



ST AGNES  
LONGSIGHT

# Pastoral Care & Nurture: Bereavement

## 3. Recovery from Bereavement

Loss can lead to growth if it is dealt with properly. The process of coming to terms with loss is called grief and it has three aspects to understand.

### 1. Social Aspect of Grief

- we are all affected by people's grief – even if via a photograph or TV picture
- the grieving person affects others (awkward, embarrassed, inadequate)
- even the best of relationships might seem difficult or changed
- people often avoid contact – leading to isolation

### 2. Physical Aspect of Grief

- Bodies react in different ways: sweaty palms, migraine, stomach pain... 'I'm falling apart'
- Important to express grief openly so as not to strain the body/physical symptoms

### 3. Psychological Aspect of Grief

There are 5 stages of grief. These stages:

- are not neat and tidy
- may not make sense to the bereaved person
- may take years
- may begin even before death, when we hear that someone is dying

#### STAGE 1: Denial

shock, not sunk in, can't believe it, using present tense as if person is still alive

#### STAGE 2: Anger

'why me?' anger at fate, anger at God, the system, doctors...

#### STAGE 3: Bargaining

looking for a way out, 'if God gets me out of this then I will...'

#### STAGE 4: Depression

what could have been, regrets, hopelessness, reality setting in, 'nothing to live for'

#### STAGE 5: Acceptance

ability to let go of the loved one

It's natural to go through these stages, but getting 'stuck' for too long in one of the stages is not healthy especially if it is years later. Professional help may be needed then.