

My GriefShare Experience

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4

Losing a loved one is difficult to accept. During the winter of 2019-2020, a few months of each other, my beloved Sister and cherished Father died. The losses were overwhelming and sorrow ran deep. I find that loss can invoke so many emotional responses, on so many levels. Among them are feelings of sadness, anger, tiredness, anxiety, and loneliness. My joy was in joining the GriefShare Program at Friendship Baptist Church. This program presented an opportunity for individuals to express aloud, in a shared group setting, their thoughts, and feelings about their experiences with the loss of loved ones, no matter the timeline, nor moment in time. As a group, we laughed, sang, and prayed as we walked our memory journeys. At every session, we knew God was ever-present.

Thou will keep him in perfect peace those whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusted in thee. Isaiah 26:3.

The program consisted of 13 facilitated weekly sessions attended by supportive individuals. The group members voluntarily shared the challenges they were contending with. All of this was part of the healing process, because with trusted, shared openness; by remembering the joy and acknowledging the pain, we come to realize healing is happening. My feeling of being alone faded.

Components of the program included a showing of weekly grief-related videos with an associated workbook that was christ-centered. It included exercises, testimonials, and scripture to help address personal situations and guide emotional issues. There was a myriad of topics discussed, including *Challenges of Grief, Coping with Grief During the Holiday Season, Heaven, What Do I Live for Now?, What's Next?*

I am pleased to have been a member of Griefshare. No two people experience grief in the same way, but being in the group, talking with others who had similar experiences and struggles, was uplifting. Through sharing, coping strategies evolved that would be used in moving forward. For this, I am grateful.

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and hope." Jeremiah 29:11

Yours in Christ,

Betty J. Roberts, Ph.D