



Waller Funeral Home
"An Oxford Tradition"

SEASONS

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Beth Waller Rosson, Manager

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GETTING THROUGH GRIEF

The stages of grief have been quoted often in writings on grief with acceptance of this progression recommended as help in understanding grieving. Some grief counselors caution against putting too much reliance on accepting these stages (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance) because grief is too personal, too individual to categorize so neatly.

Some people seem to recover quickly while others struggle a long, long time. All are entitled to our understanding and should be allowed their time of grief and healing. Our love and concern should be steadfast, our patience endless.

A rich source of healing balm is Psalm 23. Because it is so familiar, we sometimes fail to absorb the depth of help it offers. To help me appreciate its help, I sometimes turn to Max Lucado's book *Traveling Light*. Lucado says that some of our burdens should be discarded and some can be lightened with insight gained through indepth guided study. In the chapter, "In the Shadow of the Grave," Lucado borrows a quote from a shepherd found in *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, by Phillip Keller: "Every mountain has its valleys. Its sides are scarred by deep ravines and gulches and draws. And the best route to the top is always through these valleys. Any sheepman familiar with the high country knows this. He leads his flock gently, but persistently, up the paths that wind through the dark valleys."

In a chapter titled, "When Mourning

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BOB ROSSON ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



Pictured after the election at the National Funeral Directors Association Policy Board Meeting are NFDA At-Large Representative Bob Rosson, NFDA CEO Christine Pepper, and NFDA President John Hogan.

Bob Rosson, CFSP, CPC, was elected as an At-Large Representative to the Executive Board of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) at a meeting of the NFDA Policy Board on July 28, 2007, in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. Bob will begin his two-year term immediately following the 2007 NFDA International Convention & Expo, October 7-10, in Las Vegas. R. Bryant Hightower Jr., CFSP, of Martin & Hightower Funeral Home in Carrollton, Georgia, was also elected as an At-Large Representative at the meeting.

In speaking of the two newly

elected representatives, NFDA President John Hogan Jr., CFSP said: "Bob and Bryan will be outstanding additions to NFDA's Executive Board. They have spent their careers making positive contributions to funeral service and will continue their good work advancing the funeral service profession in their new leadership roles."

NFDA CEO Christine Pepper, CAE, said: "Bob and Bryan are dedicated funeral service professionals who will create resources and tools to assist NFDA members to better meet the evolving needs of the communities they serve and

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GETTING THROUGH GRIEF

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Comes," Lucado writes of death "face it, fight it, question it, condemn it, but don't deny it." To deny death and its grief delays healing.

Lucado acknowledges that "the black bag of sorrow is hard to bear. It is hard to bear because not everyone understands your grief. They did at first. They did at the funeral. They did at the graveside. But they don't now, they don't understand. . . . Why does grief linger? Because you are dealing with more than memories—you are dealing with un-lived tomorrows. You're not just battling sorrows, you're battling disappointments." All this must be acknowledged and dealt with in order for healing to begin.

Some feel guilty because they ask "Why?" God understands this emotion. It is all right to ask God why. He may not answer just as we wish nor when we wish. He answers in his own time in the way best for us. In His great and matchless love He brings comfort to tide us over until the stream is quieter.

When loss comes to us, we are likely to feel ours is the deepest, hardest of griefs to accept. We grieve for the suffering of the deceased one and for his/her loss of future accomplishments and pleasures and for our loss of his/her companionship. We grieve for the past, present, and future.

Grief may never completely end. It may erupt less frequently as time passes but then erupt unexpectedly. Extensive reading and personal experience with grief lead me to believe we never experience full closure, rather we have reconciliation with our grief.

Some people seem to have a remarkable resilience to grief. My father was one of those. His life was filled with tragedies. His mother died when he was 16, leaving him the oldest of her four sons. After he started his own family, death claimed the life of a precious 20-month old baby boy. In later years he lost another son to suicide. His wife, my mother, died when she was 50 with cancer.

At 36, Daddy lost his right arm in a cotton gin accident. The day he left the hospital he briefly drove a car with the

gear shift in the floor. Within two weeks he could tie his shoes and soon his necktie. Daddy accepted this loss and the long lasting pain it brought. He recognized that pain medication could not be continued for long, and he walked the floor day and night for weeks without relief. Sooner than expected he was back at work. The next fall he ginned cotton again. In later years he lightly admitted he could not conquer a manual can opener, but he accepted his few limitations without bitterness. He admitted that his was not the greatest of losses.

Daddy had a remarkable ability to accept these blows. Certainly he grieved. He shed many tears, all the time moving into acceptance. He was cheerful even when he was not happy. His determination was an inspiration. His example was admirable.

