



GRIEF

and the

Holidays

Holidays encourage us to remember those we love.

Even though it may be painful to remember, there can be joy in those memories too. Never let anyone take your memories away by listening to their misguided advice - "Try to stop thinking about him/her and just keep busy."

Share your true feelings with your family and friends.

Be careful about using the response, "I'm fine" to the question "How are you?" Remember it is impossible for those who have not experienced traveling the grief journey to know the pain and other emotions you are feeling.

Approach the holidays with a positive attitude.

Think about the happy holiday times when your loved one was alive. Do you want to celebrate with the same traditions or create new ones that will honor your loved one? What could make this holiday season special for you?

Let your holiday grief be what it is.

If you can physically and emotionally handle having the entire family over for a big meal as usual, by all means do so. If this would be stressful for you, ask someone else in the family to host the dinner this year. Don't feel you need to accept every invitation to the holiday festivities, but don't isolate yourself either.

Take time to care for your soul.

Spend time alone with God. Feel His healing presence. Spend time reading your Bible. Let Him love you. Sit still and just "be." Be certain to take care of yourself. Grieving is exhausting. Try to laugh each day. Laughter and tears are healing. Don't feel guilty or uncomfortable about doing either. Remember to spend time with God; pray, read, weep, worship, and share your pain with Him.

A word to family and friends

Be sensitive to those who are grieving. Ask them how you can help make this a blessed Christmas season for them. Be certain they feel your love and support. Hugs, tissues, and prayers are always good.

Some ideas for ways to honor and remember your loved one:

♥ Volunteer . . .

Help serve Christmas dinner to the homeless.

♥ Make a donation . . .

Make a donation to a worthy cause in the name of your loved one.

♥ Decorate . . .

Decorate your tree with items that represent your loved one.

♥ Invite . . .

Invite your family and friends to also contribute items for your tree.

♥ Create gifts . . .

Create gifts from your loved one's clothing. Dresses and shirts can be made into quilts of varying sizes, pillows, and ties make cute little bears.

♥ Include the children . . .

Don't forget to include the children. Even the smallest, if they were held and loved by your loved one, will miss them and grieve.

RESOURCES:

"Living with Loss"

Pastor Tony Evans, candidly shares his heart, while in the midst of grieving the loss of his wife. **YouTube link:**

https://youtu.be/EhJZdpRI_qU

GriefShare recommends two books for the Christmas season - **"The Empty Chair"** by Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge and Robert C. DeVries and **"A Decembered Grief"** by Harold Ivan Smith.