chocolate or it could have a deeper meaning. The week after my divorce was finalized, a friend unexpectedly sent me a necklace to remind me to hold onto hope. I treasured that gift. Whatever it is, presents can communicate that you care and see them – you never know when the delivery of a gift will arrive right when they need it most!

Gift ideas for a hurting friend:

- A box with small gifts. You could even number them to open one each day. Simple things such as pens, mints, chocolate, and snacks were a blessing to me in the hospital!
- Bring cut flowers or a blooming plant from your garden or the store.
- Gifts like candles, a journal, an encouraging sign, notecards, a coffee mug, a favorite book, a sculpture, magazines, houseplants, bath bombs, or gift cards are all options by themselves or in a gift basket.
- Jewelry can be a sweet reminder of their loved one, represent a new beginning or just say you care.
- Healthy or homemade treats left on their doorstep can brighten their day.
- Give them a gift card to their favorite coffee shop.
- Send their children a surprise gift. This is often the best way for kids to feel cared for.
- Put together a box of surprises to entertain children if they will be traveling.
- Gift boxes from places like Etsy or Amazon can be an uncomplicated way to show you care.
- Framed Scripture can be a constant reminder of God's love and truth.



Point Them To Jesus Without Preaching

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father."

Colossians 3:16-17 NLT

We want to encourage our friends to trust the Lord in their trials, but we need to be sensitive as to how and when to do that. Sharing our theology of suffering or a helpful Bible verse can increase their pain if it's wrongly timed. Hearing someone quote Romans 8:28 at my son's funeral felt painful and dismissive.

Follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. When losses are fresh, people often aren't ready to hear theological reflections. There will be a time to

speak later as we ask the Lord for guidance and sensitivity to His timing. When the Spirit does prompt you to speak, remember to "let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt" and when you give "the reason for the hope that is in you, do it with gentleness and respect." (Colossians 4:6, 1 Peter 3:15-16).

Rather than pressing people to "choose joy" in their pain, encourage them to hang onto hope.

How to point people to Jesus without preaching:

- Don't minimize their pain or offer platitudes. Let them talk or cry as long as they need.
- Don't give a reason for their suffering or speak on behalf of God. We don't know the "why" of difficult things.
- Share your own story of how the Lord has met you in your pain.
- Ask if they'd like information on local Christian support groups such as GriefShare, DivorceCare, or other available groups in your area.
- Offer to meet with them to pray, read the Bible or do a Bible study and let them ask questions.
- Encourage them to read the Bible, especially the Psalms which offer a model of how to lament and grieve while finding hope and joy in the Lord. The Gospels display the love and care of Christ and epistles like 1 Peter offer hope in trial.
- Lament with them (see suggestions under *Pray for Them* section)
- Send them encouraging podcasts.
- Give them a devotional book, biography, or another encouraging book on suffering. They may not want to read now so ask if a book would be helpful. (See my booklist at the end of this guide.)



Show Physical Affection

"Greet one another with a holy kiss."

Romans 16:16 ESV

While offering hugs or physical affection may feel awkward and easier to avoid altogether, some people long for physical touch when they are suffering. It makes them feel comforted, safe, and loved and without it, they feel alone and isolated. Jesus often chose to touch people when he healed them (Matt 8:3; Matt 9:29; Matt 20:34) which can show us the importance of human touch.

Obviously, this is a sensitive subject since sexual abuse is all-too common and some people are uncomfortable with physical touch. Don't assume you know how they feel so **always ask first**. My mom cringed when people hugged her

as an adolescent at her father's funeral - it felt embarrassing and invasive. One way to begin the conversation is by asking, "Would you be okay with a hug?" or as my sister suggested, "Hug, handshake or just wave 'hi' – what's your preference?" And if physical touch is uncomfortable for you, don't feel an obligation to offer it.

Be sensitive to illness and germs – don't sit close or even visit if you don't feel well. And check if they are more comfortable if you meet outdoors or wear a mask. You are there to support them – so take cues from them while keeping your own appropriate boundaries.

