

CHURCH ARMY  
.ORG

**DEATH,  
GRIEF  
& HOPE**

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# NOBODY WANTS TO BE GIVEN THIS BOOKLET

The fact you are reading it probably means someone you love has died, or is very seriously ill, or maybe someone you care for is in that situation. When someone we love dies it is often scary, painful and heart breaking. There is no point pretending everything is okay – Grief hurts like no other pain!

These pages try to tell the truth about what happens when someone dies and how we can understand our feelings. It answers questions you might have and offers some ways of learning to live with the pain of saying goodbye.

**Grief:** Intense sorrow, especially caused by someone's death.

In an ideal world you wouldn't be reading this, but would be sat talking, maybe looking at some photos of the person who died, and remembering them with someone. You would laugh and share tears over memories, and thank God for their life. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus means that can't happen. Lots of the ways people normally cope with grief are not options at the moment. This booklet aims to help.

We know that more people than usual will die in the next few months. The virus, and the changes it is currently bringing to how we live, will affect everyone, even if your loved one died of another cause. Death is always hard to deal with, but it might feel harder right now. Your normal routine is already disrupted, you can't get a hug from a friend and don't have the normal opportunity to talk if you want to. It is hard, but you are still not alone.

**Bereaved/bereavement:** The feeling of loss when someone you love dies. Also used to describe people who have had some die. (The bereaved)

Although death is horrible, this booklet is written in the belief that death is not the end of the story. However terrible we feel today, there is hope because Jesus promises to be with us through life and through death. We pray that by the end of this booklet you might have faith to believe that although you are grieving today there is still hope.

## Here are some tips about this booklet...

- Don't try to read it all at once. Take your time. It is not a race to get to the end.
- Read the bits that are helpful and ignore the bits that do not interest you. You could always come back later.
- Be kind to yourself. Each of us grieves in our own way. Some things that you read about will feel like your experience and others will not. That is okay!

## I JUST FEEL SO FULL OF...

DESPAIR  
GUILT  
NUMBNESS  
OVERWHELMED  
REGRET  
MED BELIEF  
CONFUSION  
ANGER  
LONELINESS  
RELIEF  
RESPONSIBILITY  
WORRY  
JEALOUSY

**When someone dies there are no set feelings that we should have. We all react in different ways.**

At different points you might find you experience any of these feelings...

### **Numbness**

Feeling frozen, detached from your emotions.

### **Worry**

What will change, what about other grieving family members, what will happen next?

### **Disbelief**

Feeling that the death is not real, that someone will wake you up from a dream.

### **Confusion**

Having lots of questions and not knowing what to do.

### **Loneliness**

Missing the person and feeling cut off from others.

### **Fear**

Scared of being alone, of someone else getting ill or just fearful.

### **Anger**

Frustrated and irritable, maybe wanting to lash out or blame others.

### **Guilt**

Feeling in some way to blame, or that you could have done something to prevent the death.

### **Regret**

Wishing you had done something, said something or acted differently.

### **Responsibility**

Feeling you have to look after or protect other grieving people.

### **Jealousy**

Because other people still have their loved ones.

### **Relief**

Knowing your loved one is no longer suffering.

### **Despair**

Everything feeling is bleak and pointless.

### **Overwhelmed**

Feeling all of these emotions are too much to carry.



**Your feelings will not stay the same all the time. They can be like waves that come and go, sometimes gentle and sometimes feeling they could wash you away. Try to remember that however bad a particular moment feels, it will pass. Grief changes as you go through it.**

Grieving can also have physical effects on us. These effects might include some of the following...

- Being tearful – including crying over things that seem totally unrelated to the death
- Changes in appetite – some people don't feel like eating at all, other people want to eat everything in sight
- Changes to sleep - either finding it really hard to sleep or wanting to sleep a lot more
- Feeling tired
- Losing the ability to stay focused
- Feeling sick
- Feeling tired
- Feeling cold
- A headache

Although you might not feel like eating or sleeping the way you normally do it is helpful to try to keep to your normal pattern if you can. Don't try to hide any of these physical reactions to grief, it may be that others in your family are doing the same, and by sharing you can support one another.

