



Pastoral Care & Nurture

Towards a parish bereavement support programme – notes from discussions

January 2007

Nurture: Funerals & Bereavement

To start the discussion on this topic the following points were raised for further thought next time:

- different contact with church over funerals (i.e. some are parishioners others are just those who use the services of the church but are not regular worshippers)
- different levels of support needed by different people
- there is already a group of people visiting bereaved congregation members informally
- need training on how to meet and deal with strangers
- should offer help to those who want/request it
- loneliness support
- people may look to church for help
- cards to let people know they are not alone and they are being prayed for
- easier for those who belong to church
- difficult to meet people and/or go out when newly bereaved
- group meetings may provide comfort or support
- ask people if they would like a visit
- safety / confidentiality issues for parishioners and visitors

Ask other bereavement supporters to help us in this: possibly St Cross Clayton?

March 2007

Nurture: Funerals & Bereavement

Following on from the discussion at the last meeting it was clear that bereavement care falls in to two sections: the meeting with individuals in their own home before and after the funeral and also a support type group held in church, hall or rectory to which people could be invited.

This group needs/should provide:

- trained facilitators/leaders
- tea, coffee, informal atmosphere
- have input/talk on a topic such as loneliness, forgiveness, anxiety etc
- have opportunity for prayer
- safe place for questioning and discussion
- place of reassurance and comfort
- place where listening is important
- not too 'churchy' or pushy

May 2007

Nurture: Funerals & Bereavement

Another discussion about bereavement issues proved to be very helpful. The theme that comes up again and again is that of loneliness. Often people just want someone to listen to them.

There was concern that even though we could set up a bereavement 'group' non-church people might feel uncomfortable in attending something where they didn't know people. And with only 15 funerals a year (during 2006) we do not have enough numbers to ensure a group would be well attended.

The group felt that we should offer bereaved people a chance to talk to someone. Then if they did want to talk, two members of this group could visit with Fr Stephen introducing them. To help us prepare we will spend some time during the next couple of meetings working on some issues around death, bereavement and faith in order to train ourselves up. We will also try to involve more interested people in this project. *(Following this the group followed a course on death, bereavement and pastoral care.)*