

Why This One Simple Thing May Be Your Best Gift for a Hurting Friend

Our world is facing a collection of multiplied trials. Through the coronavirus pandemic, we've lost much of what makes our world normal. Many have lost jobs. Homes. Friends. Family members.

But Pastor Patrick Schwenk says that although believers may not have 1-2-3 answers for these and other problems, we have much more to offer. Diagnosed with a blood cancer at age 43, he faced what often seemed like the worst of life's storms. But, as he and his wife, Ruth, share in their new book *In a Boat in the Middle of a Lake*, God met them in their storm and offered them His best.

As a young pastor, Schwenk says, "I had an older, wiser pastor tell me, 'Hey, when you show up, it's not just Pat Schwenk showing up, you know.' And what he meant by that is that when you show up because you're a follower of Jesus, and you have the Holy Spirit who lives inside of you ... the Holy Spirit God Himself is present with you; the Comforter is present with you when you show up.

"And I think that, that remembering that, that when a friend comes or when you go as a friend to be present with somebody, God is with you," Schwenk says. "And God is the one who comforts, and He's there by virtue of His presence. He lives inside of us and dwells with us and among us ... we never go alone into those situations."

And that simple gift of presence, Schwenk says, speaks more loudly than words. One man who was a part of their church heard him share a prayer request before his first bone marrow biopsy. The day of the test, Schwenk went up to his

specialist's office on the second floor of the University of Michigan Cancer Center, walked off the elevator, "and there was my friend, my brother in Christ. ... And he didn't say anything, necessarily," Schwenk says. "That was profound, in those 30 minutes while we were waiting together for the doctor to call me back. But he was just with me. And just his presence was enough for me, like I just needed somebody to be to be with me and to be present with me.

"There were things he did say, and he prayed with me before I went back," Schwenk says. "But more than anything, what was most significant was just his presence with me. He just showed up."

To hear more of Patrick Schwenk's story and how you can count on God to meet you in your "boat in the middle of a lake," [click here](#) to listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}