



Understanding the widow you love

How you can help...

- Family members, friends, and the church play a vital role in a widow's life.
- The widow's world has turned upside down by the loss of her husband. His death also results in the loss of hopes and dreams for the future.
- A widow is faced with having to create a new identity for herself – she cannot go back to being the same person she was before.
- Grief-induced stress may cause personality changes such as anger, negativism, complaining, and other difficult expressions. Be assured, these changes will pass with time. Your proactive unconditional love, and involvement in her daily life, will help the process along.
- Widows are often lost in the moment and unable to acknowledge all that is happening around them. She may be unable to say “thank you” or give positive feedback in the moment – don't let this discourage you. Continue to reach out to her.
- The widow does not need to be “fixed” – she needs to be loved right where she is.
- Remember the widow's family members have also suffered loss. Each person grieves differently. This may affect how they relate and respond to the widow they love.
- Widows typically lose 75% of their closest friends within one year of their husband's death. It is critical to help her connect with others who truly understand what she is experiencing.
- It's very difficult for a widow to ask for help on her own – be her advocate.
- Be patient with her – widows describe themselves as “living in a fog” – this may last for several years. There are no quick fixes for grief.
- The widow's family and friends are often unable to provide the help she needs – don't be afraid to seek outside help.