

SELF CARE FOR WIDOWS & WIDOWERS

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It is so important to take care of yourself when you are grieving. If you don't take care of yourself, you will not be able to take care of much else. Setting a self care plan in place can help you to feel like you have some order to your day. I recommend creating a plan on how you will take care of yourself, and stick to it as best as possible. In the meanwhile, please consider the following:

- Laughter can be soothing to the soul, even if it ends in tears. When at first you may feel a sense of guilt for laughing, know that that is "normal". Also, know that you are not dishonoring your loved one with being able to laugh. Watching a good comedy is a good way to pass some time!
- Try not to feel guilty for laughing! It is not uncommon to feel conflicting emotions at one time.
- It can be helpful to remember that joy is a part of the human experience, just as sadness and pain is. It's okay to feel joy, even if it's just for short moments at first. Joy and pain can and do coexist. It's a matter of becoming comfortable with that and allowing yourself to experience the simple joys in life.
- Allow yourself to find peace and joy, even in small things like being grateful that you put one foot in front of the other and got out of bed for the day.
- Spend time with the people who care about you and provide the time a space to share your day to day struggles and experiences of grief, with no judgement or unnecessary advice.
- Consider connecting with other widowed people within your church community, through a community support group or in online grief groups; the shared experiences can provide comfort. Attend a Widowed Grief Support Group. Being with others who speak your loss language can be helpful. When you hear stories about other widows and how they experience their grief, it can help you to feel less alone.
- Self care is not selfish!