

A SABBATICAL FROM GRIEF

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I am certain that each of you reading this newsletter this month would like to take a sabbatical from your grief.

How well I remember those first years of bereavement when our sixteen year old daughter, Rhonda, died. I would have given anything in this world, including my own life, to have had her alive, healthy, and happy and not to be doing my grief work.

Grief work is the most difficult work that we will ever have to do in our lives. It is physically taxing to our bodies, it devastates us psychologically and we are not ourselves socially.

We would like to take a sabbatical or "vacation" from our grief. We can take "mini-vacations" from our grief by allowing humor into our lives. A few brief moments of laughter gives us some respite from the horrible feelings of grief. Attending a funny movie, reading a funny book or listening to a joke is some simple means of giving yourself a "short sabbatical."

Sometimes our work keeps our mind busy for a short time and this is a form of a sabbatical.

A good walk or exercise in the sunshine, working on the lawn or in the garden are also means of a "mini vacation" from our grief.

Plan an evening out this spring and summer with a friend or family members. It might be watching a softball game, attending a movie, taking a picnic, going swimming, a drive through the country, shopping trip or a week-end trip to another area. These are opportunities for each of us to take a short sabbatical from our grief. We take our sadness with us but it helps to "lighten the load of grief" with diversions once in awhile. Having something to look forward to is also very important during our grieving process.

Rodney and I recently took a 'sabbatical' from Alive Alone. We left the frigid, snowy

and blowing winds of northern Ohio for the sunny, warm, tropical climate of Hawaii. We vacationed three weeks and split our time between Waikiki Beach in Honolulu, Hawaii and Malaea Bay, Maui. This is not only close to paradise but it is such an awesome, God created, blissful and restful place to replenish our body, mind, and soul. Basking in the warmth of the warm sunshine, walking the sandy beach and feeling the sand ooze between our toes, stepping into the azure warm waters of the Pacific, eating the cuisine of the islands, shopping in boutiques, visiting with dear friends, sightseeing in areas that we had not visited when we had been to this tropical paradise previously, and just getting some much needed rest and relaxation was truly a much needed sabbatical.

Even though we thoroughly enjoyed the vacation from grief work and working with those of you like ourselves, who have endured the ultimate loss of our only child/all children, we wish Rhonda could have been with us. Rhonda would NOW be the age we were when she died. As 'time marches on' and we are nearing our 'golden years' we are even sadder, at times, to realize what Rhonda missed in life on this earth. Oh yes, we know her heavenly home is far greater than anything we experience on this earth but that does not lessen our loneliness for her. We OFTEN wonder what career would she have chosen for her life? Would she be married? Where would she be living? How many children would she have had and who would they have been?

Yes, taking a 'sabbatical' from grief work is replenishing to each of us and we need to take the time to do so. Our wish and suggestion is that each of you find "your sabbatical" no matter how big or small that will assist you on your grief journey. Take time for yourself and try to find some small measure of enjoyment that will replenish your mind, body and soul.

ALIVE ALONE SPRING 2007