The feelings and physical reactions on these pages are very common. We even see them in the Bible. In John's Gospel, in the New Testament, we read the story of Jesus at the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Mary, the brother of Lazarus, is angry and blames Jesus for Lazarus' death. 'If you had been here' she says, 'My brother would not have died.'

What does Jesus do? The first thing he does is cry. Jesus feels the pain of grief and knows how much it hurts. After weeping Jesus brings Lazarus back to life and the resurrected man walks out of the grave. For Christians this is a sign that although death is part of life, death is not the end. There is hope because Jesus has defeated death. There is more about this in the 'Big Questions' section.

I wonder if you can imagine Jesus crying with grief? One title the Bible gives to Jesus is the 'Man of Sorrows'. This does not mean he was always miserable but that he understood and experienced the pain of the world. Christians believe that Jesus knows how we feel because he has been there too.



# GRIEF IN FAMILIES

We know that everybody grieves in different ways. Try not to judge how other people feel because of how they are acting. They are probably really hurting, even if they are trying not to show it.

## Taking time for yourself

This could be one of the hardest things for you to do. You may be feeling isolated and yet have things to organise and taking time for yourself in the midst of all that could feel self-indulgent. But it's important that you do; those feelings will need to be acknowledged and dealt with at some point.

It may be that you feel you need to hide the way you feel from those you look after, so that they can feel secure and like things are normal. However this may send them the message that they need to hide how they are feeling as well. See the section on 10-teenagers for some ideas on how to deal with this healthily together.

However it's important you don't forget to, or neglect to, navigate this yourself. It may be that you need to set aside some specific time each day to do this. It doesn't need to be a long time, but even half an hour for you to focus on how you are feeling and to remember the person you have lost will help you to deal with the rest of what is going on around you. Having something physical to do can help you to focus on your thoughts; it may be that you have a pastime or hobby that fills this need. If you don't, then

having something that doesn't require much thought is ideal, such as:

- Colouring, painting.
- Exercise when you can.
- Observing the world around you and counting common things, such as birds.
- The aim of these, or other activities, is to give you something to focus on to give your mind a chance to reflect, without getting lost in your thoughts.

## Notes for Parents and Carers

### Young Children

You may have young children at home as you go through this painful process. This can be tough for a couple of reasons. First, they may not react at all to the death of a loved one, or may ask questions that are painful for you. Second, they will still be looking to you to take care of them. Remember to be kind to yourself, and try to make things as easy as possible for a time to give yourself some time and space to process what is going on.

Obviously babies and younger children have no understanding of death, but may pick up on emotions around them and be unsettled. Between the ages of 3 and 10 children move from not understanding death to realising it is a permanent reality. Don't be surprised if younger children ask repeatedly when the dead person will come back, where they are, or other questions about them. They may bring death into their play and may jump quickly from being upset to being fine.

They may also ask questions when you are not ready for it. Remember they are not being unkind or uncaring; they are dealing with the news of the death in a way they can understand. Try not to be frustrated or upset with them, even if what they say or do sounds hurtful.

### Ten to Teenagers

Parenting a teenager can be challenging at the best of times. When you are both processing a bereavement, it can add a layer of complexity to the relationship that can mean missed communication, hurtful words, and confusion for both of you.

They will be going through a complex mixture of emotions, in a similar way to you, but may not have the same feelings at the same time, or the language to be able to communicate the way they are feeling. It may be hard, but try to be sensitive to their needs as well as your own. Creating a space where you give each other a chance to express yourselves, or using the pages of this booklet to share how you are both doing may be helpful.

There will almost certainly be times when you fall out with family members during calls home. Try not to hold onto hurtful words, and try not to use them. After a fall out, give each other a bit more space and time than you may usually do, and try to give each other a chance to express your feelings. Being open and honest about how you are processing the bereavement will help your teenage children to process their feelings too, as well as

helping you support one another.

