

Perhaps you are struggling
with the challenges
of grieving a loss.

Give yourself permission to try
some of the practical suggestions
in this brochure to help you
get through the
approaching holidays.
Be gentle with yourself
and with others.

May God bless you!



The discussion guide
Grief: God's Help in Times of Sorrow
has helped many individuals and groups find
hope and healing in difficult seasons.

Written by Cathy Gardner Maddams
and Jim Reapsome, it has 9 discussions based
on the Book of Psalms in the Bible.

Available at www.QPlace.com/shop

GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS



-COPING WITH WHAT IS-

In the past, you may have loved the holiday season but now are feeling a sense of dread as it approaches.

How can you enjoy the festivities when you are grieving a deep loss? How can you manage the expectations and enthusiasm of the season when you are feeling empty inside? Even the decorations may bring back painful reminders of what used to be.

Many who are grieving share these normal feelings and reactions to the holidays.

If you have experienced any kind of loss (for instance, loss of a loved one, a marriage, a job, your home, your health, or something else dear to you) the holidays can be extremely difficult.

It is important to realize that grieving people have unique limitations.

Take time to re-evaluate your priorities and what you truly value about the holidays. Be gentle with yourself while grieving, and thoughtfully consider a new plan.

Giving forethought to the holidays can truly help you *get through them*.

GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE CHANGES

- Adjusting traditions sometimes helps. Consider which traditions bring you joy and which ones might be too difficult to celebrate or accomplish this year. For example, gift-giving might be handled differently or you might find a new way to decorate.
- Discuss whether or not to send out cards, put up a tree, hang lights, make cookies or whatever else you traditionally enjoy. Do those things that you and your family can manage.
- If celebrating in your own home is too difficult, make efforts to go to someone else's home. You might even choose to travel. It is important to be with friends and family.
- Let others help or take over some of the typical responsibilities and tasks like holiday meals, parties, greeting cards, or gift wrapping.
- Include other family members as you consider any possible changes. Involving others in decision making shows sensitivity to the needs and sorrows of others.

HANDLING THE STRESS OF THE HOLIDAYS

- Find ways to strengthen yourself through exercise, healthy eating and ample sleep.
- Reach out to those whom you trust, sharing your feelings and concerns with them. Consider asking them to pray for you.
- Discover healing as you offer help and support to others.
- Ask for God's help through simple prayer. Reading the Psalms in the Bible can provide hope and the acknowledgement of God's presence and love. Some suggestions: Psalms 46, 62, 77, 31, 32, 33, 100, 139, 37, 71.

LOOK FOR WAYS TO HONOR A LOVED ONE

- If you have lost a loved one, it can be very comforting to find a way to honor him or her.
- You might light a special candle in memory of the loved one, buy a poinsettia for your home or church as a memorial, have someone make a special toast at a meal or make a donation in the name of your loved one.
- Take the initiative to talk about your loved one and encourage others to share memories and even tears.