Walking Through Death, Dying, and Grief: A Resource Guide for Pastors, Christian Care Leaders, and Church Leadership

A Resource Guide for Pastors at BCYD 2026 Conference, by AHGSS CEO, Andrea Critchley



When the Pastor or Christian Leader Is Facing Their Own Loss

A Word To Leaders

Leaders are not separate from grief. You may be carrying the loss of a parent, spouse, child, friend, congregant, or someone whose care has shaped your ministry. Remember:

- Your calling does not exempt you from grief.
- You do not need to be "strong enough" to avoid lament.
- Being vulnerable is not the same as losing leadership credibility.
- People need to see faith lived honestly, not performed perfectly.
- Grief is not a leadership failure; it is a human response to love.

Give Yourself Permission To



- Step back temporarily from some ministry responsibilities
- Receive care rather than always providing it
- Seek professional Christian counseling
- Create a personal prayer team
- Take extended Sabbath rest
- Say "I don't know"
- Preach from your wounds without preaching your wounds

Resources

Christian Personal Grief & Loss Books:

A Grace Disguised - Jerry Sittser
· A profound reflection on losing a wife, mother, and daughter in a tragic accident. Excellent for leaders learning to live with grief rather than "get over it."

Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering - Timothy Keller
· A biblical framework for suffering, loss, hope, and faith.

Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy - Mark Vroegop
· An accessible guide to biblical lament and honest prayer.

Unlocking the Mystery of Grief: How to Grieve Well and Live Again After Loss
· A practical guide with stories, ideas, and practical tools anyone can use when grieving.

Lament for a Son - Nicholas Wolterstorff
· A pastoral and deeply personal account of grief after losing a child.

Safe in the Arms of God - John MacArthur
· Helpful resource for pastors supporting families after infant or child loss.



Resources Continued

Grief is not a problem to solve. It is a journey to accompany, with room for lament, hope, memory, and rest.

Podcasts for Personal Spiritual Care:

The Russell Moore Podcast
- Frequent conversations about suffering, faith, leadership, and resilience.

Grief Out Loud (Dougy Center)
- Practical perspectives on grief from individuals and professionals.

The Pastor's Soul Podcast
- Focuses on emotional and spiritual health for church leaders.

Everything Happens with Kate Bowler
- Especially helpful for pastors dealing with serious illness, uncertainty, and mortality.

Free Online Resources:

Canadian Virtual Hospice - www.virtualhospice.ca
- Excellent Canadian resources offering: Caregiver guidance, Grief information, Children's grief support, End-of-life education, Practical questions about dying

The Dougy Center - www.dougy.org
- Specialized support for children, teens and families after loss

Grief Share - www.griefshare.org
- Church-based support groups and devotional materials.

Center for Loss & Life Transition - www.centerforloss.com
- Resources from Dr. Alan Wolfelt on mourning and companioning the bereaved.



Helpful Questions for Reflection

- **What losses am I grieving right now? Where am I resisting God's comfort?**
- **Who is caring for me? What expectations am I carrying that Jesus has not placed on me?**
- **What would faithful leadership look like in this season, rather than ideal leadership?**

Exciting news!

Abbotsford Hospice & Grief Support Society will soon be launching a new **Online grief course** in the **Spring of 2027**. This course, for personal and/or professional development, will be available as a full package, or 12 individual modules available for download covering a wide range of important topics such as:

- Bereavement and Grief Support
- Spiritual Care
- A Journey Through Self-Care
- Understanding Grief and Loss in Children and Youth

For more information, please reach out to **Andrea@abbotsfordhospice.org**
or visit: **www.abbotsfordhospice.org/trainingandeducation**