

# HEALTHY GRIEF / HONEST GRIEF

**G**rief is a completely normal response to loss and is commonly experienced at various times by the entire human race.

When a loved one dies, we can experience a range of confusing and sometimes frightening responses, which are generally not well understood in our western culture.

On the back of this leaflet is a simple diagram of a 'grief curve' which is intended to help us understand and accept these responses, both personally and in others around us. It is reassuring to know that when we embrace the grief process with a healthy acceptance, we can move forward into greater maturity and a realisation therefore, that our pain need never be wasted.

**I**t is a well known truth, that those who allow themselves to grieve while trusting in the safety, love and assurance of God's 'embrace' and His ultimate good purposes, are those who more readily overcome and flourish, despite their loss. People of faith in Christ, trust in His promises such as that found in Romans 8:28, *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

**T**he Bible has a lot to say about grief. Jesus Christ experienced the ultimate unfairness of death. He understands, because he too has experienced human grief and sorrow, loss, pain, disappointment and helplessness (Isaiah 53:4, Matthew 26:38). When we seek with an open heart, to understand why He willingly endured the crucifixion and what that really means, we discover the wonderful truth about His motivation...His love for each individual and the entire human race. He promises to walk with us through our griefs and sorrows. His well documented resurrection, also guarantees the validity of our hope for a life beyond physical death. *'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?'*

(1 Corinthians 15:55)

**C**ommonly, in times of grief, some of us can feel betrayed by God or angry at Him for not 'doing something' about the situation leading to the loss. People often say, "If God is a God of love, how could He or why didn't He ...?" This question is most valid when coupled with the honest desire to look past the anger and investigate who God really is.

The stumbling block within this question, is our predisposition towards believing that God should be and act only in ways that meet with our approval, our comfort, or our idea of who God is. We are inclined to believe that He is indebted to us. However, by our readiness to put aside this stumbling block in our thinking, we open a new door towards truly discovering the 'mysteries' of a loving God and a life given over to trusting in His higher purposes and sovereignty, even during times of grief and suffering.

It is within this trusting relational framework, that we get to experience the miracle of His supernatural peace *'which passes all understanding'* (Ephesians 4:4-6) and is *'not of this world,'* (John 14:27) but is experienced in all circumstances as the by-product of a living relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

**Y**ou may be reading this pamphlet because you are in a season of grieving. There are members in our church family here at Castlemaine Church of Christ, who have experienced grief and who understand its process, but who can also testify to the comfort and peace discovered through relationship with the living Christ. Many are well qualified to listen and understand.

**I**f this has raised further questions for you, please feel free to contact pastor Michael on :-  
0411873364

**S**ome other bible 'helps' that speak to grieving people:- John 16:33, Psalm 22, Psalm 23:4, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 2 Corinthians 7:6, Matthew 5:4, Isaiah 53.

# GRIEF EVENT

• Shock: God's anaesthetic

Some grief processes not so deep

• Higher level of understanding

## 1. DENIAL: disbelief/detachment

• Emotional release: letting go. Weeping = normal.

• Readjust to new reality

## 2. ANGER: at self/others/deceased/God → depression - loneliness?

↑ Sometimes people get stuck at this level ↓

• Confusion: forgetful, can't make decisions.

• Remembering positive  
• Realising gratitude  
• Ability to laugh

## 3. BARGAINING: "Why didn't I?" Blame. Guilt. Resentful. "What if-..."

• Physical symptoms: headaches etc. The body says things the mouth can't say.  
• Preoccupation with loss  
• Panic: eg. hears footsteps, "I must be going mad!"

• Light at the end of tunnel

## 4. DEPRESSION: Difficult to resume normal activity. "What's wrong with me?" "I should be able to-..."

## 5. ACCEPTANCE

PROCESS TIME: 6 months to 2 years is NORMAL

\* Arrows indicate that this process can move back & forth & may involve various stages at the same time.

\* Each person's journey through grief will be different and each grief event is unique!