It is difficult to prepare for death. We do not realize the severity of the coming sorrow. Afterwards we may be too distraught to seek help. Although I have read, listened, and learned a great deal about grief as I have been involved in funeral service, I still feel the dread of losing those close to me.

What can we say to help a grieving friend through grief? Say simply, "I am sorry for your loss." Do not give advice about how someone should get through the loss. Talking with a sympathetic friends can often ease the pain—but listen more than you talk. If you want to be upbeat, share a funny anecdote or memory about the deceased. Just "being there" is important.

Jess Decourcy Hinds suggests in "I'm Sorry' Shouldn't Be the Hardest Words" (*Newsweek* May 28, 2007) that we should learn from elephants. They are known to grieve in groups. They loop trunks to support the bereaved. We should remain connected and open to the sorrow of mourners for longer than the memorial service. Ms. Hinds says: "Grieving is private, but it can be public too. We need to stop being afraid of public mourning. We need to be open to mourners. We need to look each other in the eye and say, 'I am sorry.'"

Sincerely,
Patsy

BILLY GRAHAM, *My Answer* EVEN FOR FAITHFUL, GRIEF IS NORMAL

My aunt died about a year ago, and it's been very hard on my uncle. The thing I don't understand is that he is a Christian and believes she's in heaven—but if that's the case, why is he so grief-stricken? Shouldn't he be glad she's in heaven instead of grieving all the time?

I'm sure your uncle is very thankful that your aunt had committed her life to Christ and that she is now safely in heaven forever. The Bible says that because of what Jesus Christ did for us we have "an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

But the death of someone we love is still painful to us, even as Christians—not because we fear for them, but because of the empty place they leave behind in our hearts. The Bible says we don't "grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope"—but we will still grieve (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

The more we loved someone, the more we will miss them—and the more we will look forward to seeing them again in heaven. When Jesus came to the tomb of his friend Lazarus, we read these words: "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). That is the shortest verse in the Bible—but it contains a world of truth. If Jesus wept over His friend (who shortly would be raised from the dead), won't we also be touched by the death of someone we love?

Pray for your uncle, and do what you can to be his friend. In addition, urge him to reach out to others who need help and encouragement, including those who are going through the same experience he is (his church may offer opportunities for this). Not only will he help others, but he will help himself.

-Bobby Wolff

United Feature Syndicate

Grieving is as natural as crying when you hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you are hungry, or sneezing when your nose itches. It is nature's way of healing a broken heart.

- Doug Manning

Don't Take My Grief Away

BOB ROSSON ELECTED

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enhance the public's confidence in funeral service.

"Bob is currently serving NFDA in many ways--he is Mississippi's representative to the Policy Board, a member of the Pursuit of Excellence Committee, a member of the Heritage Club, and a regular participant in advocacy activities. He has also been a member of the Communications, Consumer Campaign, and 'For a Life Worth Celebrating' committees. On the state level, he has served as President of the Mississippi Funeral Directors Association and as chairman of the Mississippi Funeral Directors Trust.

Bob was nominated by J. Michael Krill, CFSP, of Krill Funeral Service in Edgerton, Ohio. Mike said of Bob: "Through his life Bob has shown leadership abilities--from being an Eagle Scout to his involvement in various community service organizations, his church, and as a reserve deputy on his county Sheriff's Department. He has been a respected member of the Mississippi Funeral Directors Association, having served in all capacities of leadership and as a chairman of many of its most active committees including the Master Trust of the Association. He believes in NFDA. All we have to do is look at his firm's involvement in the Pursuit of Excellence Program in which they were awarded a Best of Best Distinction. Bob participates and supports with enthusiasm the programs of NFDA. As a Policy Board member, Bob has become a respected voice and shown true leadership skills in all that he undertakes. He has the ability to analyze the issues wisely, taking into account all sides of the issues."

In his acceptance speech, Bob said he was passing by the important topics such High Ethical Standards, Pursuing Excellence, Continuing Education, and Advocacy, to look back at the beginning of his career and share a story about a friend--Mrs. Flora Tucker--known as "Miss Flora" to her many friends--who retired from many years as a beloved first-grade

teacher.

The story in Bob's words:

"That Wednesday in 1983 was like most Wednesdays before Thanksgiving, but Miss Flora's life was about to change forever. It was also a day that touched me in a way that changed my life.

