

## **Grief and Loss**

The death of a loved one is life's great trauma that shakes the ground beneath us, forever altering the landscape of the familiar. As Christians, we are not immune from death's sting. The hole in our heart that the loss carves is common to all humanity. Walking through that "valley of the shadow of death," we can expect to encounter the stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, sorrow and acceptance; as documented by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

I joined the ranks of the bereaved seven years ago when my husband of thirty plus years died suddenly. Following his internment, my older brother suggested that I read the Book of Job, one chapter a day. That daily reading recounting Job's relationship with God after his devastating losses along with the Christian meditations in the book, **Grieving the Loss of Someone You Love**, was strengthening and life affirming.

As Christians, when death comes, we turn at some point to the author of our faith and remember His promises. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 reminds us that "there is a time for everything, a time to be born and a time to die." The prophet Jeremiah tells us of God's promise to "turn their mourning into gladness; to give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow." Jesus himself said, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Paul writes, "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope." And the Apostle John's words in Revelation 21 offer great comfort: "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain..."

If you are struggling with grief and need to speak with someone, please email [care@cascadeumc.org](mailto:care@cascadeumc.org). If you are feeling anxious and need to share your thoughts immediately, contact the church office at (404) 691-5770 during office hours. After 6:00 p.m. and on weekends, contact our on-call Pastor at (404) 313-4225.

Most importantly, stay rooted in God's word.