

PONDERINGS ALONG THE PATH

By Nadine Boyd



Dear Compassionate Friends:

*"To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven;
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck
up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace."*

Ecclesiastes 3

This passage from the Bible is read at many funerals and memorial services as words of comfort, and a reminder of the changing of the seasons and the passages in our lives. To a family who has buried their child, however, these words sometimes offer little or no comfort. We feel no parent should have to bury their child, regardless of their age. We feel it is not their time to die and it is not our time to weep and mourn. We question and rage and seek to understand what possible "purpose under the heaven" our child's death could have. We feel our time to "get" and love our child here on this earth was far too short, and now our time to break down, weep and mourn is never ending.

It is interesting, however, how these words address so many of the stages of our grief. Perhaps you are in the anger phase of grief and are expressing your "hate" to the unfairness of losing your child. Maybe you are now in the healing phase of grief, your grief is not so intense and you are not "breaking down" as often. Perhaps now you are even further down the path to healing and are "building up", and it is your "time to speak"; even your "time to dance" to celebrate your child's life.

Wherever you are in your journey of grief and on the path to healing, I hope you do not feel you have to "keep silent" or "refrain from embracing", unless those are your choices. Losing a child is such a different kind of loss than any other bereavement because we lose our future hopes and memories with the death of our child. Society wants us to "get back to normal" as quickly as possible, and is uncomfortable with our grieving. A lot of people have lost an older relative, but unless they have a lost a child they really don't "get it". That is why it is so important to reach out to other Compassionate Friends, whether it is attending the monthly chapter meetings, reading the newsletter or books on grieving, or going on-line to the Compassionate Friends website. You do not have to suffer "in silence". In reaching out to others you help them and yourself to heal.

Time does help you heal. In time, you will feel less anger and hate and more peace. Notice I said "peace"-not "acceptance". I've never felt "acceptance" was an appropriate word in learning to live with the pain of losing your child. I don't understand it and will never "accept" the pain of Aaron's loss, but I am more at peace. I can "let go" of the anger more now, and can "laugh" and "build up" more easily.

I wish you comfort and healing on your journey. Remember, we need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.

In friendship,

Nadine