

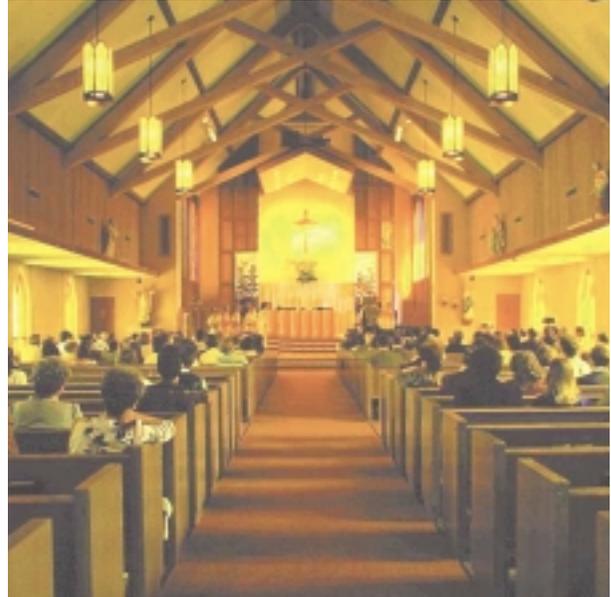
We Christians who grieve

Is it appropriate for a Christian to have those feelings we call grief? The word 'bereavement' includes the emotional, physical and spiritual reactions to the loss of a loved one. Grief is more than a crisis, it is a process. Both Christians and non-Christians experience grief because no matter what our own faith says about life after death, the reality is that a person I love is no longer part of my life.

If a Christian has an unreal expectation that he or she will not grieve when faced with the fact of his/her own death or the death of a loved one, then he or she may feel guilty at breaking down, believing this shows a possible lack of faith in the Christian hope of Eternal Life. While anger, depression and outpourings of grief can be beneficial, guilt held within is destructive.

Persons who put themselves outside or above grief have unreal expectations of themselves. As Isaiah said of Jesus in the Bible, "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3-4). Jesus was able to show his grief about the death of his friend Lazarus and He was able to show grief before the eventual demise of Jerusalem. We read of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane troubled with grief and that His tears were shed like drops of blood.

When we realize that Jesus shared our earthly experiences and He was able to express His grief, how can we say that we are stronger and better than Him by refusing to accept grief as an honest outpouring of human emotion. In recognising the real nature of grief and its effects on us and others, the Christian can take comfort in the fact that he or she is part of a Community of caring people who share a common faith and a bond where no individual need feel alone.



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Christians can identify themselves with Christ's resurrection and live in hope of Eternal Life. This is comforting but it cannot take away the fact that humans, irrespective of faith, need to show their feelings, give way to emotions and not be ashamed of such shows of grief as a loss of their faith. Whether it be our own approaching death or the death of a close friend or partner in life, the shock of life without the closeness of another, or our own finality, is hard to accept.

At these times of worry, despair and grieving, Christian hope and belief can be comforting and give strength. The difference between Christian and non-Christian grief is not noticeable in the grieving process, but rather in the acceptance of hope.

A Christian does not grieve as those without hope, for the Christian lives with a belief in the hope of Eternal Life through faith. Others may seek hope in different ways, however, and find peace through memories of the special human qualities of the departed person.

Words of comfort from your Bible

When in sorrow, read **John 14**

When you are lonely or fearful, read **Psalm 23**

When you want Christian assurance, read **Romans 8:1-30**

When you feel down and out, read **Romans 8:31-39**

When you grow bitter or critical, read **Corinthians 13**

Your church community may have groups that can assist you during your time of grief. Many have Bereavement Support Groups or Family Care Groups that can help and support you and your family both physically and emotionally.

Ask your local minister/priest or church office to put you in touch with these groups within the parish.

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Bereavement counselling

Anglican Loss and Grief Centre
26 Daphne Street
Prospect SA 5082

Phone 8342 4005

Email: losscentre@anglicare-sa.org.au

Listed below are some resources that will further assist you.

Books

A Time To Grieve: Meditations for Healing after the Death of a Loved One by
Carol Staudacher (HarperCollins Publishers 1994)

Healing Your Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas Compassionate advice and simple
activities to help you through your loss by Alan D Wolfelt PhD (Companion Press 2001)

When Bad Things Happen to Good People by Harold S Kushner (Pan Books 2002)

Website

www.grieflink.asn.au

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other help is available through contacting us, details below.

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