

What you can do to help someone in those first few days

TIP SHEET 7

- Pick up family members from the airport that are coming for the funeral.
- Offer an extra bedroom to out-of-town family members or friends. Not every home can accommodate extra guests and the grieving families may need space of their own.
- Bring folding chairs and tables to the home – they are easy to set up and take down as needed to make visitors comfortable.
- Ask if they would like you to reply to any text or voice mail messages on their behalf.
- Bring small packs of tissues to the funeral.
- Bring large umbrellas to shield family from rain or sun at the funeral.
- Bring ice in an esky for drinks, fill with water bottles and single serve soft drinks.
- Offer to drive grieving people where they need to go. Deep grief can impair driving and concentration. Be willing to sit in the lobby or parking lot – they may want company while finalising arrangements or meeting with the celebrant or clergy.
- Clean the house. Ask if you can do a load of washing or take home a basket of ironing.
- Mow the lawn. Sweep. Rake leaves. Tidy flower beds.
- Bring toilet paper. Paper towels. Paper plates. Napkins. All the things you need when there are extra people in the house.
- If one or more of the bereaved people is a carer, offer to take over that responsibility for a time (only if you are sure you can competently manage this).
- Take children to the park or out for ice cream . However, be mindful that not all children will be comfortable leaving their parents at this time.
- Clean the family's car before the funeral.
- Take the dogs for regular walks.
- Offer to drive the family or out-of-town relatives to the funeral and home again.
- Cook meals. Bring them in ready to heat dishes or plastic containers for freezing. And don't expect them to be returned.
- Offer to take clothes to the dry cleaners - and pick up in time for the funeral.
- Offer to be the one who sits with and takes care of toddlers at the funeral, allowing the parents to focus their attention on the ceremony.
- Stay in touch – experience tells us that after the funeral is over, visitors and offers of help decline quickly, this is a time when help around the house, ongoing support and a listening ear can be much appreciated.