

10

Ways to Stand by a Widow

Tragedy strikes and suddenly there is a widow in your midst. What do you do? Here are 10 easy and helpful ideas that will help walk a widow through her grief.



Look for her. Smile at her. Talk with her.

Don't avoid her because you don't know what to say, or you feel uneasy. Push through the feeling of awkwardness, she needs you.



Pray for her often and tell her that you are. Ask her how she needs God to show up in her life.

Provision?
Parenting wisdom?
Comfort?
Decision making?
Grace for dealing with people?
Pain? (Grief hurts down to your bones.)



Let her cry, talk, laugh, howl and process.

This isn't Hollywood and grieving will probably look different than you might expect and take longer than you think.



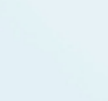
Ask her to tell you about her deceased husband.

Ask what he was like. Ask what she misses the most. Ask how they met. Ask what they did for fun. Ask. Just ask. She needs to talk about him.



If you knew her spouse, write her a letter about him.

Share what you remember about his character, a shared experience, a tale that makes her laugh, an account that confirms what a great guy he was.



Make a note on your calendar.

Send her flowers on the 6 & 12 month anniversary of her husband's death. Let her know she isn't forgotten.



Offer to assist.

- With her kids - Remember, this woman is now a full-time mom ALL DAY, EVERY DAY. No hubz to help. No one takes the children for an hour at night or every other weekend.
- Take her kids for play dates, ask them to join you at the park or McDonalds.
- Offer to carve that miserable pumpkin at Halloween.
- Take older children to a burger and movie.
- With her car - make a list of things to check for regular maintenance. (Oil change every 3000 miles, tire rotation every 6000 miles, etc.)
- With her lawn, leaves, snow removal - you have no idea how daunting this is, especially if the children are young or if the widow is older.



Invite her for a family dinner, girl's night out, or to your Bible study or small group.

She is lonely and feels like a third wheel everywhere.



Send her cards and celebrate with her.

She misses romance. Take her out for her birthday or her wedding anniversary. I can't overemphasize the significance of these dates!



Even if there is life insurance, it may not be available for months.

Ask her if she needs a loan or a financial gift if you are able. 80% of widows now living in poverty were NOT poor before their husband died. It just costs more to live without a spouse - especially if he was handy. A plugged toilet needs a plumber! A flat tire or a dead battery means a tow truck. \$\$\$

Remember, you don't have to do all these things, pick the ones that are easy for you. Whatever you do will make a big difference.

Robyn Dykstra is an author and speaker. Her book *The Widow Wore Pink* is available on Amazon.com To invite her to tell her story of God's faithfulness in person, contact her at www.robindykstra.com.