On this Thanksgiving Eve there was a terrible car accident and three teenagers were killed. Two of those teenagers were Miss Flora's granddaughters. It was the first funeral service with teenagers and also the first double funeral I had been involved with. I had never met Miss Flora until we made arrangements on that Thanksgiving morning. I so wanted to help but I was unsure what to do. It was so very difficult to watch the family grieve over the loss of not one but two precious young girls. Even under the stress of those two days, the family was very gracious to me and our staff. The visitation and funeral service went as expected. After the graveside service we took two vans full of flowers to the home, and the day was finally over for us. But it was not over for Miss Flora. Later that night her husband of many years--"Shag"--died unexpectedly, and the family had to come back to the funeral home and do it all over again.

"Much time has passed and I have seen Miss Flora occasionally when she has come to the funeral home. I called her on Thanksgiving for many years. The calls seemed to help us both. We feel forever bonded by the tragedies of 1983. Mrs. Tucker is blind now but I know her unconquerable spirit remains."

Bob continued: "When the families we serve, sometimes even total strangers, come to our funeral homes with the loss of their family members, we help them in all the ways we know how, and then they take us into their families and we become friends. It is because what we all [funeral home staffs] do is so special.

"Today I am running for At-Large Representative because I want us to continue to take care of all the Miss Floras in our communities with the dignity and compassion we all have for the families we are so privileged to

serve. Serving on the Executive Board will give me the opportunity to help keep NFDA on the right track to help us take care of all our families with loving care and professionalism."

Bob made the following pledge: "High Ethical Standards without compromise is my promise. Service Beyond Expectation to our families will continue to be my standard. Pursuing Excellence for us to better serve our families will be my objective. Continuing to Educate Ourselves to become better stewards to our profession will be my obligation. If elected I have much to learn, but I am willing to learn and dedicate the time it takes to keep NFDA at the pinnacle of our profession."

Bob also promised if elected he would listen to concerns and help find solutions to problems. Bob introduced Beth, co-manager of Waller Funeral Home and his wife for 29 years, and said that his commitment to the Board position was possible only with her support.

Bob and Beth returned from the meeting with renewed professional commitment to funeral service nationwide and especially to Waller Funeral Home, where next year they will complete 25 years of service. Professional activities through NFDA and other organizations have broadened their knowledge and understanding of funeral service.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (NKJV)

SERMONS AT A GLANCE

Have you seen a good sermon lately? A road trip these days often includes some good sentence sermons. Some of these pithy statements are creations of the pastor or a church member and some come from published collections. It is a lot more fun to read them as you ride through the countryside, but here are a few to read and ponder in your easy chair:

Go out on a limb. That's where the fruit is.
Trust in God, but lock your car.
Change is inevitable. Growth is optional.
Wal-Mart isn't the only saving place in town.
Swallow your pride—it contains no calories.
Looking for a lifeguard? Ours walks on water.
Don't give up! Moses was once a basket case.
All that's necessary for evil to win is for good people to do nothing.
Honk if you love peace and quiet.
To belittle is to be little.
Worry is a waste of the imagination.
Faith is a journey, not a destination.
The heaviest thing to carry is a grudge.
Carve praise in stone; write criticism in sand.
Focus on a good life, not a good living.
Happiness is an inside job.
Opportunity knocks once. Temptation leans on the doorbell!
A hypocrite is a person who's not himself on Sunday.
Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned.

In Memoriam

We dedicate this issue of *Seasons* to those who died and whose families we served from May 15, 2007, through August 2, 2007.

Mr. Anson Abbe Aven May 15, 2007
Mrs. Caroline Still Wiren May 16, 2007
Mr. Edward Atkinson Morgan May 20, 2007
Mr. Lee R. Rooker May 24, 2007
Mr. Auzie Grover Spence June 3, 2007
Mr. James Everette Rankin June 7, 2007
Mrs. Nettie June Pritchard June 13, 2007
Mr. Randy Lee Davis June 13, 2007
Mr. Wallace Earl Jones June 19, 2007
Mr. Ranny Reed Stafford June 22, 2007
Mrs. Marilyn Taylor Zarzeski June 24, 2007
Mrs. Thelka Bell Zanola June 25, 2007
Mrs. Madeline C. Cole June 27, 2007
Mr. Bobby Simms Malone July 5, 2007
Mrs. Nellie B. Tidwell Stewart July 11, 2007
Mr. George L. Sullivan July 15, 2007
Mr. Cornelius C. "June" Lovelady July 17, 2007
Mr. Franklin D. Lovelady, Jr. July 22, 2007
Mr. Mike Aune July 22, 2007
Mrs. Peggie Sue Davis July 25, 2007
Mrs. Beth Jones Huggins July 28, 2007
Rev. Troy B. Land August 1, 2007
Mrs. Renolda Hudgins Hoffman August 2, 2007



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