

Rick Warren Offers Heartfelt Advice for Supporting Grieving Friends

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15 MEV).

The interesting thing about pain and joy is that whenever you share a joy, it gets doubled. But it's the opposite with pain. When you share a pain, it's halved. When your friends are going through a crisis, they need you to help carry the load and lessen the pain.

When I'm talking about sharing the pain with your friends, I'm not talking about sympathy. Sympathy says, “I'm sorry you hurt.” People don't need your sympathy. They need your empathy. Empathy says, “I hurt *with* you.” Sympathy stands at a distance. Empathy draws close.

The ultimate form of love is compassion. Compassion says, “I'll do anything I can to stop your hurt.” When you read the Bible, you'll find that Jesus was repeatedly moved with compassion. He was willing to do whatever he could to stop others' hurt, including going to the cross. He was willing to die to stop your hurt. That's compassion.

The Bible says in Romans 12:15, “*Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep*” (MEV). That means cry with them. Weep with those who weep.

What do friends do? They show up. They share the pain, and they shut up. They don't give pious platitudes. They don't give advice. They don't try to talk a friend out of his pain. They don't say, “It's going to be OK.” They just say, “We're going to sit here with you. We're going to be here for you. We're going to hurt with you.” {eoa}

Rick Warren wrote the New York Times best-seller *The Purpose Driven Life*. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also founder of [The Purpose Driven Church](#), a global Internet community for pastors.

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