Ways to give physical touch (or a substitute) to your friends who are suffering. *Offer to:*

- Sit beside them on the couch.
- Hug them sincerely, especially when you say hello and goodbye.
- Rub their shoulders, neck, or back.
- Hold their hand in silence or while they are talking.
- Bring supplies to give them a hand massage or manicure.
- Hold them when they're sad.
- Dance with them.
- Bring your pet with you (if it's cuddly).
- Give them a gift certificate for a professional massage.
- Get them a weighted blanket or weighted grain bags that can be microwaved.
- Buy them a portable shoulder, back, or foot massager.



Care For Their Children

“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

Matthew 19:14 ESV

When our friends are suffering, it affects their children both directly and indirectly. Their children might not be able to verbalize or pinpoint what's bothering them, but may act rebellious, withdrawn, or depressed. They may also seem uncharacteristically indifferent, lazy, or entitled when they are trying to process their own pain. Pay attention to them individually so they feel seen, known and cared for too.

We can help our friends by giving them grace in their parenting and not judging them. We can also offer to keep their children, include them in our family activities and attend their special events. Our care may have a greater impact than we can see or know.

Ways to care for their children:

- Offer to keep their children for an afternoon, an evening or even an entire weekend.
- Ask, “When would be a good time to pick up your kids to come over?”
- Find out about upcoming appointments – when it would be helpful to keep their children.
- Take their children to school or an extra-curricular activity. Consider organizing rides regularly.
- If their child is in the hospital, bring a box of small gifts to be opened one a day.
- Find out their children's favorite foods and bring them over.
- Send or bring their children surprise gifts.
- Put together an activity box if their children will be in the car for extended time.
- Ask their child what they'd like to do – suggest options like the park, the zoo, a museum, mini-golf, a theme park, a sporting event, shopping, ice-cream, a manicure, hiking, or a picnic.
- Attend their games, recitals, or special events.
- Take a child out and ask, “There's a ton going on in your family right now. How has it felt for you?”
- Spend regular one-on-one time with one child. Be consistent and keep your commitments.
- If their child has special needs, offer to learn any specific skills required in their care.



Offer Rest and Renewal

"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken."

Psalm 62:5-6 NIV

Grief is exhausting and takes a physical, spiritual, and emotional toll on us. We can even forget what it's like to laugh and fun often seems impossible. That's when we most need refreshment and planning ways for our friends to find respite can give them the strength to keep going.

Helping someone rejuvenate needn't be expensive or extravagant. Often simple things can help our friends restore.

Ways to offer rest and renewal for a hurting friend:

- Gift them with movie tickets or restaurant gift cards.
- Go to a movie with them.
- Pay for one hotel night for them to relax.
- Give a spa gift certificate and offer to join or invite a few friends.
- Take a class with them like art, writing, dance or exercise.
- Offer your vacation home or see if anyone you know has one they can use.
- Plan a night out or a getaway with them.
- Watch a movie or comedian you've enjoyed at your home or theirs.
- If their family lives far away, offer airline miles, vouchers, or tickets.
- Invite them to do something with you and take care of the babysitting.

Organize Help for Greater Needs

Share with the Lord's people who are in need."

Romans 12:13 NIV

Loss not only impacts us spiritually, emotionally, or physically, but it also creates larger hardships that require financial resources. Your hurting friend's needs may be beyond what you can afford so pooling resources with others in your church or community can be an immeasurable blessing.

Before you begin, ask what would be most helpful in this season and get creative on how you can meet those needs. Talk to your mutual friends, neighbors, and church members. Research potential community resources or even start a GoFundMe page.

Being a friend who loves at all times requires time, energy, and perhaps financial resources, but it can be life-changing for the people you're serving.

Ideas for organizing help for greater needs:

- Hire a housecleaning service to clean their home or ask a group of friends to clean for them.
- Give them gift cards to restaurants that offer take-out or delivery like GrubHub, UberEATS or DoorDash.
- Buy meal kit delivery services such as Hello Fresh or Blue Apron.
- Hire a repair person to come for a day and fix whatever is broken.
- Organize a "go-to" group with people who are willing to be on call to help.
- Ask about their financial needs and offer help for large bills like car or home repairs.
- Help find a good counselor. Pay for some counselling sessions for them or their children.
- Send gas or grocery gift cards.
- Give money directly, anonymously or through the church.



