

RESOURCES AND IDEAS FOR ORPHAN AND WIDOW CARE

Widow Care:

- Pray and ask God what kind of care you can offer any widows/widowers/single parents you know (or have yet to meet) .
- Offer regular invitations to dinner. If they refuse, because getting dressed and out the door feels overwhelming, then regularly drop off dinner instead with no pressure to have polite conversation. Just drop it and go.
- Bake them baked goods each month and have a regular, scheduled monthly appointment where you go to drop them off and spend time with them, if they want company.
- Stop by for regular visits or scheduled game nights monthly.
- For a widow(er) , if they have kids, offer babysitting so they can have alone time to grieve. For the single parent, offer babysitting so they can sit alone and decompress.
- In that same vein, for widow(er) s or single parents, ask if they would like you to spend special time with the kids, getting to know them, or taking them on playdates. I emphasize that you ask if this would be appreciated or not, because the widow(er) , in particular, may not wish to bring new people into their kids' lives at such a tender time, so it's important to ask.
- Offer to just sit quietly without speaking. Sometimes people just want company without the pressure of talking.

(Page 1)

RESOURCES AND IDEAS FOR ORPHAN AND WIDOW CARE

Widow Care (continued):

- Offer to have a movie night where you watch a comedy. Many seek comic relief and any sense of joy or normalcy.
 - Bring them coffee regularly.
- Buy them massages. If they have kids, watch the kids for them so they can go get the massages.
- Take them out to eat. Ask them how they are doing and allow them to dictate if they want to discuss their struggles or not.
 - Do their laundry.
 - Clean their house.
 - Pay for their therapy.
- Coordinate with another family—one of you babysits their kids (if they have any) . the other opens up their vacation home to offer respite for them to spend time by themselves. Or, if they prefer the kids come, then offer that, too.

(Page 2)

Widow Care (continued):

- Don't forget to keep showing up. For widow(er) s in particular, they can get overwhelmed with support immediately after death. But when they really need support is in the weeks, months, and years that follow. Mark the date of death, their birthday, and their anniversary on your phone as a reminder. Make sure you surround them with extra support especially in the days/weeks approaching these dates.
- Arrange for a handyman to come fix the things in their house that need fixing. Home repair can feel especially overwhelming, especially if the person who passed away was normally the " fixer."
- For the widow(er) , be willing to talk about their lost spouse with them. Do not treat their dead spouse as a taboo subject. It's hard to feel like everyone has forgotten your spouse. Don't be scared if they start crying. They probably will. But if they start crying, say " I'm sorry" and that you miss them too. Don't feel like you have to fill the space with anything more than that.
- Don't badger them. If they aren't ready for any of the above, just let them know you are praying for them and check in with them in a few weeks to see if they are ready for support yet.

(Page 3)

RESOURCES AND IDEAS FOR ORPHAN AND WIDOW CARE

Orphan Care:

- Pray and ask God what kind of care you can offer any orphans you know (or have yet to meet).
- Become a licensed foster worker.
- Become an adoptive parent.
- Become a CASA. This particular organization appoints volunteers to work as an advocate in the court system when a child is going through foster care. Essentially, you are another person on the child's team to advocate in the best interest of the child while they are in care. Find out more info here:
<https://nationalcasagal.org/>
- Once a month make a meal for a foster family and/or adoptive family in your church. Make a commitment to do this for them every month. Try to find out what their foster children's favorite meals are. This will allow the foster family an extra hour where they don't have to cook and they can spend time bonding with their foster children (attachment and bonding are often large issues for foster/adoptive children and the more time the family has to do attachment-building activities, the better).

(Page 1)

Orphan Care (continued):

→Once a week or once a month, make a meal for a single parent family.

→Become a licensed respite care provider for foster and/or adoptive families in your church. Sometimes they will need a break in childcare. Make sure you receive training in trauma and attachment disorders so that the family can relax with their child in your care, knowing you are informed and prepared. Find out ahead of time if they have any disabilities of which you need to be aware. Educate yourself on their specific disabilities.

→Become a regular, monthly babysitter for a foster and/or adoptive family. Again, become knowledgeable in trauma and attachment disorders before you do this. You want to make sure the family knows that you are informed and prepared. Ask them to provide you specific information on how you should handle particular behaviors. Find out ahead of time if they have any disabilities of which you need to be aware.

(Page 2)

RESOURCES AND IDEAS FOR ORPHAN AND WIDOW CARE

Orphan Care (continued):

- Offer free babysitting once a month to a single parent family.
- Become a Big Brother or Big Sister mentor in your area. Let them know you would love to have a child as your Little Bro/Sis. More info here:
<https://www.bbbs.org/>
- Donate Services. If you have a business or a hobby that might benefit children or parents, help them out. Do this on a consistent/regular basis to maintain connection and contact.
- Become a Safe Family. Host families voluntarily take in children for short periods of time. <https://safe-families.org/involvement/host-family/>
- Or become a Family Friend. Family Friends provide support to families in crisis as well as respite to host families. <https://safe-families.org/involvement/family-friend/>

(Page 3)

RESOURCES AND IDEAS FOR ORPHAN AND WIDOW CARE

Orphan Care (continued):

- Become a Family Coach. Family Coaches provide support to both Safe Families and Family Friends. You are able to help families in crisis by supporting these two critical supports. <https://safe-families.org/involvement/be-a-family-coach/>
- Support adoptive and foster families. Be a listening ear who offers zero judgment; just listens. Bring the parents coffee regularly. Buy them massages. Take them out to eat. Ask them how they are doing and don't let them get away with just saying "fine." Do their laundry. Clean their house. Pay for their therapy.
- Coordinate with another family. One of you babysits, the other opens up their vacation home to offer respite for the parents.

(Page 4)

RESOURCES AND IDEAS FOR ORPHAN AND WIDOW CARE

Orphan Care (continued):

→Start a support group for adoptive/foster families in your church or community. Contact your pastor or a leader in your church about having a support group, luncheon, or any kind of event that might get local foster/adopt parents connected. Many times those already involved in care are too overwhelmed to try to seek out or organize getting connected with others. They desperately need the connection, and you could be the bridge for them. Make sure you offer childcare during the event with trained caregivers who are aware of some of the complex issues adoptive/foster children are facing. If adoptive/foster parents feel stressed about the childcare, they will not show up and will remain isolated.

→Offer to pay-ongoing-for summer camps or week-long camps during school breaks for a single-parent family.

→At the beginning of a school year, offer to pay for any miscellaneous school expenses for a single-parent family for the entire year (ie: school uniforms, school books, field trip fees, sports uniforms, book fairs, etc.) .

(Page 5)

Orphan Care (continued):

- Ask a teacher at the local school to alert you any time a student in their class doesn't have the fees to participate in any school activities.
Anonymously pay these fees every time.
- Anonymously drop groceries on a single parent's porch once a month.

(Page 6)