

## How to Help a Friend in Crisis

1. The first few weeks, especially, are not the time to judge how your friend is doing. Just be there with them.

Like Job's friends did in Job 1-2.

2. Satan may try to convince your friend that God is punishing them for something.

If the situation was caused by sin: I John 1:9

Saul's story: Acts 8:54-8:3; 9:1-31

If they feel like they deserve it for their past:

Mary Magdalene's story: Luke 8:1-3; John 20:1-18

Rahab's story: Joshua 3, 6; Matthew 1:5

If they feel like they betrayed God and deserve it:

Peter's story: Luke 22 (his betrayal);

John 21 (Jesus' gave him work to do once again.)

3. The first step toward life after tragedy is to believe God loves you.

Isaiah 61:1-4

4. It is God who will give them lasting strength – it won't come from within themselves, nor from you.

II Corinthians 4:7

5. It's OK to ask God questions.

Mary's story: Luke 1:26-38

Abram's story: Genesis 15:1-6

Moses' story: Exodus 3-4

The man born blind story: John 9:1-5

Job's message from God: Job 38-42

6. It will bring life back into you when you praise God

David's Cries: Psalm 42

7. Don't swallow tears.

## Practical Ideas

1. Pray with your friend.
2. Study the Bible with your friend.
3. Let them cry when they choose to cry.
4. Invite them into your world, while gently entering theirs.
5. Give them something to look forward to – like a planned outing or visit.
6. Do something with them – a project or ministry that fits their gifting.
7. Volunteer together. Serving someone really helps us focus outside of our own pain.
8. Do random acts of secret kindness together.
9. Offer ideas, but don't get upset if that idea is refused. Be patient.
10. Help them add new traditions, without trying to replace the old ones.
11. Remember their dates: birthdays, anniversaries, dates of death. Do something that says quietly, "I remember."
12. Know that what they wish to do one year won't necessarily be the thing they want to do next year. They may not decide until last minute.
13. Share memories. It feels so good to know someone remembers as the years go by.
14. Don't be afraid to ask what bothers them, or what they don't want you to do. And be ok with their answer without defending yourself.
15. Listen. Listen. Listen.
16. Use your own skills to meet practical needs. (Things my church family did for me the first few months: mowed the lawn, fixed the washer, maintenance on my truck).
17. Teach them how to do the things their spouse used to do for them (or do it for them.)
18. If a spouse is now missing, do special things with the children to give the parent a break, and to help the child feel special. (Fishing, hunting, ice cream, carnival, park, etc.)
19. When people around a bereaved mom or dad begin talking about their own children (which is a natural and good thing to do), pull the bereaved parent into the conversation by asking, "Did Johnny used to do that?" or "I remember when Sally..." (Or whatever fits the conversation.) That way they can tell their own story instead of feeling awkward.
20. Don't be afraid to ask, "What do you need?" But know that they may not know how to respond at first.
21. Do NOT say, "Maybe it's time to move on..." That feels like you are asking them to forget their loved one.