The Bible says 'Be angry, yet do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger' (Ephesians chapter 4 verse 26). You will feel angry. You will probably do or say some wrong things. Try to put things right before the end of the day, even if you don't feel you should back down first. It will help everyone let go and sleep better. It will also let you have a fresh start the next day.

### What about friends?

We all need friends. Hopefully, despite the lockdown, you are still able to contact your friends. Here are 4 tips to remember about friends right now...

1. They will react in different ways. Some will be happy to talk to you, others might be embarrassed and disappear for a while. This might be because they don't want to say the wrong thing, or maybe they have had a bereavement themselves. We often assume that, as adults, we should know how to deal with these sort of things and feel guilty if we don't. Remember, for many of us, bereavements are not something we deal with regularly and can cause significant discomfort or awkwardness.
2. Think about how you want friends to know. Do you want to tell each of your friends or do you want another friend to tell them so you don't have to? If you decide to tell others yourself, you may end up being supportive and reassuring of those you speak to, which can be exhausting. Think about those you need to inform, and those who others can speak to for you.
3. Think about where you speak to those who are supporting you. While we encourage honesty between you and those you care for, there may still be things, such as details surrounding the bereavement, you want to keep from them for the time being.
4. It is okay to speak to friends about other things and to laugh with them. Some people feel they should be sad all the time and feel guilty about enjoying themselves. Don't fall into that trap! You are not letting the dead person down by still enjoying things. Try not to feel guilty about it.



## What happens when someone dies? Bodies, funerals and changes for Coronavirus

The purpose of this resource is not to set out the practical steps that are necessary to follow on the death of a loved one but at some point you will have some practical questions. The Coronavirus has meant some changes to how arrangements are made after someone has died. These changes have been made to make it harder for the virus to spread, but they can make the process of grieving more difficult. There will be Healthcare professionals and Undertakers who will support you in the process. If you have never been to a funeral the difference won't be as obvious for you, but it may make others in your family feel very frustrated and disappointed. Once you have read this you will understand why they might feel like this. The official guidance in the community is changing constantly as are the rules relating to funerals, please talk to your Chaplain about the current rules.

In normal times, when someone dies their body is taken to be looked after by the funeral director. They sort out the practical arrangements for a funeral according to the traditions and faith of the person who died. Sometimes members of the family visit to see the body for a final time and say goodbye. In some cultures the family prepare the body to be buried and in others the funeral director makes the body ready for their service. Often the person is dressed in their best clothing for their funeral. The person leading the funeral service will make sure it reflects the life and faith of the person. The family often chooses music and readings that were significant to the person who died. Depending on the religion and culture of the deceased, the service will sometimes be soon after the death and sometimes a while later. Funerals can be large or small and at their best remember the good, as well as letting people share their sadness. Sometimes there is a service or event in the person's place of worship before a second event at the cemetery or crematorium.

## So what has changed for those who die with Coronavirus?

If someone has died of Coronavirus it may be that some of the usual preparations are not allowed to take place. To cut the risk of infection the body of the dead person may not be dressed and prepared in the usual way, and may not be seen by relatives. No funerals can happen in church or other places of worship and very few people are allowed to go to the funeral service in a Crematorium or at a Graveside. In addition, service leaders cannot meet with the family of the dead person in the same way as normal and funerals may be shorter and less personal. All of this can leave people feeling they have not been able to say goodbye in the way they wanted to. This will make some people feel sad, angry or even guilty because they think they have let the dead person down. Some funerals will be able to be streamed, but that won't let people meet together. For many going to the funeral is an important part of the grieving process so not being able to meet and share their sadness will feel very hard.

Some people will decide to hold a service once the crisis is over, so family and friends can get together. Another idea is to hold your own memorial service at home. This is a chance for your family to come together in a special way to remember the person who has died and thank God for them. Although you will not be able to attend a memorial service you can still spend time talking to your family to support them on the phone and the Chaplain can help you light a candle in chapel to remember at an appropriate time. You will find some ideas and an outline service in the Christian tradition in the next few pages. You may never have done anything like this at home before, but it might help even if the idea seems a bit odd. Have a look at the outline included and chat with the other people at home about whether this might help.

