

# And Give You **PEACE**



Words of Comfort  
at a Time of Grief

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# Someone Hands You Something That Can Help You

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We were called rather suddenly to the hospital. My mother had seemed well enough the evening before. Considering she had terminal cancer. She was joking, and laughing, and enjoying my brother's 22nd birthday.

But during the night pneumonia had settled into her lungs, and we were called in to say our good-byes ... and to watch ... and to wait.

My father, who had arrived first, was clearly beside himself, but struggling to maintain some sense of composure. As I entered the room, he thrust a leaflet into my hands—something that must have been thrust into his hands only minutes before. "Here," he said. "Read this."

I didn't want to. What I wanted to do was ... I don't know ... look at my mother, further assess the situation, hold her hand ... pace.

But I could see from the desperation in my father's eyes that something in that little leaflet (maybe he didn't even know exactly what) had somehow helped him. He wanted it to help me, too.

And so I read it. A little leaflet from the hospital chaplain's office that tried to make some sense of the physical process of death.

Nothing sunk in. I couldn't understand why Dad was making me read it. I only knew that he, who always had something profound to say, was relying on what he had at hand.

What amazes me, now, more than a decade since that death, is how often my mind has turned back to the words in that little leaflet. They had seemed nearly worthless at the time. But they stuck. They grew, so to speak. They were profound words rooted in faith and hope. And I have grown to appreciate them nearly as much as I appreciate the intention with which they were given to me.

Which is my way of saying, when someone hands you something that can help you (even, perhaps, this little leaflet or something like it ... or a casserole ... or a hug), take it.

# Like Being In A Fog

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As he closed the book in which he had been taking notes, the funeral director said, “You may not realize it, but you have just made about two dozen major decisions.”

Major, perhaps ... but when a loved one dies, so many things happen at once (or in rapid succession) that I feel as though I am just going through the motions ... or watching myself in slow motion (or is it fast forward?).

The phone calls, the arrangements, the visitation, the funeral, the stream of well-wishers, the gifts of baked goods and casseroles, the floral tributes. There are kindnesses to be acknowledged, legal matters to deal with, forms to fill out ...

And a feeling that I am kind of wandering aimlessly through it all ... alone.

But not alone. Family and friends have been here, even if they seem distant or I perceive them to be unable to understand. The pastor ... a doctor ... a lawyer ... a trusted friend or associate—shadowy figures they may seem at times, but people are there to walk me through these foggy times, often to lead me through the daze.

And my Lord is there working through them, I know, using them, sending them to me, giving them to me out of his treasury of loving gifts.

Our Lord’s disciples went through foggy times, too—shortened, of course, by the immediacy of his resurrection. That immediacy may be another gift from the Lord, a hastened preview of the gift (for which he died and rose) that waits for me as well, and the one whom I love ... even in this fog.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

—*Psalm 46:1*

# The Obituary Isn't Enough

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## **Nineteen Lines**

To sum up 29 years.  
Your parents' names  
and the fact that you  
were loved by your  
brother and sisters  
and their children.  
Three grandparents  
even made the list.  
Hardly room for a long  
out-of-touch friend  
whose picture was in  
your wallet the day  
you died. A picture  
that awoke volumes of  
a life which nineteen  
lines couldn't begin to  
retell. The last three  
lines gave directions  
to the funeral home.

Can a woman forget her nursing child,  
or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may  
forget, yet ***I will not forget you.***

—Isaiah 49:15

# You Realize It's Over

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After all that flurry of activity, suddenly it's all over. The guests have left, the flowers have wilted, the food is gone. Now I have to pick up and get back to normal. As if life can ever be "normal" again.

It may take several weeks to realize that THIS is normal. This is the way it's going to be from now on. My loved one is not coming back, this side of eternity.

And I can live with that. I have no other choice, of course. But in the midst of my grieving I said, "... this side of eternity." And because Jesus went through death like this—went *through* it!—God gives me the confidence that I will, too, along with the one for whom I grieve.

Eternity is a long time to be together again!

O save your people, and bless your heritage;  
be their shepherd, and carry them *forever*.

—*Psalms 28:9*

Creative  
Communications  
Sample

# And Give You PEACE

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## Words of Comfort at a Time of Grief

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The devotions and prayers in this small booklet are not to be read straight through...or even daily. They are TOPICAL, and are to be read at the very specific times when they are the most appropriate: when the family feels like a loved one is really gone for good, or when the holidays leave one especially lonely, or when the funeral food is all eaten, or after the first genuine laugh following the death.

Born from personal experience and expressing genuine faith, this book reverberates with the assurance of God's enduring presence when it is needed most. Appropriate for teens through adults, for those grieving the loss of spouses, family members and friends.

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