

PRECIOUS MEMORIES

*Precious memories unseen angels
Sent from somewhere to my soul
How they linger ever near me
And the sacred past unfold.*

*Precious father loving mother
Fly across the lonely years
And old home scenes of my childhood
In fond memory appears.*

*In the stillness of the midnight
Echoes from the past I hear
Old time singing gladness bringing
From that lovely land somewhere.*

*As I travel on life's pathway
Knowing not what the years may hold
As I ponder hope grows fonder
Precious memories flood my soul.*

CHORUS:

*Precious memories how they linger
How they ever flood my soul
In the stillness of the midnight
Precious sacred scenes unfold.*

A Handbook For Starting A Precious Memories Support Ministry

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**Dr. C. Bill Hathaway
Founder**

**THE
PRECIOUS MEMORIES
SUPPORT MINISTRY**

*For Those
Who Have
Lost Their
Life's Mate*



**A MINISTRY
OF
BAPTIST TEMPLE**
2655 N. Grant Ave.
Springfield, MO 65803
Phone: 417-831-2631

The Precious Memories Support Ministry is a ministry designed to encourage and comfort those whose spouse has passed away. The ministry was started by Missionary/Pastor Bill Hathaway following the home-going to his wife of 51 years, Dixie A. Hathaway. Following my wife's departure on Feb. 4, 2005 I realized the need to help others go through this valley. After asking several hundred missionaries and pastors via e-mail for a name for this ministry, the name **Precious Memories** was suggested. The first meeting was held in April, 2006 at Baptist Temple in Springfield, Missouri where we have been members since the year 2000.



Dixie A. Hathaway

Since then, the Springfield New Leader Newspaper printed the story on July 8, 2006. and a second chapter was started at Northside Baptist Temple in Mt. Vernon, Missouri. The ministry is also announced daily by the KWFC radio station in Springfield, Missouri. Pastors have been calling expressing an interest in starting **Precious Memories Support Ministries** in their churches all over America. This manual is intended as a guide in getting one started.

dead in Christ shall rise first: {17} Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

B. The living have no advantage over those whose bodies are asleep in Jesus. In fact, they will be resurrected first. Then in an instant, we will join them on the way up. Hallelujah!

V. GOD REMINDS US TO GIVE SOLANCE.

- A. 1 Thes 4:18 “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”
- B. He gave us His Word so we could comfort each other with it. He wants us to comfort others who are going through the valley we are experiencing.
- C. Without the Lord, there is no hope! With the Lord, there is positive hope! Although we grieve and sorrow, that sorrow is lessened with the knowledge that our loved ones are in a wonderful place, comforted, loved, happy and waiting for us.

CONCLUSION:

Thank God every day that you are saved and that your loved one is saved and in the very presence of his (her) Savior. What a wonderful reunion we will have. I'm looking forward to that great day. In the meanwhile, we've got a job to do. Let's keep busy doing the Lord's work.

Miss Me ... But Let Me Go ...

*When I come to the end of the road,
And the sun has set for me.*

*I want no rites in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?*

*Miss me a little but not too long
And not with your head bowed low.*

*Remember the love that we once shared.
Miss me ... but let me go.*

For this is a journey that we all must take.

*And each must go alone.
It's all a part of the Master's plan
A step on the road to home.*

When you are lonely and sick of heart.

Go to friends we know.

And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds.

Miss me ... but let me go.

I. GOD REVEALS THE SECRET.

- A. 1 Thes. 4:13a “But I would not have you to be ignorant...” Jesus does not want his followers to be unaware of their loved one’s condition. Therefore He takes us beyond the veil and assures us of their comfort.
- B. Christ told us of the poor beggar and how after he died he was carried by the angels to be comforted.
- C. The Scriptures tell us that, for the Christian, “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.” God tells us the secret. He let’s us know what is on the other side of death. He tells us of that which our human eyes cannot see.

II. GOD REDUCES THE SORROW

- A. 1 Thes 4:13b “...that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.” He doesn’t REMOVE the sorrow for we are still going to grieve over being separated from our loved ones. To have no hope is tragic, but that is not our case. We have the assurance of God that we shall see our departed loved ones again.
- B. Christ understands our grief. (Heb 4:15) “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”
- C. Christ wept at his friend Lazarus’ tomb. (John 11:33-37) “When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, {34} And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. {35} Jesus wept. {36} Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! {37} And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?”