For people who die without contracting the Coronavirus then at the Undertakers discretion family and friends may be able to spend time with the person at the Undertakers Chapel of Rest. It is always important to remind family members to observe the Governments recommendation that people remain at least two meters apart, this recommendation will also be observed at the funeral service itself.





### So what helps with grief?

Grief is not something that you can fix by doing an activity and you cannot rush through so it ends more quickly. A bit like when you have a bruise, to begin with it really hurts, but over time the pain does reduce, even if that is hard to believe now.

So what helps?

### So what helps?

- **Talking** – letting people know how you feel, even if you are not sure you have the right words to describe it.
- **Writing or drawing** – a picture, letter to the person who died, a poem or even a song might help you express your feelings.
- **Friends** – you can't be with other people in person right now, but use the resources you have to keep in touch: phone calls and letters.
- **Space** – take some time for you. Don't be tempted to fill every moment so you can't think but have some quiet to reflect.
- **Prayer** – you can tell God how you feel, however good or bad, and ask for His strength for you and the people you love.
- **Memories** – Thinking back to good times or finding pictures of happy memories is a good thing to do, even if remembering also makes you cry.
- **Knowing you will have good days and bad days** – or to begin with good minutes and bad minutes. This is normal.
- **Celebrate** – there will be things to be grateful for. In time you will be able to enjoy the memory again.
- **Exercise** – this can be difficult because of the lockdown, but physical activity helps. Even climbing the stairs a few times (if you have some) can make a difference. You could also try an online fitness programmes.
- **Understand what is happening** – if you can recognise what is happening in you or those around you it can be easier to be kind to them and yourself.
- **Know you are not the first to feel grief** – almost every adult you know has known someone who has died. They have been where you are. They have found that in time and with support they can enjoy life without forgetting their loved one.

### A little warning

Some people who have had a bereavement find themselves tempted to take risks they would not normally take. Please recognise these feelings for what they are and don't listen to them. If you have thoughts about doing things you would not normally do please talk to someone you trust or maybe your GP or other health professional. Keeping feelings inside our heads can make them grow. Saying them out loud to someone else can take away their power and helps us make healthy choices.

# WAYS OF REMEMBERING

**Here are some practical ways you could remember in a positive way. You could do some of them on your own but others are better with other people. Don't push anyone else to do any of these right away. Some people might need a little time before they are ready to remember or take part.**

## Collage, mobile or picture frame

You could create a collage of things the person who died liked or enjoyed. You can include anything from wrappers of their favourite chocolate bar to pictures of holiday locations. Maybe you have a favourite picture and you could create a picture frame to go around it using things that have positive memories like a flower they liked or bits of a map of where they lived. Be as creative as you like but don't use anything precious without permission!

## Candle Lighting

Christians light Candles as signs of hope, ask your chaplain if you can go to the chapel and light a candle, if this is not possible ask them to light a candle on your behalf and draw a picture of a candle and keep it by your bed to remember

## Memory Sheet

The next page is a guided way of remembering what has happened and why the person is important. You could do it alone or with other family members and friends. You could also complete it separately and then come together to share your thoughts and memories. Don't worry about filling it all in at once. You can come back to it.

## Simple Service

After the memory sheet you will find instructions for holding a short service at home to give thanks for the life of the person who died. If no one from your house can go to the funeral you might want to hold this service that day. If someone is able to go you probably want to use the service when you are all together.



**I am remembering:**

**They were born in:**

**They died in:**

**This person was my:**

**Date of birth:**

**Date of death:**

**How/why they died:**

**One great memory is:**

**Things they enjoyed:**

**Some changes will be:**

**What I will learn from them:**

**I will miss them most when:**

**I still have these questions:**

**I would like to say to them:**

**I think they would want me to know:**

# A SERVICE TO REMEMBER

**Not everyone is currently able to go to a funeral, but remembering at the same time as the service is a way to feel connected. If a member of your family can attend, you could hold your service to remember in advance. Anything you write during that time can then be taken to the funeral to represent you and your thoughts.**

## **Holy Space**

In the Bible Jesus often took ordinary things, like 5 loaves & 2 fish from child's picnic, and made them something amazing (a feast for more than 5,000 people). Today your ordinary space is to become a Holy space where you can remember.

