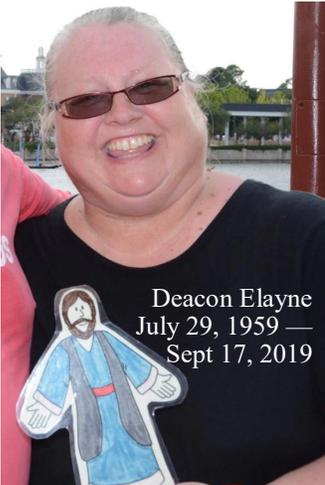


Dear Faith Shapers,

We have very sad news to share. Our beloved friend, Deacon Elayne Werges, has lost her battle with cancer. Elayne died on September 17th. Elayne was a frequent writer of this newsletter and a valued member of the Home Life team. Elayne was an amazing wife, mother, grandmother, faith shaper, and friend. Elayne was the best storyteller and was passionate about equipping others to love and serve God. Elayne had the best laugh and always had a creative idea up her sleeve. We will miss her terribly. In 2016, Elayne wrote about having cancer in an edition of the Living Faith @ Home newsletter. We thought we would follow her lead and write



Deacon Elayne
July 29, 1959 —
Sept 17, 2019

about grief as we are grieving the loss of our dear friend and partner in ministry.

Holding you in prayer,
The Home Life Team



Death can be a complicated subject. It's a topic that can make people feel uncomfortable. It's easy to tell ourselves that kids won't understand what's happening when a loved one is dead or dying. The truth is even very young children know there is something wrong in their world. Pretending it is not happening will only make a child feel more unsure or upset. Here's some helpful tips to talk with kids about grief, death & dying.

- Tell the Truth. Speak openly and honestly.
- Use simple words and use the words "death" and "died" to talk about your loss (euphemisms can cause misunderstandings, anxiety or distress).
- Be prepared to answer kids questions about death.
- Tell children what to expect before you take them to the hospital, a visitation, or funeral.
- Let children see you grieving and being emotional. It shows them that grief is normal and it's ok to feel sad, upset or mad.
- Let kids know that everyone grieves differently and that grief may last for a long while.
- Provide support and reassurance. Let kids know they are not to blame and that you will be here for them.
- Remember your loved one. Show photographs, visit graves, tell stories about the person who died. Don't avoid mentioning the person they lost or talking about her/him.
- Grief comes in waves so be prepared to have many conversations.
- Remember holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, special traditions, school projects, or other milestone events can be difficult.

This information is prepared for you by the
Northwestern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network
for use by families and local congregations.

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Our page is [Northwestern Iowa Synod Home Life Network ELCA](#)

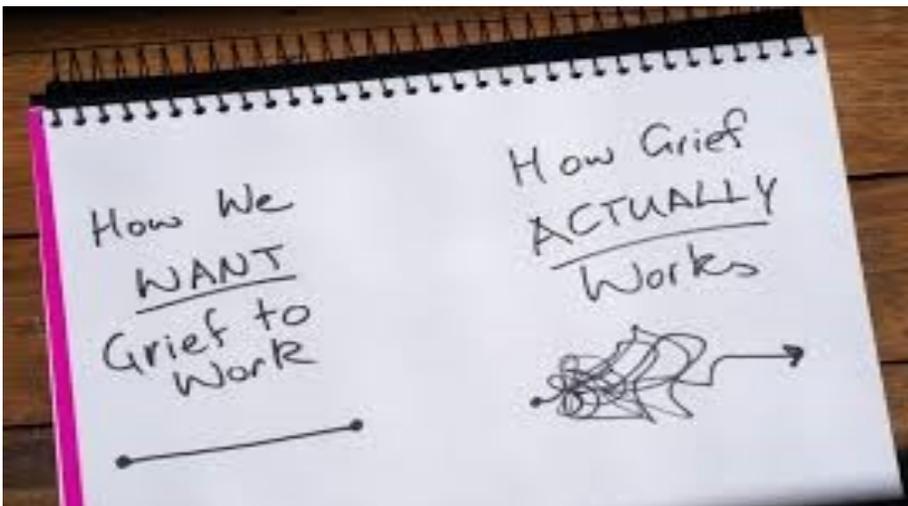


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What to do we say to those who are grieving?

Not Helpful & Helpful

- I know just what you are going through.
- This is hard, but try to focus on the good memories or good things in life.
- At least he/she is no longer in pain.
- You must be feeling angry.
- God needed person's name
- Let me know what I can do to help
- Can you tell me more about what this has been like for you?
- What kinds of memories do you have about the person who died?
- What sorts of things have you been thinking about since your loved one died?
- What has this been like for you?
- I am not sure what to say, but I want you to know I care and I am here
- Call and offer to help in specific ways



20 Ways to Really Help Those Who Are Grieving

1. Show up
2. Call, text, send a message
3. Listen
4. Give a hug, say I love you
5. Ask them about their grief
6. Don't explain their feelings away (such as God needed person's name)
7. Look for a need and do it (don't wait for them to ask you to do something)
8. Say the deceased person's name
9. Share memories
10. Don't say you know how he/she feels or talk about your experiences
11. It's ok to be silent. (We can't fix the pain, but we can sit with those who grieve)
12. Send pictures of the deceased
13. Make a meal
14. Keep inviting them on outings even if they decline
15. Pray
16. Lend your expertise (gardening, lawn mowing, laundry, meals, etc.)
17. Give books about grief
18. Remember special days. Send notes or make calls on the difficult firsts (birthdays, holidays, anniversaries)
19. Invite them to your home
20. Don't assume they are all better. (Grief lasts forever. You will need to adjust to a new normal and learn to live with grief)