Living with grief script

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| ***Slide #*** | ***Text*** |
| Slide #1 | Health Week |
| Slide #2 | Disclaimer: The health information contained in this devotional is for general population use only, and must not be used to replace professional advice, guidance, or treatment. Where there is real concern and need for professional help or review, we strongly recommend contacting your primary care provider, general practitioner, or local mental health team. |
| Slide #3 | **Yearning for ‘Koinonia’**  **• Living With Grief**  **Pastor Felix Wadrobert**  **President, New Caledonia Mission** |
| Slide #4 | There are very few people, that have never experienced the death or loss of a beloved family member or friend, for death touches all – both believer and non-believer. But to those who know God, Jesus gives assurances of consolation when he declares, “Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted”. (Matthew 5:4, NIV). These words of comfort show that the Saviour is aware of and supportive of those afflicted. When death knocks at the door, or misfortune bursts into a family, God’s consolation is at hand. It was in demonstrating His power over death that the Lord desires to reveal His glory and supreme power. |
| Slide #5 | Though in Thessalonians, Paul reassures the Christians there that they need not mourn as others who “have no hope” (1 Thes 4:13) some have mistakenly taken that to mean that Christians should not grieve or mourn. But this is not Biblical as both the old and new testaments acknowledge the legitimacy of mourning and tears in times of loss. When Sarah passed away, the Bible says that Abraham went to Hebron “to mourn for Sarah and to weep over her.” (Gen 23:2 NIV) and in the New Testament, after the stoning of Stephen, “Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.” (Acts 8:2 NIV) |
| Slide #6 | According to Allan D Wolfeit, “Grief is what you think and feel on the inside after someone you love dies. Mourning is the outward expression of those thoughts and feelings. To mourn is (to be) an active participant in our grief journeys. We all grieve when someone we love dies, but if we are to heal, we must also mourn.” |
| Slide #7 | Lori Ciccarelli Stolko, a grief recovery specialist, very aptly comments: “Mourning is the action following grief that brings comfort, connecting us to others who are also mourning and bringing our past to the present. We can mourn through written, verbal, or physical activities, expressing ideas, thoughts and beliefs that help us transition from pain and chaos to wholeness and healing”, in her article ‘Mourning Through the Holidays’, Transforming Lives Advocacy (blog) 2017. |
| Slide #8 | The author continues by advising us to allow space in order to lend a sympathetic ear to those who are grieving. She believes this ‘provides a safe place’ for such people to express their feelings and sufferings. By so doing we imitate the example of Jesus who was a model of empathetic listening. She recommends: ‘‘Listen with your entire body, giving your undivided attention; turn off any distractions. Reflecting back what you heard without judgement or unsolicited advice, will validate feelings. Save advice for those who ask; most often, people just want to be heard and affirmed. This is healing to the soul’’. |
| Slide #9 | In the New Testament, the Greek word ‘koinonia’ is used, especially by Paul, in several different ways. All of the meanings are linked to the idea of connectedness and sense of belonging. It could be an intimate sharing, like communion in marriage, or a close association or fellowship. When we human beings experience suffering, we hanker after connectedness – the connectedness that is found in community. |
| Slide #10 | Churches, clubs, and charitable bodies may all provide the connectedness of community and thus serve to alleviate loneliness and isolation. Churches have the added advantage that they introduce a spiritual dimension to the communal spirit and thus provide a group of caring individuals and well-wishers who can help to alleviate pain and suffering, loneliness, and depression. |
| Slide #11 | “For they will be comforted” says Jesus; this is a certainty. God will comfort though the answer to the questions: when? where? how? lie with God. At times He may not bring solace very quickly to those who are grieving. |
| Slide #12 | It would be wise for those of us who support those who mourn to wait in a spirit of community of faith with the person who is mourning, for divine consolation and keep praying to Him to provide solace in His time. |
| Slide #13 | On the island of Maré, an island in the archipelago with New Caledonia, there are some traditional mourning rituals which illustrate just how important community and cultural expectations are in dealing with grief. |
| Slide #14 | When someone dies there, the first step is to communicate the news to the scattered family members throughout the Island. At this time, people don’t use the phone, because such a method would not be considered respectful of the dead. They would say: “We have a house, and this information should be communicated in our house.” |
| Slide #15 | Once the news is shared, families come to the house of the deceased person bringing with them food and financial support. You never come empty-handed in such circumstances. Whenever a family shows up, they perform a customary gesture and present the family with a piece of cloth and some money. This is the way we enter a house and the intimacy of a family. If we don’t do this gesture, we feel ill-at-ease, just as if we are entering into the house through the window. This gesture is followed by a short speech of gratitude by a member of the bereaved family. |
| Slide #16 | When the time comes for the religious ceremony and burial, a member of the bereaved family acknowledges the uncle of the dead person. (Bear in mind that this is a matriarchal regime in which blood ties matter a lot, just as they do in other places of the territory.) |
| Slide #17 | Traditionally, in our Melanesian world, a family always has ties with another family. This custom goes back to the dawn of time. While the body of the loved one is at the home, the family in mourning won’t associate and eat with the rest of the community. They will do so only after the deceased has been laid to rest. |
| Slide #18 | A week after the death, families will meet together to show customary respect to the maternal uncle. A meal is served for this last mourning ceremony. In other parts of the country, a light is kept burning for a year after the death and they end the bereavement period by extinguishing the light. Clearly, the symbolism and the rituals of mourning in Maré and the Loyalty Islands, is of paramount importance to the inhabitants and contributes to resolving the mourning process. Failure to stick meticulously to the rituals and customs of the Kanaky culture might affect the serenity of the families and individuals who have suffered loss. |
| Slide #19 | Through this example of how strong cultural ritual observance can ease the pain of grief, one may make assumptions about how one’s own cultural and traditional influences may aid or ease such pain. Where culture is more diffuse or indistinct, these resources may be absent, however, our cultural spring is the Bible which is rich in comforting passages for times of loss. |
| Slide #20 | We would like, before we bring these reflections to an end, to quote a comforting text from the Holy Scriptures. Let us remember apostle Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians“Let us not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding weight of glory, while we do not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporary but the things which are not seen are eternal. 1 Corinthians 4: 16-18 (New King James Version). |
| Slide #21 | Happy are those who mourn for they will not be forgotten and lost. Jesus always keeps His promises. We can safety rest upon the promise of the second Beatitude with absolute trust. |
| Slide #22 | **Discussion Topics**  **In small groups of 3-5 people, consider one of the following:**   1. **Pastor Felix has addressed the issue of grief after the death of a loved one, what other losses involve significant grief?** 2. **What cultural traditions around grief have you found useful when dealing with grief?** |
| Slide #23 | **Further Discussion Topics**   1. **What cultural traditions have not been useful or have caused grief to go ‘underground’ or be hidden?** 2. **From the book of Job, we get the expression, “Job’s comforter” when his friends tried in vain to comfort him with empty words.**   **Explore why their ‘comfort’ was not effective.** |
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