

Helping Ourselves through the Holidays

In our lives there are many holidays or “special days” which are all difficult, especially for those who have lost a loved one or have experienced estrangement from family. Christmas day, more than any other holiday, is spoken dreamily of “family together.” Christmas and family are connected in music, television programs and commercials of any sort. Many clients express the wish that they could jump from November 15th to January 2nd. Listed below are some ideas and suggestions that may be helpful in coping with the holiday season. Choose the ones that seem most helpful to you and know our thoughts and prayers are with you.

What to do when the holidays bring pain and sadness:

1. Decide as a family what you want to do for the holiday season and what each can handle comfortably. If children are involved, the season will require some respect for their feelings around the holiday.
2. Keep in mind that some may wish to do the same traditions while others may want to change the routine. There isn't a set way to handle the holidays. Deciding together will mean give and take on everyone's part.
3. Once you have decided, notify relatives that may be impacted what your plans are. Remember they may or may not fully understand your decision.
4. Find your way a little at a time. It is easy to take on too many responsibilities. Filling your days with busyness may help avoid the emotions but also fatigue you beyond what may be healthy.
5. Realize it isn't going to be easy. Just do the best you can.
6. Do the things that are very special and important to you. Nothing more, nothing less. The Lord will help you find the balance between honoring the season and caring for your self.
7. As much as possible, try to get enough rest. This time of the year is draining emotionally and physically. Again, balancing activity with rest will feel elusive but even resting with you eyes closed for 10 minutes can help restore and refresh your spirit.
8. Consider doing something for someone else, such as volunteer work at a soup kitchen or reach out to an elderly person who is alone. Organizations often run short of volunteers this time of year.

9. Let others help you. If decorating, shopping, or cooking seems too much, ask a friend or family member if they would be willing to help. You also have the option of shopping online or through a catalog.
10. Don't forget: "Anticipation of any holiday is so much worse than the actual holiday." This too shall pass. Before you know it, January 2nd will have arrived.

Adapted in part from Family Life Education, 1342 Lancaster Ave., Syracuse, N.Y. 13210

Compliments of Practical Family Living, Inc.

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