## **A picture**

Prepare your space. If you would like to, place a photograph of the person you are remembering where you can see it, or if you don't have a picture you could use a child's drawing or an object that reminds you them.

## **Bible**

Place a Bible next to the picture. A children's Bible or any version of the Bible is fine. If you don't have a Bible then any device that you can use to find an online Bible will also be fine.







**Use the image of the candle above**

...and be quiet together for a moment before you begin.

**Prayer**

Wherever it says *N* please say the name of the person you are remembering.

*God the Holy Trinity,*

*we have prepared this space, we ask you to make it Holy as we gather here together to remember N, please be with us at this sad time, help us to trust that you are with us.*

*We know that Jesus made ordinary things Holy and we ask that you will make this space Holy for us today.*

*We know that Jesus came alive again on Easter Sunday and that Jesus promised that because of his resurrection we too will be alive in Heaven one day.*

*As we remember N give us faith and hope, we pray.*

*Amen.*

## Remembering

Take time to remember the person you love. You might want to use these questions to guide you.

What made them really special to you?

What is your favourite memory?

When did they make you laugh?

How did they care for you?

What did you learn from them about Life? Love? God?



## Bible Reading

These two Bible readings are often used at funerals. You can replace these with another Bible reading if there is one that is special to your family.

### Psalm 23 verses 1-4

The Lord is my shepherd. I will always have everything I need. He gives me green pastures to lie in. He leads me by calm pools of water. He restores my strength. He leads me on right paths to show that he is good. Even if I walk through a valley as dark as the grave, I will not be afraid of any danger, because you are with me. Your rod and staff comfort me.

### Praying...

We thank God for the life of the person we love and ask God to help us, and all who are sad, because someone has died. (You can use these prayers or you can write your own. We talk to God the same way we talk to one another; we don't need special words and we can be totally honest with God about how we feel).

Dear God, Thank you for N, for all that they meant to us and to others. Thank you that you promise your love is stronger than death, nothing can separate us from you, even though we can't see N we trust that you are holding them and us today. Amen.

God of Love, You love everything you made, the whole universe, including each one of us. You made us to live with you. Please be with us and everyone who is sad because the person they love has died, help us all to know that without you we have nothing to hope for; with you we have nothing to fear. Please be with us and bring us Light and Peace through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### We pray together:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.  
Your Kingdom come  
Your Will be done  
On earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread  
And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory.

### John chapter 14, verses 1-3

Jesus said, "Don't be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am."



This final prayer is used at the end of a funeral service. It commends our loved one into God's loving arms and is our way of saying Goodbye.

God our creator and redeemer, by your power Christ conquered death and entered into glory. Confident of his victory and claiming his promises, we entrust N to your mercy in the name of Jesus our Lord, who died and is alive and reigns with you, now and for ever. Amen.



**Some of these prayers are very old and have been used by Christians in good and bad times.**

Our Father in Heaven  
 Hallowed be your Name  
 Your Kingdom come  
 Your will be done  
 On earth as in heaven  
 Give us today our daily bread  
 Forgive us our sins  
 As we forgive those who sin against us  
 Lead us not into temptation  
 But deliver us from evil  
 For yours is the kingdom, the power  
 and the glory  
 Forever and ever  
 Amen

Let nothing disturb you,  
 Let nothing frighten you,  
 All things are passing away:  
 God never changes.  
 Patience obtains all things  
 Whoever has God lacks nothing;  
 God alone suffices.

Lord Jesus,  
 I cannot find the words I need,  
 But you know everything.  
 Please hold me and give me hope as  
 I wait for this dark night inside me to  
 pass into the light of a new day  
 Amen

I arise today  
 Through the strength of heaven;  
 Light of the sun,  
 Splendour of fire,  
 Speed of lightning,  
 Swiftmess of the wind,  
 Depth of the sea,  
 Stability of the earth,  
 Firmness of the rock.

