

## Grief

There are so many forms of grief and so many ways to grieve. My husband of 63 years left me 2 years ago this week. I was thinking about this and how my grief has progressed. There is an empty spot in my life. I am sitting in the same spot I was in 2 years ago, at the desk in the spare room with my back to him listening to his final breaths. When that last breath came, I turned and waited for another one, but none came. He was just gone, as quietly out of my life as he had come into my life and had been leaving me a little at a time for a few years. A young man who carried my books and made me laugh. There were many days in those last days and months that he did not remember me as his wife but would ask me about school. I had learned to accept where he was on each day. Grief takes many forms and sometimes catches us when we least expect it. My brother died when I was 12 and he was 17. He had been my mentor, my confidant, my hero and my brother. When he died it was as if all my props were taken away from me and I have found I still grieve for him. One day, not long ago, I was driving home and thought of Bill. I thought about how blessed I had been and all the things I had experienced that he had never had. He never knew love, marriage, children, grandchildren, the joys and trials of a long life. I began to cry, not just a few tears but the way I wept at his funeral, and I had to pull off the road. Our grief for loved ones does not end at any specified time. There is no book on grief that can describe and define your grief, but they will tell you that your grief is just that, your grief. It has taken me 75 years to come to a place where I can stop asking God why he took my brother so soon and instead thank him for the short 12 years I had his physical presence in my life and for the influence he had on my life. My husband and I knew each other for 70 years and I am grateful for that and for the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren that came from our marriage. Over the years, my mother, my oldest brother, my sister-in-law and my father have all left me and there is no one who remembers me when I was young. But God remembers me and why he chose to give an infant who weighed 3 pounds and had Ricketts and Malnutrition such a long life I don't know but he did, and I hope and pray he knows how grateful I am.

Lamentations 3:19-23 I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him."

Lord, we thank you for this day and for the love you have shown us through those in our lives. We thank you for those lives that so influenced who we were and who we become. Be with those who are suffering the horror and ravage of war, especially in Ukraine. Be with those who grieve and those who are suffering illness and despair. May we be your light in their lives. Be with our church may we each be the church. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and bless his family. Be with our staff and leaders, guide and uphold them. Be with those who are suffering loss in Gaylord. Lead us Lord and help us to be the church, your church. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in all things. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson