

Support For A Grieving Father



1. Involve dads in the process. Don't leave them out of decisions. Don't assume that he is not hurting just because he is quiet in his grief. Everyone grieves differently.
2. Don't allow the fear of saying or doing the wrong thing keep you from reaching out in love. There are no perfect words. A simple, "I'm sorry," and a hug can go a long way.
3. Those who are grieving are not always able to ask for help. Instead of saying, "Let me know if you need anything," just do something for the family. Be available, but also willing to give space when needed. Bring a meal. Offer to watch the other children for a while. Come over and sit with him, offering a listening ear.
4. Acknowledge the baby. Refer to the child by name. Sharing can be a comfort. Be willing to listen.
5. Avoid clichés such as, "You can have more children," or "This was God's will." Even words meant to comfort can actually sting a grieving heart as salt poured into an open wound.
6. Ask how the father is doing, don't just ask about the mother. Remember, he lost his child too. One father said it well: "In my opinion, it would be so great if there was a way to educate the public that an infant loss is an emotionally devastating event for fathers as well as mothers. I feel that part of my responsibility to my wife is to be her protector. I will always place her needs above my own. However, it would be so much to me to know that there were those who recognized I was hurting."
7. Sometimes fathers need to "do" more than talk. Offer opportunities to go fishing, golfing, bowling, etc. Include him as you would before his loss.

A wonderful quote by Patsy Clarimont from her book *Stained Glass Hearts* sums up well the art of ministering to a broken heart: "Honestly, when I'm hurting, I'd rather have a friend who stands and weeps with me or wonders with me than one who rattles off his or her thing take on the universe." Sometimes we just need a friend to walk with us a little while, to sit with us, to love us as we are, to impart grace, to listen, to hurt with us, weep with us and pray for us. ***"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Romans 12:15***