

Coping With Your Grief At The Holiday Season©
Twenty Five Positive Reminders During the Holidays©
Grief Care Fellowship©

Planning your holiday season will assist in reducing your level of stress. Having some plan is better than no plan at all. You cannot ignore the holidays; they are just as real as your grief and they are going to happen. You cannot wish them away, you cannot sleep them away and you cannot ignore them. The following is a brief overview of some of the thoughts we shared in our "Grieving Through The Holiday Seminar."

First and foremost Christmas is a reminder of our Lord's love and grace

Make time to attend spiritual holiday activities

Maintain a journal of God's blessings at this season

Realize your holidays will never be the same, they will be difficult

Expect your emotional grief to become more amplified at this time

It is okay to feel sad and miss your loved one

Decide ahead of time where to spend the holidays, have a plan

Communicate ahead of time with family/friends you plan to be with

Remember that other family and friends may be grieving also

Be honest in telling others what you do or do not want to do

Allow others to minister to you - and you to them

Remember that it is okay to seek professional counseling

Journal your holiday thoughts, ideas, wishes and events

Don't feel guilty if you feel like you need to leave a festivity

Have some form of plan so if need be you can excuse yourself from the activity

Be sensitive to your own feelings of "holiday overload", eliminate some activities

Do not allow others to tell you how to spend your holidays

Determine what traditions you want to keep, what to change, develop new traditions

The holidays can be hectic, especially in your grief, allow yourself "quiet times"

When you need help ask for it and accept it - friends want to help you at this time

Remember that in your grief, you may forget things, so make a list

If you do not feel comfortable at attending an event - skip it

Enjoy yourself as much as possible. It will be tough, but holidays express joy

Being happy does not mean you do not miss your loved one - it expresses that love

Being happy does not diminish the memories of your loved one

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Twenty Five Positive Activities During The Holidays© Grief Care Fellowship©

Keep yourself in the Word of God for comfort and encouragement

Maintain your daily quiet time - allow the Lord to minister to you

Plan to attend some church holiday musicals and special programs

Keep a journal of “special blessings” during the holidays from the Lord

For a special blessing write out something you are thankful for every day

Design a “memory box” of your loved one’s favorite holiday items

Make or purchase a “memory item” and place it in the memory box

Design or purchase a special memory holiday ornament

Plan a special donation to an organization your loved one supported

Use the monies you would have spent to buy gifts for a children’s charity

Purchase a special gift in your loved one’s name and give it to a charity

If you have not done anything with your loved ones personal possessions:

Give them to someone who liked and will appreciate that item

Enclose a note that shares your loved one’s appreciation for them

Give clothing to a homeless shelter, men’s or women’s shelter

There are organizations that can help you make something new out of personal items, such as quilts, bed covers, and other memorial items

Try to send holiday greeting cards, and special notes for special friends

Make a special “Christmas Memorial” of some of your loved one’s personal items

Reach out and be with other grievers - encouragement and comfort becomes mutual

If you become discouraged, seek professional counseling

Do not feel guilty if you minimize holiday decorations

Volunteer with a non-profit in your loved one's memory

Be sensitive that holiday "goodies" can affect your emotions - enjoy wisely

If you are stressed out at the mall, don't stay - consider on-line shopping

It will be okay to "splurge" on something special for yourself

Donate special holiday flowers in memory of your loved one to other organizations

Reach out to friends you have not connected with in years

Remember it is okay to recall fond memories even if it means you cry again

Finally, recall fond memories, develop new traditions, remain close to the Lord