Resources for Ministry in the Valley of the Shadow of Death

Carenotes, from AbbeyPress, www.onecaringplace.com, 800-325-2511 Attractive, thoughtful booklets on a wide variety of topics are available for individual or bulk purchase and in packages related to such topics as “End of Life/Hospice” and “Grief & Loss.” Individual titles include “Understanding a Child’s Grief,” “Grieving the Loss of Your Parent,” and many more.

Don’t Ask for the Dead Man’s Golf Clubs: What to Do and Say (And What Not to) When a Friend Loses a Loved One by Lynn Kelly (Workman Publishing Company, Inc., NY, 2000) Drawing on her own experience of being widowed at a young age and combining it with the words of survivors who have lost mothers and children, husbands, grandparents, and siblings, Lynn Kelly offers a simple but profound little book of advice. There are four sections: What to Do Now, What to Do Over Time, What Not to Do, and the particularly difficult situations of Suicide, Stillbirth, and Miscarriage. The advice is practical, heartfelt, direct, insightful. Let your friend know how you feel. Express sympathy to all the family members. Talk about the dead person and don’t be afraid to say his or her name. Write a fond memory or send a picture. Bring food. Listen. Record a new phone message. Remember holidays. Keep giving hugs. And never criticize arrangements, assume that it’s a blessing, compare to the loss of a pet, say “I know how you feel,” or do something without asking. And don't ever, ever ask for the dead man's golf clubs - as some people actually do. (Based on Amazon review)

Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying by Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley (New York: Bantam Books, 1992). The authors share stories and insights from their years of caring for terminally ill patients. They help the caregiver understand his or her own feelings and needs and communicate more effectively with the dying person so as to transform dying - and even death itself - into a peaceful and deeply meaningful experience.

Final Journeys: A Practical Guide for Bringing Care and Comfort at the End of Life by Maggie Callanan (New York: Bantam Books, 2008). Sharing true stories from her experiences as a hospice nurse, the author provides a thorough guide to understanding the special needs of the dying, their loved ones, and their caretakers. With gentle wisdom she addresses such issues as dealing with denial, choosing treatment or palliative care, understanding the physical symptoms of terminal illness and dying, honoring individual coping styles, and addressing spiritual needs. This is an excellent resource for those who want to be present with the dying in the most helpful way possible.

Healing after Loss: Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief by Martha Whitmore Hickman (Avon Books, 1994). The author offers short comforting and encouraging meditations, that have proved helpful to people who have lost a child, parents, grandparents, and others. The daily selections offer quick, meaningful reads full of insight, hope, and understanding. Readers can work through the pages in order or skip around to find what they need at a given time.

Mrs. Hunter’s Happy Death: Lessons on Living from People Preparing to Die by John Fanestil (New York: Doubleday, 2006). The author, inspired by reading accounts of the “ritual of happy dying” and by witnessing people approach death with grace and uplifted spirits, discusses the
spiritual practices – prayer, reflection, caring for others, and more – that seem to help make such an experience possible.

*I Wasn’t Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One* by Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair, Ph.D. (Sourcebooks, 2008). The authors explore the experience of sudden death and offers wisdom for those grieving the sudden loss of a loved one, addressing such difficult topics as the first few weeks, suicide, death of a child, children and grief, funerals and rituals, physical effects, homicide, depression, male and female grieving styles, religion and faith, myths and misunderstandings. New material in this most recent edition covers the unique circumstances of loss, men’s and women's grieving styles, religion and faith, myths and misunderstandings.

*Tear Soup* by Pat Schweibert and Chuck DeKlyen, illustrated by Taylor Bills (Portland, Oregon: Griefwatch, 2005). This beautifully illustrated children’s book for age 8 and up portrays the grieving process, using the metaphor of tear soup as a way “…to sort through all the different types of feelings and memories you have when you lose someone or something special.” In the story, Grandy, who has suffered a great loss, knows that she must deal with her feelings, memories, and tears in order to heal. Some friends help her just by listening and caring, while others increase her suffering by telling her what she should feel and do. Near the end of the story, she explains to her grandson why making “tear soup” is so important, affirming that “…there is something down deep within all of us ready to help us survive the things we think we can’t survive.” Following the story, several pages provide succinct advice on self-care while grieving and on caring for others mourning a loss. Finally, you will find a list of websites and organizations providing support and resources for various kinds of loss.

*To Begin Again: The Journey Toward Comfort, Strength, and Faith in Difficult Times* by Naomi Levy (Ballentine Books, 1999). The senseless murder of her father when she was just fifteen shattered the author’s faith. In time, she fought her way through the darkness to conquer her pain. Weaving together her own experiences and stories of her congregants with the teachings of great sages, she offers simple lessons and prayers for those who struggle with pain and seek to live joyfully again. (Based on Amazon review)

*When a Loved one Dies – Helping Children & Youth Cope With Death* Leaflet compiled by MaryJane Pierce Norton, retired Associate General Secretary, Discipleship Ministries, and Chris Wilterdink, Director, Young People’s Ministries Development, Discipleship Ministries

[www.thegrieftoolbox.com](http://www.thegrieftoolbox.com) - This website offers articles, healing activities, and guidance for support groups that be registered – and found – online. The accompanying Facebook page sends regular posts of encouragement and inspiration to your Facebook newsfeed. You can also sign up for email messages, e-newsletters, and Twitter; watch videos, participate in discussions, share poetry and artwork, and purchase books, mementos, and curriculum materials for group use.

Curriculum Resources for Ministry in the Valley of the Shadow of Death

*Living Fully, Dying Well* by Rueben Job (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006) This eight-session study for small groups includes a book for the leader, a participant’s book, and a DVD with eight approximately 10-minute video presentations and three additional stand-alone lessons -
accessible by computer with a DVD-rom drive - for adults and teens. Each chapter of the leader’s book contains, in addition to the content of the participant’s book, Scripture, prayers, discussion questions, and a summary of the video presentation. Chapter titles are as follows: “Living Fully,” “Theology of Aging,” “Our Culture’s View of Again,” “Finding Purpose and Meaning in Life,” “Getting it All Together,” “Dying Well,” “What Happens When We Die,” and “How Then Shall We Live?” The three additional lessons on the DVD are “Dying Well” and “Living and Dying” for adults and a “Reel to Real” youth lesson based on the film “My Life.”

Stephen Ministry, https://www.stephenministries.org Stephen Ministry is a one-to-one lay caring ministry that takes place in congregations that use the Stephen Series system, which includes specific training and resources. Stephen Ministers provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people going through tough times, usually meeting with one person at a time for an hour or so weekly and participating in sessions with a Stephen Leader for supervision and ongoing training. Visit the website to learn more or go to http://www.stephenministries.org/begin or call 314-428-2600 for information on how to get started.

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