Pray for Them

"...pray without ceasing..."

1 Thessalonians 5:17 ESV

The greatest way to help our suffering friends is to pray for them. As we go to the Lord with their needs, we recognize that we are powerless to change their situation and true healing and comfort only comes through Christ.

God acts in response to our prayers -- they make a difference. As the prophet Daniel was interceding for others, an angel affirmed that his words were heard and acted upon as he prayed them (Daniel 9:20-23). Jesus declared, "Whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you" (John 16:23) and James encourages us to "pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (James 5:16b). God's timing may be different than ours, but we know that God hears and responds to every prayer.

Ask how to pray, write down prayer requests and immediately pray with them. Pray for your friends in private, with others in a group, or with the two of you. Pray whenever the Lord brings them to mind. Put them on your prayer list and pray for them daily. For ideas of what and how to pray, see the guide in the back.

Ways to pray for your suffering friend:

- Ask them what you can pray for and pray right then, either in person or over the phone.
- Set up a prayer chain and assign friends specific days and times to pray.
- Check in regularly for updated requests.
- Put their whole family on your personal prayer list and pray often for each of them.
- Go to their home to pray.
- Organize a prayer event or get a few friends to pray collectively, with or without the hurting person.
- Lament aloud with them i.e. pray the Bible (individually or with a few friends).
 - Use Psalm 142 or another lament psalm like 6, 13, 42, 43, 77 as a framework.
 - Read a section of the passage and then add your own words and requests.
 - Psalm 142 sequentially falls into the categories of:
 - complaint (1-4) – turn to God and pour out your troubles
 - boldly ask the Lord for what you want (5-6)
 - praise and give thanks to the Lord. Choose to trust (7)



Just Do What You Are Able To

It's easy to look through a guide like this and become overwhelmed but be assured that God is with you and with your friend. You don't have to be perfect, only prayerful, and willing to walk with them. Helping our hurting friends may be both inconvenient and time consuming but it is one of the greatest ways to show love. If you don't know what to do, give them a copy of this guide and ask them to note what things they would like. It may surprise you.

Remember, you don't need to do everything – even doing one small thing can make a difference. And it's never too late to reach out, so act whenever the Lord brings it to mind without second-guessing yourself.

I hope this guide has been helpful. May you press in when someone you love is suffering and may your simple acts of obedience be a tangible reminder of the presence of the Lord!



Encouragement If You Are the One Struggling

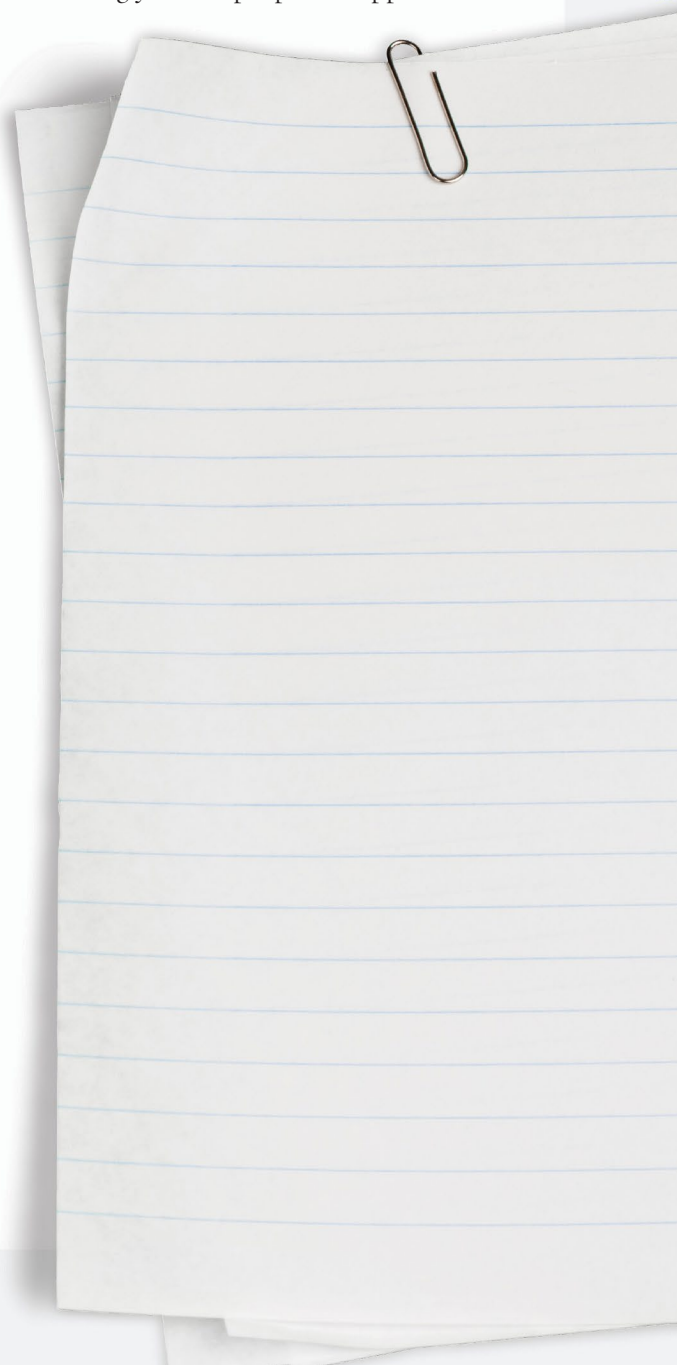
If you are in a season of suffering and feel unsupported right now, I'm so sorry. Please know that even though you may feel alone, you are not alone. There are often aches so deep that only the Lord can fill, and He will never leave you or forsake you. You are fully known and fully loved by Jesus.

