

You Might Be Ignoring One of God's Greatest Tools to Heal Your Hurts

"Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God" (Hebrews 12:15a, NLT).

When you're going through a season of loss, you need not only the support of other people, you also need the perspective of other people. When you experience loss, you don't see the whole picture. Your pain narrows your focus, and you need people to help you see the big picture. We need each other desperately in a season of loss.

After you release your grief, it's time to let other people minister to you. Let them help. Let them comfort. Let them offer suggestions. Let them sit with you and grieve with you. And don't be embarrassed about it! That is one of the reasons God created the church. We are a family, and we are to care for each other.

You need to get involved in a small group and get into ministry so those relational bridges will be in place before the inevitable time of loss comes.

Years ago, when our church was much smaller, a family attended Saddleback for five years. They never joined the church or took a membership class or got into a small group or found a ministry to serve in.

In the fifth year of their attendance, the man was opened up in surgery, and doctors discovered he was being eaten alive by cancer. They called the office and said, "Can Pastor Rick come visit us?"

I was often out of town, ministering somewhere. I called them

back and said, “I can’t be there, but tell me the name of your lay pastor and who’s in your small group. Tell me what ministry you’re a part of. Name anybody in the church that you know, because I’ll contact them, and I’m sure they will be there in an instant to give you comfort, pray with you, encourage you, provide meals—whatever you need.” Although they had attended for five years, they couldn’t name a single person in the church.

He later got out of the hospital, and they left the church, saying, “This church doesn’t care for us.” But they could’ve built those bridges and connections and friendships! All the opportunities had been there to develop relationships so the foundation would be in place when crisis came.

Hebrews 12:15a says, “Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God” (NLT). To make it through a season of loss, we need God’s people to help us.

Talk It Over

- Why is it often hard for many of us to receive grace and gifts from others?
- What is the best way to approach someone who has experienced a loss so that you can offer help?
- Think through some practical steps you can take to become more connected to your church or small group. Which step will you take today? {eo}

Rick Warren is the founding pastor of Saddleback Church. His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, was named one of the 100 Christian books that changed the 20th century. He is also founder of , a global internet community for pastors.

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