

Resolving Differences:

You may have heard that couples always pull together in times of trouble, but that is not always true. Resentment of your wife/partner may occur. As the patient, she's getting all of the attention. Medical staff are naturally concerned with her physical and emotional needs; you may feel like a bystander. She may withdraw from you and dwell on the thought of the baby. Be present. Her distance is not because of you, but due to processing differently. You may feel that she needs more from you than you feel you can give right now. Losing a baby can change the relationship between spouses/partners. Talking with friends, family, or a support group may help. You need to know that it is okay to talk to your wife/partner or to others about your feelings when you are vulnerable. It helps her to make sense if you tell her your needs. Dads grieve differently and are treated differently by society, but dads grieve. Although responses to the loss of a baby vary, know that time lessens the daily sting, and although triggers can set it off, the overall weight of the grief will dwindle.

To reserve your spot in Heaven's Gain Ministries' on-line support group which meets the 2nd Thursday of each month contact [Kim Kelley](mailto:Kim@heavensgain.org) @ (513)619-0100 or email Kim@heavensgain.org

We are sorry that your baby has died. Those of us involved in Heaven's Gain Ministry understand first-hand how devastating the loss of a child can be, and are sorry for all you are going through.

Blessings and healing – Donna and Jim Murphy -HGM Founders

A Father's Grief



Support for Fathers suffering the loss of a child

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As a father, this loss may be difficult for you to understand and express – you may feel torn between your own reaction and your need to remain strong for your wife/partner's sake. It is important for you to mourn your baby's death in your own way. Understand that men and women grieve differently, and that's okay.

Your baby has died. As a father, you may be trying to “be strong” or deny your emotions. You may find yourself worrying about how you should react to your grief. Try to let those emotions come, and accept them for what they are, regardless of the expectations of others. Acknowledge the pain, and allow yourself to react to it in a way that feels right to you. What you need now, most of all, is time to heal- physically and emotionally. Allow yourself time.

Grief Responses are Unique:

All losses are individual, and everyone grieves in their own way. Grief can't be measured or compared. Differences in how you and your wife/partner grieve may be hard to understand. She may think you do not care if she doesn't see tears, or if you're not tolerant of hers. You may feel intense guilt when your grief looks differently than your wife's/partner's mourning. Recognizing and accepting the fact that you are both grieving in your own way may help. Sharing thoughts and feelings is easier for some couples than others. If you have a difficult time expressing yourself to your wife/partner, then you may consider writing a letter or talking to a close friend.

*Society allows too little time for grieving and even less time for men.
Allow yourself the freedom and the time for sadness.*

Your attachment to the baby may be entirely different than your wife/partner's. It is not possible for you to have the same physical connection to the child due to hormonal or biological differences. Some fathers feel involved the moment they discover the pregnancy, but some do not feel that attachment until after the birth. No matter the attachment you feel, we recommend that you give your baby a place in the family. We suggest you give your baby a name. Acknowledging that your baby was, and still is, a part of your family gives the child a place of honor.

What you can do for your wife/partner and baby:

After the loss of a child, the urge to help, to protect, and to fix everything may seem overwhelming; because of this, fathers often feel an intense sense of powerlessness. For your wife/partner the loss has a medical dimension that may cause physical limitations throughout recovery; during this time, there are many ways you may be able to help. You may offer to make phone calls to keep loved ones informed. You may help care for other children or arrange for other family members or friends to do so. Revisiting the doctor's office your wife/partner frequented throughout her pregnancy usually occurs at the sixth week mark. This is a traumatic experience, and she should not go alone. Ask your wife/partner how you can help. Talk to her. Don't be afraid that you will make her cry; the tears are from the loss. Allow her tears and sadness. You are not causing the pain; talking and sharing lets her know that you are there.

Goodbye is Never Easy:

It is recommended that you and your wife/partner try to make decisions together at this time, even though you may feel that making the funeral arrangements is a way of protecting your wife/partner. It may be difficult to think of a funeral service for your baby, but it will help with healing and will provide friends and family a way to express their love and support during this time of need. There are several ways to remember your baby. You may choose to hold a formal funeral, or you may take comfort in a private memorial service. Some people find it helpful to write and conduct the service themselves. Involving other children, a pastor, and/or family and friends may be helpful. No matter what, say goodbye in a way that feels right to you. Don't let pressure from family and friends influence your personal decisions. You may regret it later. Do what is meaningful to you.

Ask for Help:

Allow your friends and family to help. Feel free to tell them exactly what they can do to help you. They are looking for any way to comfort you. Ask them to help with childcare, grocery shopping, making meals, or just spending time with you. Reach out to other men who have experienced loss. Seek help through resources for you and your wife/partner. We encourage you to talk with other bereaved parents, healthcare providers, doctors, and counselors. There are people who understand how hard this kind of loss is. Try to connect with them. Heaven's Gain APPL's (Advocates for Parents of Perinatal Loss) are trained, certified, and available to help parents through this difficult journey. Although we do not give medical advice, Heaven's Gain Ministries' free support services are available before, during and after the birth of your precious baby. Our APPL's offer non-medical information and help for those suffering pregnancy loss at any stage of pregnancy: miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant loss. We welcome phone calls to answer your questions and encourage you to visit our website for a wealth of information. Research shows that support services and being able to tell your story is very important to the healing of parents after losing a baby. Heavens Gain Ministries offers an on-line support group on the 2nd Thursday every month at 7:00 pm EST. There are also several other support groups available including: *Rachel's Gift*, *Star Legacy*, *SHARE* or *Faces of Loss/ Faces of Hope*.