I am praying that you will hold on to hope in this dark time. It may feel overwhelming, and God may feel distant, but Jesus is nearer than you can imagine. Call out to him and pour out your heart using one of the Psalms of lament under the prayer section.

You may feel discouraged after reading this guide, wishing you had people to support you in your grief. You may even feel misunderstood and forgotten by people that you hoped would be there for you. I've felt that way before and I wished I had a way to let people know what would be most helpful to me. It felt awkward to bring it up. And vulnerable. I wanted people just to know what I needed rather than having to tell them.

But the Lord has shown me that sometimes I need to be vulnerable and admit my needs so if this booklet resonates with you, I encourage you to print out this guide, give it to a TRUSTED friend and circle what sections and statements describe your feeling and then prioritize what others can do to help you. Write other ideas in the margins or on the lines to the right, and then list what you'd appreciate most on the back lined page. Let them know that you aren't expecting them to do all these things, but these are what would be meaningful to you. Perhaps that friend could let others know of your needs as well, and this guide could serve as a jumping off point for honest conversation and help.

God uses our friends in amazing ways, but He alone can meet our deepest needs. I'm praying as I write this that you would press into the Lord and find help and hope in your sorrow.



What to Write

Writing even a few words in a card, letter, email, or text can be so meaningful. Some ideas are:

- "We loved her too."
- "I will never forget him."
- "I know this is beyond hard. I'm praying that the Lord will meet you in a tender way."
- "Praying. Praying. Praying. Every day."
- "No words. Just praying."
- "You mean the world to us. We're so sorry for all you're going through."
- "I hate this for you. I'm crying out to God on your behalf."
- "This is painful for me, and I can't imagine how hard it is for you."
- "I don't know what to say and I desperately wish I could fix this. But I obviously can't. But please know that I love you and I'm going to walk through this with you."
- "I wish I could make things easier for you right now. But I'm praying that the Lord will comfort you with His presence and surround you with His love."

Write out Scriptures in your favorite translation (or look up a few on BibleGateway) and insert their name. Some examples are:

