

HOW TO RELY ON YOUR FAITH WHILE GRIEVING

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Grieving can be an opportunity for healing and spiritual development. Many people become angry because their belief system did not stop the person they loved from dying. Instead of rejecting your faith throughout your loss, let it help you by giving you a supportive community and a place to voice your anger. Learn how to rely on your religion following your loss.



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1. **Notify someone in charge:** Contact the leader of your faith as soon as possible. Religious leaders usually are trained to help individuals and family cope with the immediate loss. Let them help you plan the funeral or memorial service.
2. **Following the death:** Most faith systems have a method of supporting the bereaved. People in your faith community might want to help answer the phone, bring in food, host the meal after the funeral/memorial service or sit with you as you grieve. Let those in your place of worship know how they can help you the most.
3. **Go to services:** Keep going to religious services. If you have not been attending services now might be a good time to start. Being with a group of people who believe the same thing you do can be very supportive.
4. **Join a grief support group:** Many religions offer support groups through the place of worship. You will not be the only person in your congregation that is grieving. See if there is a grieving support group you can join. If there is not one, talk to the leader of your faith about starting a group.
5. **Set up a special memorial:** Some faiths have places to put up a special memorial for people who have died. Ask to see if such an opportunity is available.
6. **Give flowers:** During the holidays many faiths have the tradition of having flowers provided in the name of people who have died. It gives a way to remember a loved one, to let other people know their memory exists and enhances the religious holiday at the same time.
7. **Have people pray for you:** Many religions have a system where people can ask to be included in prayers. This may take the form of a prayer basket or a call-in number. If your faith does not have a prayer system there are many national prayer lines you can call and be placed on their prayer lists.
8. **Look for religious retreats:** Your faith may offer religious retreats to help specifically with grieving issues. Also, consider hosting an evening where a guest speaker comes in to discuss grief.
9. **Participate in rituals:** Rituals can be comforting during times of grief. Take part in rituals offered through your faith community. One of these rituals might be a candlelight service during holidays. Remember, only participate in the rituals that mean something to you.
10. **Pray:** Set aside quiet time in your day when you have some quiet. Focus on yourself. Take the time to pray or read passages from your faith literature that hold special meaning to you.