

# AT THE CENTER

Sharing God's work at the Mall Ministry

Burlington Center  
**Mall Ministry**  
*Jesus is at the Center*

Fall 2008

## A Letter to Grief ... with a Response

*Below is an exercise from our **Healing After Loss** program. Participant Lori Lyons attended the program to help deal with the loss of her nephew, the eighth loss she has experienced in the past few years. She says, "Grief is one of God's most unwelcome gifts." With her permission, we are sharing Lori's correspondence.*

### A Letter to Grief

Dear Grief, Sadness, Pain, Disbelief, Shock, Anger, Fear, and Acceptance:

I'm writing because I want you to know how I feel about you being in my life. You have all had your roles to play, though I have wrestled most with Anger.

Some of you caused my body to shake, my heart to race, my mind to go where it's never been—darkness, or utter confusion where I heard only lies. My tears flowed like a dam just opened. Other times: no words, no tears, only numbness. Even so, you have taught me and I thank you. Thank you for the sensitivity and compassion I can pass on to others who meet you face-to-face.

Ronnie was my family, my friend. His death erased my dreams of future parties together, phone calls or hearing about his son's accomplishments. He'd gone to Florida to be near his children. I could burst with joy whenever I heard his voice. Ronnie was so kind, passionate, fun to be around.

All you guys invaded my privacy and wore me down. I know there

will be another time in my life when you will return. Hopefully, I won't be as weary or resentful but will accept you with grace so you can accomplish the purpose for which you were sent.

I know that you can never totally destroy me because the Lord has his hold on me. Isaiah says: "Fear not for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are mine." I know with surety that there is a bigger plan going on here and in my heart. So back to you, Anger. Take me as far as you need me to go. On the other side Hope and Trust are waiting for me. Until then, let me rest awhile. Let me go back to the family that I love so much. It's time to let the light shine more than the darkness. I pray for the day when I can say, "It is well with my soul."

~Lori

Continued on pg 2



Lori shows her memory quilt made from her mother's dresses

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## Grief Writes Back Continued from pg 1

Dear Lori,  
I'm not shocked or disappointed by what you shared with me. I appreciate your honesty. It allows room for me to minister to you the way I've been sent to do it—never for your harm, but only for your good even if it doesn't feel that way at the time.

I heard you say I was an unwelcome visitor. I didn't take that personally, but I had a visit with Love, Joy and Peace and asked if you felt the same way about them. They told me, "Early on—when she was 30—she struggled with receiving us. But she worked through it and we found ourselves right at home." So I understand your frustration, your tears and all the questions that have risen since you've met me again.

My job has never

been easy, but it was chosen for me. I have accepted it with all its ups and downs because it has an invisible strengthening quality. If you persevere, I won't destroy you. That's never my purpose. You're different because you have Hope. I saw him the first night I arrived and was encouraged because "Hope doesn't disappoint. God has poured His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit whom He has given us." And another scripture: "We do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him." As Jesus said, "You don't have to trust me, but trust in the one who

sent me."

I truly am sorry for your loss. I know Ronnie well because I had been with him also. He told me his Hope was in the Lord. "May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him so that you may overflow with Hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Until we meet again.

I love you,  
*GRIEF*

*If you or someone you know is feeling the pain of losing a loved one, consider attending the next 7-week session of **Healing After Loss for faith-based grief support.** Call the Ministry (609.239.9300) as **soon as possible** for more information or to register.*

### You're Invited!

#### A Blue Christmas:

*For those dealing with loss and grief, hope and encouragement to help through the holidays*

**Monday  
December 1  
7:30-8:30 pm  
Please RSVP**

## Ways YOU Can Help

### INTERCEDE

Email prayer requests are available biweekly.

### RECYCLE

Bring used name brand (not Epson or Canon) inkjet cartridges to BCMM. Your trash becomes our cash!

### VOLUNTEER

We can use one-time or ongoing help. Volunteers always needed. Training is provided.

### SHOP AMAZON

BCMM benefits if you order thru our website.

### GROCERY RECEIPTS

When you shop at area **Acmes** and **Shop Rite of Willingboro**—we receive 1% of purchases.

### FINANCIAL GIFTS

We appreciate ongoing pledges and one-time gifts. Consider honoring a loved one or celebrating a special event with a gift.

### GOODSEARCH.COM

Designate BCMM as your charity and use this as your search engine.

### COMMERCE BANK

Link a new or existing account to Mall Ministries Inc. Affinity program.

**WANTED!** Looking for volunteers to... gift wrap in December, pray, sit out front as host, update our website, create a Ministry scrapbook, write press releases, help with teen outreach...

*To help, contact the Ministry*

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