

**TALKING POINT #28**  
**LIFE'S TURNING POINTS #8: CHURCH AT LIFE'S FINAL TURNING POINT (PART 2)**

**ALWAYS A DIFFICULT TIME**

When death comes, it is always tragic. Whether someone passes away suddenly or after illness, it is a sad moment when they are taken from us. As we said in the previous *Talking Point Paper*, our society now does not talk about death – it is society's last taboo. So, when that moment comes, it is important that the community of the Church help those who grieve to navigate through their pain.

**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

While the Bible deals extensively with death and our need for Jesus' victory (1 Corinthians 15:54-56), it gives little direction about funerals. Indeed, the only records we have of rituals following death come, when Jesus raises those who have died. In those cases, the community gathered around the grieving family and shared in their pain (John 11:29). However, while the Bible may not outline the details, it does give some principles for how we can serve those who are grieving.

In the scene mentioned above in John 11, the community gathered around Mary and Martha. This is the first thing we can do – simply be there to help in any way. This can include the pastor's role in attending the family and helping with the formal arrangements, people providing meals and emergency care, phone calls to extend our sympathies or praying with them. This is where the community of the Church can step up and envelope those who grieve with the love of God.

The Bible also tells us to encourage one another with the truth that those who have trusted in Christ are hidden in Him. We know that those who are with Christ will also one day be raised with Christ, so Paul says, "Therefore encourage one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:18) For many who have lost a loved one, the return to Church can be difficult. As we encourage one another, we can ease this difficulty and simply love them, removing some of the awkwardness.

**NOW FOR US AT FOREST LAKE**

All these elements come together in the ministry of the Church – as we walk with someone through the valley of the shadow of death. From the moments following death, through the planning and conduct of a funeral and on into the future, the Church has a unique opportunity to show God's love and kindness to people in the hour of their greatest need.

The funeral, particularly, is an important time when the Church can help a family celebrate the life lived, acknowledge the reality of death and look to the hope that is in Christ. This is a time when we serve people in a special way.

**CONCLUSION**

The Bible tells us that when we cry out to God in distress, He parts the heavens to come down, mounting the cherubim to comfort us (Psalm 18:10). The Church has the opportunity to be the arms and feet of God in the darkest hours of people's distress, as we rush to their side to serve them. If you are struggling with grief, let us serve you – it would be a blessing to us. If you can help serve someone else, please see one of our pastors to find out where you can help someone.

In our next Talking Point Paper, we start a new series on "Sharing our Faith" – the core elements of our Christian faith that we can share with others. We will start with "God is King!"