

Following the Loss of a Loved One

The First Days



Grief is different for everyone. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. No timetable. No progression through stages of grief. There are things each person might experience, from shock and denial to anger and bargaining to a final acceptance, but these are just words to those who have not walked your path.

We are praying for you as you walk through these first days. Your feeling of loss may be overwhelming right now. That is normal. Realize in the first days after the loss of a loved one you are most likely in shock. Unfortunately, this is the time you have to make decisions about final arrangements, when you are not at your strongest.

You have probably chosen a funeral home and the funeral director will walk you through many of the initial decisions and plans. They will also provide you with the death certificates you will need when you apply for benefits, close accounts and deal with other estate matters.

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Let friends and family do whatever they offer that feels right to you, from cooking and cleaning to yard work and organizing calls. People want to help and now is your chance to receive their care. This will be important as you walk the journey of loss and grief.

You may or may not sleep well nor have your usual appetite. Some people may be overly concerned about this and mean well in their efforts to keep things as normal as possible. However, for you everything has changed and you may feel you are just going through the motions. That is all right. What you have to do right now is make the final arrangements. Initially this might mean deciding on cremation or burial and whether to have a viewing or not. It might also include deciding on a eulogy, what songs to use, what verses to read, how to display pictures and other personal considerations, all things the funeral director will work with you on deciding. Just remember that this is the service to honor your loved one and what you decide is what is important. You will not be alone in this process.

After the service is over and everyone has gone back to their lives, you are left with deciding what to do with your loved one's possessions. There is no timetable for this and no best way to handle these things. When you are ready, you will know what to do. Trust yourself and do not let anyone pressure you into moving on too quickly. Of course, if you cannot get back to some sense of living within several months, you might want to seek the counsel of your clergy or other professional to help with your grief. You will find a list of area resources in this packet that could be helpful to you in your time of need.

Please know we care and are here for you.