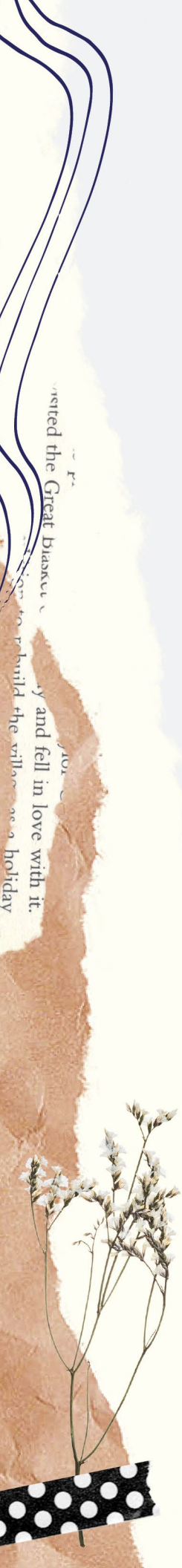
- Deuteronomy 31:8
- Deuteronomy 33:26-27
- Psalm 46:1-3
- Isaiah 43: 1b-2
- Isaiah 54:10
- Matthew 11:28-30
- John 14:27

Examples:

Do not be afraid or discouraged (their name) , for the LORD will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you." (Deut 31:8 NLT)

The Lord says, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you, (their name) ; I have called you by name, (their name) , you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire, (their name) , you will not be burned, and the flame will not consume you. (Isaiah 43:1b-2 ESV)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid, (their name) . (John 14:27 NIV)



Prayer Guide

Here are some specific ways to pray for a friend who is suffering:

Spiritual needs:

- That they would sense God's presence and peace.
- That they would walk closely with the Lord and not turn away from Him.
- That the Bible would speak to them as they read it.
- That their faith would deepen.
- That they would see the Lord's provision even in this trial.

Physical needs:

- That they would have strength for their daily tasks.
- That their doctors would have wisdom.
- That their body would be healed.
- That they would make wise decisions.
- That they would find a fulfilling job.
- That they would experience financial wholeness.
- That the Lord would provide all their needs and they would recognize His hand in it.

Emotional needs:

- That they would have a clear mind.
- That they would have hope.
- That they would experience joy amid sorrow.
- That their friends would surround and support them.
- That they could forgive those who have wronged them.
- That they would have a sense of wholeness and worth.
- That they would feel loved and accepted.
- That their depression and discouragement would lift.

Pray Scripture over them:

Praying scripture is a wonderful way to pray for your friend. Psalms are a great template to guide your prayer. Just insert their name as you pray. There are so many great ones, but a few to get you started are: Psalm 23, 25, or 27.

For example: "Lord, you are _____'s shepherd, help them to see and know that they do not lack anything. Give them rest so they can lie down in green pastures and lead them beside your still waters. Restore and refresh _____'s soul. We know You lead them in paths of righteousness for Your name's sake. Even though they are walking through the darkest valley, help them to see that they do not need to fear evil for You are with them; Your rod and Your staff protect and comfort them..."

Shorter prayer suggestions: Ephesians 1:16-20; Ephesians 3:14-19; Philippians 1:9-11; or Colossians 1:9-13. Choose one to regularly pray.



Recommended Book List for People Who are Hurting

Devotionals for people who are suffering:

- *Ninety Days of God's Goodness* – Randy Alcorn
- *Streams in the Desert* – Mrs. Charles Cowman
- *The Scars That Have Shaped Me: How God Meets Us in Suffering* – Vaneetha Rendall Risner
- *Walking by Faith* – Esther Smith
- *Beside Still Waters* – Charles Spurgeon (edited by Roy H. Clarke)
- *Hope When it Hurts* – Kristen Wetherell & Sarah Walton

Christian Biographies/Memoirs that highlight suffering:

- *Walking Through Fire: A Memoir of Loss and Redemption* – Vaneetha Rendall Risner
- *The Hiding Place* – Corrie Ten Boom
- *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss* – Jerry Sittser
- *A Small Cup of Light* – Ben Palpant
- *When God Doesn't Fix It* – Laura Story
- *A Grief Observed* – CS Lewis

Encouraging Christian books on Suffering:

- *A Lifetime of Wisdom: Embracing the Way God Heals You* – Joni Eareckson Tada
- *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy* – Mark Vroegop
- *Suffering is Never for Nothing* – Elisabeth Elliot
- *Suffering: Gospel Hope When Life Doesn't Make Sense* – Paul David Tripp
- *This Too Shall Last* – KJ Ramsey
- *Walking with God Through Pain & Suffering* – Tim Keller
- *Hearing Jesus Speak into Your Sorrow* – Nancy Guthrie

Notes