I arise today  
 Through God's strength to pilot me;  
 God's might to uphold me,  
 God's wisdom to guide me,  
 God's eye to look before me,  
 God's ear to hear me,  
 God's word to speak for me,  
 God's hand to guard me,  
 God's way to lie before me,  
 God's shield to protect me,  
 God's hosts to save me  
 Afar and anear,  
 Alone or in a multitude.

Christ shield me today  
 Against wounding  
 Christ with me, Christ before me,  
 Christ behind me,  
 Christ in me, Christ beneath me,  
 Christ above me,  
 Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
 Christ when I lie down, Christ when  
 I sit down,  
 Christ in the heart of everyone who  
 thinks of me,  
 Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
 Christ in the eye that sees me,  
 Christ in the ear that hears me.

I arise today  
 Through the mighty strength  
 Of the Lord of creation





# A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS

**No one ever chooses to be on a journey with bereavement. We all wish we could put back time so things were different. The truth is that everyone will experience bereavements as they go through their life. If you love people bereavement is impossible to avoid.**

So you will have some good days and bad days. There will be times when life seems to come back to full colour and other times when you feel back in the darkness and pain. This is normal. Most people come through the darkest part of their grief with the help of their family and friends and don't need external support through counsellors or specialist help. Sometime though people can get a bit stuck in their journey with grief. Something seems to stop them moving on. If this feels like you please ask for help. As well as your family and friends, church leaders are people who might be able to help you get your grief journey going again or find you the right help if you get a bit stuck.

I sometimes tell people who are grieving that their grief is a bit like a mountain on a journey. While you are very close to the death it is all you can see, just like when you are close to the mountain it fills your view. As you get further away the mountain is not any smaller, but you have a broader perspective. It is not the only thing you can see any more. Right now your grief is probably like that mountain up close; It feels massive and overwhelming and as if it is all you will ever see. Give yourself time. You won't forget the person, but in time you will regain the ability to see other things as well as the mountain.

Your loved one will always have had an impact on you and you will carry their memory and influence with you.

We going to leave the final words to two Bible promises. God has not forgotten you. You can trust him to carry you even when everything around feels hopeless and scary.

## **Jesus said:**

Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted  
(Matthew chapter 5)

## **And in St Paul's letter to the Church in Rome we find these words:**

For I am certain that nothing can separate us from God's love: neither death nor life, neither angels or other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above or the world below – *there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(Romans chapter 8 verses 38-39)

# BIG QUESTIONS

**I am sure you have some questions. A few that are asked most often are on this page. You will find more answers and support through the resources page.**

## **Christians say God is loving and powerful but the virus is killing hundreds of people and many others are sick. Why doesn't God just take it away?**

This is a really common question. Every time a person dies someone who loved them asks why God didn't stop it. The truth is that death is part of life. One day we are all going to die, we just hope everyone has a long and enjoyable life first. Can you imagine this world if no one ever died?

The virus is terrible, but can we say it is God's fault? We live in a world where there is soap as well as viruses. It wasn't God taking all the toilet rolls from the shops. Where some people are greedy and there is not medical care more people will die. Where people think of others by isolating well and caring for each other more people will live. We have amazing aeroplanes that can take us around the world, but they also transfer viruses in record time.

In the Bible God sometimes performs miracles, but not always. Do you remember the stories of Jesus dying on the cross? If not you can look them up. The night before his death Jesus asks God for another plan so he would not have to die but he is still willing to give up his life. Christians see that God is there with us in our suffering and pain. He understands us because he has been broken and felt abandoned too.

The Bible does promise a time will come when there will be no more suffering, death and tears. Until that day God comes to share our suffering by giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit to be our comfort and guide through life. You might want to use one of the prayers at the end of the booklet to ask God to be with you and fill you with the Holy Spirit to help you in your grief and sadness.

## **Did God choose my loved one to die?**

Viruses don't have brains and don't make choices. Viruses just spread without thought. That means anyone can get a virus. We still don't fully understand why some people have serious illness or die because of it and others don't, but it is not God picking out certain people.

