



IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP?

Yes, there is much that you can do to help. Simple things. The following suggests the kinds of attitudes, words, and acts, which are truly helpful.

The importance of such help can hardly be overstated. Bereavement can be a life-threatening condition, and your support may make a vital difference in the mourner's eventual recovery.

Perhaps you do not feel qualified to help. You may feel uncomfortable and awkward. Such feelings are normal – don't let them keep you away. If you really care for your sorrowing friend or relative, if you can enter a little into his or her grief, you are qualified to help.

In fact, the simple communication of the feeling of caring is probably the most important and helpful thing anyone can do. The following suggestions will guide you in communicating that care.

- **Get in touch.** Telephone. Speak either to the mourner or to someone close and ask when you can visit and how you might help. Even if much time has passed, it's never too late to express your concern.
- **Say little on an early visit.** In the initial period (before burial), your brief embrace, your press of the hand, your few words of affection and feeling may be all that is needed.
- **Avoid clichés and easy answers,** "He is out of pain" and "Aren't you lucky that..." are not likely to help. A simple "I'm sorry" is better.
- **Be yourself.** Show your natural concern and sorrow in your own way and in your own words.
- **Keep in touch.** Be available. Be there. If you are a close friend or relative, your presence might be needed from the beginning. Later, when close family may be less available, anyone's visit and phone call can be very helpful.