



On The Home Front Q&A

“How Can I Help A Friend Who’s Had A Miscarriage?”

By Jennifer M. Brown



Illustration by Lisa Freeman/Matthew Wawiora/SIS

Heart pounding, I turned into Janet’s drive, wondering if she’d think me foolish for coming. After all, I didn’t know her very well. She appeared so intellectual, organized, and generally “together” that I feared she wouldn’t need, and might not want, my sympathy. But Janet had miscarried, and I understood her pain. I knew that “the God of all comfort” expected us to “comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Cor. 1:3–4). His love had sustained me while I grieved for the three children I had lost through miscarriages. Now, it was my turn to comfort. Taking a deep breath, I headed for the door with a sympathy card, a dessert, and a miniature rosebush.

Ministering to Those Who’ve Miscarried

When someone miscarries, lay aside your reluctance to get involved and your fear that you won’t know what to say. Instead, allow God to use you. Here are several things to remember as you minister to those who’ve experienced a miscarriage.

They lost a *baby*. When we grasp that miscarriage is truly the loss of a beloved child, comforting the grieving parents takes on a new perspective. God’s Word is clear: Even in extreme immaturity, a miscarried baby is still a child, and to God, a beloved, planned child. Not just a lump of tissue, he or she is an eternal being, created, called, and intimately known by Almighty God (see Psalm 139:13–16 and Jeremiah 1:5).

The most poignant example of this truth is the story of Jesus and John the Baptist in Luke 1:39–45. John, then a six-month-old fetus, “leaped for joy” in the presence of “God with us,” even though Jesus’ tiny body had been conceived only days before. And



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Elizabeth called Mary “the mother of my Lord” before anyone could tell Mary was pregnant.

Miscarriage is not an illness. It is a death in the family. When a friend miscarries, serve her just as you would if she had experienced the death of any other family member. Bring dinner. Send a sympathy card. Call. Call again the next day and the next week. Send flowers. Remind her of the hope expressed in 2 Samuel 12:23 by King David. Mourning the death of his baby son, he said, “I will go to him.” Won’t it be amazing to one day meet and get to know this child in heaven?

Love in deed as well as words. John wrote, “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:18). Be sensitive to your friend’s needs. Remember, she’s still postpartum but with empty arms. Touch. Hug. To be held and allowed to cry is a priceless gift. Listen. “He who answers before listening—that is his folly and his shame” (Proverbs 18:13). Weep with her instead of judging that she is making too big a deal of the loss. Pass along a short book that explains the hope God’s Word gives us for these children, such as *I’ll Hold You in Heaven* (Regal) by Jack Hayford.

Pray, and then pray some more. Only God can heal broken hearts. “Carry each other’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2) by praying daily for your friend. It’s one of the best gifts you can give.

Be careful not to wound further with careless words. Avoid attitudes and statements such as “It was only a miscarriage,” or “You can always have another baby.” Remember, “reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (Proverbs 12:18). *Do* talk about the baby and the baby’s death, just as you would if it were another child in the family. Accept her angry questions and “whys.” Don’t slough off her pain with pat answers, but steadfastly point her back to the Healer.

Encourage a memorial. Those grieving a child lost through miscarriage know the extra pain of having to combine hellos and good-byes. They have no memories, photos, or even a grave to cry beside. What did he look like? What was her name?

A memorial helps acknowledge the baby’s death and anticipates a heavenly reunion. Our family planted a miniature rosebush after our third miscarriage. Some of the rosebuds grew through the fence and now bloom on the other side. They remind us that our baby is alive, just “on the other side.”

In the months following that miscarriage, as I sat beside the little bush, gently touching the tiny pink blossoms and pouring my heart out to Abba Father, my heart began to heal. Many other sorrowful families have found that planting a living memorial is a significant step on their healing journey.

Remember that grief can take a long time. Denial, bargaining, anger, and depression are all part of the normal grief process. Each person feels and expresses these steps uniquely. Grieving normally varies in intensity and length among different members of the family. Give them time to grieve, even when it takes longer than you’d expected. Listen and weep with them after everyone else forgets.



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Listening and Loving

Years later, Janet still treasures the memory of my visit. Treating the miscarriage like a death, not an illness, affirmed the child's life and profoundly impacted her family. I counted it an awesome privilege to listen and love during Janet's grief. My hugs and understanding became instruments of healing in the Father's hands as He bound up her broken heart. That privilege can be yours, too, as God uses your hands and heart to share His comfort.

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