The friends of Jesus once asked him why some people were killed by a falling tower. They wondered if the people were bad and so were being punished. Jesus said it was nothing to do with their sins or even their parents. He went on to say that each one of us should remember that life is fragile and should realise that we will all die one day.

## **Will I ever feel better?**

Yes! Ask anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one in the past. They will probably say that at first the pain is overwhelming and feels like it will last forever. Most people say they still miss the person, but they learn to live with the loss and that while they don't forget they find their enjoyment of life returns and they learn to live with the loss they experienced.

### **Where is my loved one now?**

Often people want to know if the person they loved is in heaven. There are two parts to this answer. One part is about time and the other about place.

The time question is about where the person is now. Some Christians believe that as soon as a person dies the immortal (which means never dying) part of them goes straight to be with God. Others believe that the person dies and will come alive again at the end of time and be with God then. In the meantime, they are not aware of time passing, so for them it is more like being asleep and waking up when God calls them. Whichever of these ideas you believe the person you love is not in pain any more.

The second part of the question is about place. Some people worry about whether the person they love is going to be in heaven with God or in hell. Even people who didn't think they believed in God can find they have this worry. Again, Christians have different views. We all believe that Jesus shows us God's amazing love and invites us to share it with him. Some Christians think that the only way to be sure of being with God in heaven is to become friends with him now, other believe that when Jesus died he opened his arms to the whole world and paid for us all, whether we realise it or not.

We can be sure of this: God is love. He loves the person who died even more that you do (even if you find that hard to believe right now). Only God can see people's hearts and because he is loving, just and kind we can trust him to do what is right. At a Christian funeral service the dead person is 'commended' to the love of God because God is like a parent, waiting for his children to return home.

### **Does God love me?**

Absolutely! The Bible says God loved the world so much that he sent Jesus, so that whoever believes in Him can have eternal life. We tend to think that eternal life is about 'forever' but it is also about having a really full life now. However lost, upset or overwhelmed you feel you can be certain Jesus loves you more than we can ever explain, or you could ever fully understand.

# ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

**This material was first written for students of Wren Academy, a Church of England school in North London by its chaplain, David Booker. It has been edited in partnership with Mike Reeder to adapt it for adults. Church Army has developed the contents and made them available free of charge to support those grieving because of the Covid 19 pandemic.**

David has over 25 years of experience working with young people. He is a Church Army Evangelist, teacher, curate of a church in North London and a member of the Archbishops' College of Evangelists. Over the 7 years David has been chaplain at Wren he has spent time with many of young people who have experienced the death of a loved one, sometimes in traumatic circumstances.

Mike Reeder has been the Senior Chaplain at St Luke's Hospice in Sheffield for 13 years and has had the privilege of being a Church Army Evangelist for 33 years. He is ordained in the Church Of England and has gained experience of life and ministry within parish, academic and health care settings. Mike is passionate about seeing people explore the life events that affect us all and, as a Hospice Chaplain, walks with people who are faced with death with all its opportunities, pain, and bereavements.

This resource has been further developed for use in prisons in partnership with the Rev'd Helen Dearnley. She is the Anglican Advisor for Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, with additional responsibilities for the chaplaincies in the female and private prison estates.

Church Army is a mission focused community that has been pioneering mission and evangelism for nearly 140 years by training, enabling and resourcing the church and its members to share the gospel.

Our vision is that everyone everywhere has the opportunity to encounter God's love, and be empowered to transform their communities through faith shared in word and action.

Church Army has a strong, proud heritage. Founded in 1882 in England by Wilson Carlile, an ordained priest in the Church of England whose vision to put the call to evangelism into the hands of ordinary, working Christians so they could transform the world around them is a legacy that Church Army is built upon today.

Church Army are known as trailblazers. Ordinary people who are radically dependant on Jesus, generous and expectant that God does and will continue to change lives. By releasing evangelists to go beyond the church walls and into areas where others will not to bring change and hope, we are able to reach individuals and communities across the UK and Ireland regardless of the circumstances.

The *A Service to Remember at Home* Service was adapted from a model created by Alison Booker.



# YOUR NOTES

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