



Practicing Generosity

through

Celebrations & Setbacks



“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

- Ask: What do you need most right now? This is the best place to begin.
- Send a brief text message. Let her know she's not forgotten.
- Make a phone call and leave an uplifting voice message.
- Send an email telling her what you appreciate most about her. Be brief, but specific and sincere.
- Say: “I love you, and I'm not going anywhere.”
- Set up a daily alarm/reminder to pray at a certain time. Periodically, let her know about it.
- Mail a greeting card. Humor is almost always a welcome relief in suffering.
- Deliver a gift box filled with small necessities (lip balm, lotion, bookmarks, chocolate, writing pens, journal, lavender oil).
- Give a book, with a personal inscription in the cover from you.
- Create a collection of your favorite hope-filled verses on index cards or print out.
- Give a picture of the two of you together. Bonus: print it off and frame it.
- Prepare and deliver a meal OR if they can get out, invite them to join your family once a week or once a month. For those who grieve a long-time spouse, this can be the highlight of their week and connection with others.
- Schedule a coffee date. Bring the coffee to them if they can't leave the house.
- Deliver flowers or a plant.
- Buy her a subscription to a favorite magazine.
- Spend time together. Offer your un-rushed self.



More Creative Way to Bless a Friend or Family Member Going Through Setbacks or Celebrations

- Buy a soft blanket. Bonus: embroider a message on it from you.
- Make homemade bread, cookies or brownies. Know her favorite comfort food? Make that.
- Give a gift certificate to get a mani/pedi, massage or other treat and maybe do it together.
- Take a walk together or sit outside to enjoy fresh air.
- Write up a list of what you appreciate about them, ways they make the world a better place. Be specific. Be honest. Be sincere.
- Find a t-shirt or socks that carry some kind of positive message that will encourage.
- Gift her with new pajamas or lounge wear.
- Ask: “What is your greatest pain right now?” And then sit quietly and listen. Resist the urge to share your personal pain or try to fix theirs.
- Give a customized necklace or bracelet with an encouraging word or symbol.
- Take them for a drive on a sunny day. No agenda. No map. Just a drive to enjoy the scenery. Bonus: windows down and music up!
- Do her laundry for a week. Or a month. Coordinate a schedule with friends to pick up and drop off.
- Make a painting together. Get a canvas, some paints and create a memory you both won't forget.
- Write and date your prayers for them. Then gift it to them.
- Make a homemade journal leaving random, brief notes through the inside pages.
- Offer to drive them to doctor's offices, legal appointments, etc.
- Keep her company on a bad day. You don't need to talk or do anything. Just be close.
- Physical touch. Offer a hug, hold a hand, scratch a back, brush her hair. You might want to ask permission first, but it's surprising how much a person can cherish a simple touch.
- Ask for a list of things that need to be fixed around the house. Then coordinate those projects.
- Offer to make phone calls to doctors, insurance companies, etc. Simply sitting with them while they tackle these tasks can be a huge comfort, too.
- Wash her car.
- Mow the lawn or shovel the walk.
- Walk the dog. Maybe wash him, too!
- Keep their children for an evening. Or a week. Or find several friends to do it together.
- Clean their house. Or send a gift certificate for a cleaning service.
- Listen to an audio book out loud together. Talk about it.
- Ask questions. Listen more than you talk.

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- Provide thank you notes and stamps if they plan to follow up with people that way. Offer to address the notes and assist in mailing.
- Provide a gift card – Door Dash, grocery store, favorite restaurants, or even a VISA gift card. Need a creative presentation? Put them in plastic note card picks and put in a small floral arrangement.
- To offer daily encouragement, create simple posters with uplifting Bible verses and phrases like “You are strong!” or “You did it!” If possible, attach posters to the wall of the garage that they will see each time they enter. Or use smaller versions for a hospital room or bedroom.
- Share your special hobby. Gifted gardener? Plant seasonal flowers in pots on her front porch.
- Ship a care package from services like spoonfulofcomfort.com. Or pick non-perishable items from Amazon for a quick delivery.
- Think beyond dinner – consider dropping off snacks, cut fruit, and breakfast items as well.
- Volunteer to pick up online orders at the grocery store or Wal-Mart.
- A practical gift would be a basket of paper plates, bowls, napkins, cups, etc. Whether it’s a new Mom or someone who’s ill, doing dishes can be overwhelming.
- Give the gift of health when they’re ready... gift card to yoga, Pilates, etc.
- Schedule a movie date or stream a movie with them if they can’t leave the house.
- Lavender-scented anything, like a microwavable heated neck wrap.
- Have your child write a letter or color a picture. Is there anything more uplifting than the joy and prayers of a child?
- Adopt them as part of your family on the big holidays.
- Fix her hair or take her to a salon.
- Ask for her opinion on a project or specific subject. Show that her wisdom and insight still matter to you.
- Write down and reach out on the important “anniversary” dates (passing, diagnosis, goal reached, etc.). Make sure she knows you won’t forget.
- Ask: “What’s your greatest loss during this crisis? What do you miss the most?”
- Get tickets to the symphony, comedy club, sporting event or local concert in the park. Get dressed up, go out and celebrate life.
- Do church together. In person or online.
- Share your favorite Christian Worship playlist.
- Ornaments make great gifts to remember a loved one, celebrate a birthday, baby or wedding.
- For someone having extra houseguests, consider leaving toilet paper and papergoods, cooler with ice and drinks, or non-perishables that don’t take up room in the fridge.
- When delivering food, always use disposable containers labeled with clear instructions.

Words of Wisdom and Additional Advice *as shared at the Seeds of Joy Winter Social*

Ideas for Friends and Family...

- Don't say, "What can I do to help?" Act when you feel led. Just jump in and do something!
- Use your birthday as a calendar prompt – to call someone, pray for them, or serve them.
- Send regular postcards. Simple touch points, scripture, words of encouragement.
- Send a song or photo that would bring joy.
- Collaborate with friends—to cover certain days or activities (e.g., Susan always checks in and is "on call" on Tuesdays, Debbie covers Band activities since our kids are in it together, etc.). This helps reduce decision fatigue.
- Prayer! Let the recipient know you're nearby in prayer, even knowing they can't come and see you (e.g., text the recipient you're in the hospital parking lot praying for them as they or a loved one are inside).

For the Recipient or Person in Crisis...

- Understand expectations vs. shared agreement. Don't assume expectations because that can be a set up for disappointment if someone doesn't step up to serve. Sometimes it's surprising who doesn't volunteer and who does. There may be a variety of reasons someone doesn't step up. So it's okay to have a conversation about what someone may or may not be able to do. Then you have a shared agreement and no false expectations.
- Don't take anyone else's personality personally!
- Journal more. So many memories and moments get lost and overlooked in the chaos. Jot them down so you can look back and reflect on those times, both tough and good. You may see even more answer to prayer!
- Have more humor. It's okay to have laughter and levity. Sometimes it's what gets you through the unbearable.
- There's a spiritual discipline of receiving.
- Learn and cherish the power of being seen.
- Utilize apps (CaringBridge, etc.) that are right for you and know there can be different levels of communication (general updates vs. close-knit circle of confidants).
- Do the best you can.