



## **UNDERSTANDING MOURNING - A CHILD HAS DIED**

Grief is not understood in our society and mourners are expected to recover quickly. Be gentle with yourself during the many ups and downs.

Alcohol and sedatives can cloud thinking and slow down the bereavement process. Use prescribed medications sparingly and only under supervision.

Friends and relatives may avoid you and talking of the death of your child. Let them know you need to talk about the baby and that it helps to talk. Share with them as you can.

Search for listening friends and/or others with a similar experience to help you through this time.

Delay major decisions at least a year - changing jobs or home, another pregnancy, etc.

Keep the baby's clothes and other mementos until you are ready to decide what you want to do. Time is needed in making a good decision about these things.

Suicidal thoughts may occur and are normal. The meaning in life will return in time. The pain does lessen. Talk over feelings with a trusted friend as they surface.

Express your feelings and thoughts. They may be illogical to some, so share them with a listening person who will help you explore and to forgive yourself in time.

Anger is a common and normal response perhaps unacceptable to you and difficult for others to witness. Find healthy and safe ways to express anger. (ie: beat a pillow)

Your anger may be directed toward God. You may feel that your faith has weakened as you question past strong beliefs. Tell God how you feel and talk to those who can help you explore. Your faith can help you through this time, yet expressing doubts and feelings aids in processing what you are experiencing.

Include the other children in your grief. Do not hide your tears from them, but be open and honest about your own feelings. They too, are grieving and need an avenue to express their feelings. They need to be included and to feel your love. You may find it helpful to find a close family member who can supply what you are not able to give at this time.

Holiday and anniversary times are reminders of your empty arms. Plan ahead to avoid some of the added stress. Do not expect others to remember to be sensitive to how you might feel. Lower expectations of yourself. Take time for your needs.

Mutual - help groups put you in touch with others having a similar experience, by sharing, deeper feelings will surface and can then be processed in an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance. Know that you are not alone. There are others who understand and who care.