



## Practical Suggestions for Parents Whose Baby Has Died

- due to miscarriage, stillbirth or early infant death -

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- Information/Education – find out everything you can about what happened to your baby. Buy a notebook; create a file.
- Ask questions.
- Include your other children in the family grief, including the visitation and funeral ceremony.
- Find out what you need to do now to take care of yourself for the future.
- Talk to others – especially those who have also had a baby die – share your feelings.
- Journal.
- Write a letter to your baby.
- Create a memory book or memory box. You'll be surprised what special things you do have that can now be keepsakes: cards, notes, items from the hospital, special things purchased in anticipation of the birth, flowers which can be dried, a ribbon from a floral arrangement, etc.
- Include the baby in family celebrations by: talking about him or her, having something displayed which represents the memory of the child such as a candle, flower, plant or picture.
- Put away the baby things when YOU are ready, not when others tell you "it's time."
- Be ready for "helpful" comments of others (UGH!):
  - "You can always have another..."*
  - "At least you have your other children."*
  - "It's better it happened now than after several years when you really knew your child."*
  - "This is a blessing...things probably would have been worse if it hadn't happened now."*Also, the focus of concern is usually exclusively toward the mom, not the dad.
- Nurture your relationship with your spouse/partner.
- Seek a support group.
- Take your time making decisions.



- Try to eat, sleep and get exercise.
- Embrace, renew or establish your faith.
- Pray.
- Be prepared for the “residuals” which will trigger your grief emotions to surface unexpectedly, such as:
  - Mom’s post-pregnant body, including her milk coming in
  - People who don’t know about the death of your baby
  - Junk mail advertising baby items
  - Commercials
  - Seeing pregnant women and families with babies
  - The inevitable question: *“How many children do you have?”*
  - Holidays
- Remember that there is no right or wrong time to: name your baby; create a memory book or box; start a journal; write a letter; put away or display reminders; cry...