CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

GRIEVING & HOPE

By Gayl Wright

HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.
(1 Peter 1:3-4)

There are times in our lives to mourn and grieve, but it is so important not to lose hope. For those of us who know Jesus, we cling to an everlasting hope. Grief is something we must work through, and it cannot be rushed.

"Sorrow, however, turns out to be not a state but a process.....Grief is like a long valley, a winding valley where any bend may reveal a totally new landscape." C. S. Lewis from *A Grief Observed*

Whether we are grieving the loss of a person or the losses we've had in chronic illness, each loss is real. Yet, no matter where we are on our grief journey, we are not alone. We don't have to succumb to despair, but we can lament our losses to God.

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never allow the righteous to be shaken.
(Psalm 55:22)

SCRIPTURE READING & JOURNALING

Journaling our thoughts after reading Scripture is a wonderful aid for journeying through grief. It gives us a tangible reminder of our time interacting with God and Scripture. This writing can take many forms such as prayer, lament, poetry or just recording our thoughts as they come to us. Here is a guide help you:

- Read a Psalm or other passage of Scripture.
- Pick out a verse or verses that stand out to you.
- Write them down in a journal or on your computer.
- Meditate on the passage, particularly the verses you chose.
- Write down your thoughts as they come to you.
- From those thoughts, write a prayer or lament or poem.

The important thing is to allow the Scriptures to speak and then to record your responses.

LAMENT

Since many of the Psalms are laments, they can be used as a guide to write our own. A lament usually begins with some type of sorrow or complaint. Then, as the psalmist recalls all that God has done, there is a turnaround, and the Psalm culminates in praise to God. Here is an example:

Burdens heavy on my heart pierce me like a poisoned dart. Lord, be near me.
My weeping eyes seek after you; I don't know what to do. Lord, be near me.
Breaking through my anxious tears,
Your light of peace calms my fears. Lord, be near me.
Full of hope my hands I raise, voicing hope and joyful praise. Lord, be near me.

POETRY AND PARAPHRASE

Using poetry or paraphrasing Scripture are great ways to record our responses. One simple form of poetry is haiku. The pattern is three lines: 5 syllables in the first line, 7 in the second and 5 in the third. It can be one stanza or as many as you'd like. This example, along with the Scripture it is based on, is also a concise form of paraphrase.

May your faithful love rest on us, Lord, for we put our hope in you.
(Psalm 33:22)

Let your faithful love
Come rest upon us always
Lord, we hope in you

As we grieve and mourn, let us also remember to encourage each other, to look for the joy in life no matter where we go, and to put our hope and trust in the God who loves us.

Dear Father, You are the great and awesome God, full of compassion and mercy. Please comfort and strengthen us for this journey of grief. May we look to You, not doubting, but trusting that You will meet our every need. Amen.