III. GOD REFERS US TO THE SAVIOR.

- A. 1 Thes 4:14 “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” Jesus conquered the grave and if we are “in Him,” we are made victorious over death as well.
- B. When we hurt, it is always good to remember our Savior. Think about the fact that our loved one is right now with Him. To be with Jesus...what consolation! What comfort!

IV. GOD RECITES THE SCHEDULE.

- A. 1 Thes 4:15-17 “{15} For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. {16} For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

***T**he material contained in this booklet are only suggestions gained from personal experience in getting this ministry started. Things that work in one place may not work in another. In Springfield, having the people bring a pot-luck plate for a luncheon works great, but in Mt. Vernon we had to change to a coffee, juice and donut social time. It is also my wish that you call your ministry **Precious Memories Support Ministry**, but even that is up to you.*

***W**ithout a doubt, the best person in charge of this ministry ought to be someone who has personally experienced the loss of his/her life’s partner. “Experience is the best teacher” is especially true here. When those attending realize that their leader is going through the same valley they they are experiencing, they will confide in that person. However, until a person is available to fill that position, the pastor, deacon or some other person could do so until the right person is available.*

***I** believe that the home-going of a spouse is the deepest valley a person experiences. Nothing can compare with it. Only those who have experienced it, know what I mean. With that in mind, the **Precious Memories Support Ministry** was born. I pray that this booklet will be a help to you in getting one started in your church.*

Dr. Bill Hathaway

(2 Cor. 1:4) “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. The Secret Of Success in this ministry is three-fold:
 - a. A leader with a burden for this ministry.
 - b. A church with a desire for this ministry.
 - c. Prayer and the backing of the church.
2. Contact the local newspaper informing them of this new ministry. Ask if they want to do an interview or send a reporter and photographer to the 3rd or 4th meeting. Waiting until the 3rd or 4th time gives time for the attendance to increase.
3. If the Church has a web-site, include this ministry.
4. Decide on the time and day. It is best to schedule the meeting for the same time each month. Once a month usually works.
5. Decide if you want a luncheon such as a pot-luck luncheon or a coffee, juice, donuts and/or cookie time.
6. Promote this time in church bulletins and announcements from the pulpit and in the adult Sunday School classes.
7. Start small, with your own church people.
8. Make brochures to be distributed at other local churches, funeral homes, hospices places, etc.
9. Have your church people carry one or two brochures with them to be given to those they meet who need this ministry.
10. Send an announcement or news release before each meeting to the local news-paper requesting it be printed in the Church and Community Calendar section, or other appropriate place.
11. Contact local radio stations, especially Christian stations requesting they announce this ministry giving the day, time, place, phone numbers and other necessary information.
12. Have someone save the obituary column from the local newspapers and someone to send a brochure to the bereaved person. After about 3 or 4 months, send a letter with the dates and time of the next meeting. It usually takes 3 to 4 months and in some cases a longer period before some are ready to attend a support meeting.
13. Send a news release to all the newspapers within a 30 to 40 mile radius of the church or place of the meeting with all the details.

BE GLORIFIED IF YOU BELIEVE.

- A. The Glory of God is the Most Important Thing In The Universe. You say, "But that's a difficult experience for people to go through just for the glory of God." It was difficult for Jesus to die on the cross for the glory of God, but He did it ---and He did it for you!
- B. He Will Be Glorified Through Your Testimony.
- C. He Will Be Glorified Through Your Life.

CONCLUSION:

Remember: **GOD LOVES YOU! CHRIST IS WITH YOU!
GOD'S WILL IS BEST! GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED IF YOU BELIEVE!**

GOD'S GIFT TO HIS GRIEVING CHILDREN

INTRO. God has a message in His Word for every human need. God has not left us in the dark about things that matter to them. God loves us and does not want us to be ignorant of those truths that would give us hope and comfort in troubling times. There is nothing more troubling and mysterious than death. We cannot see beyond this world. We cannot see the angels as they carry the souls of our saved loved ones to heaven to be with the Lord. We can not see them take that first step into glory. We cannot see their faces when they first see their Savior. We cannot see their heavenly home. Oh, how we wish we could just get a glimpse of heaven...a glimpse of our loved one. What is she (he) doing right now? Can I get a message to her? Does she see me? I doubt this, but the thoughts are still there. Sometimes these thoughts are so overwhelming that in my case, I break down and cry. I can't help it. But the sunshine of God's love shines through to calm our spirits and heal our broken hearts. Notice the scripture reading: (1 Th 4:13-18 KJV) But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. {14} For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. {15} For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. {16} For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: {17} Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. {18} Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

the love of God by your feelings or your circumstances!
In fact, in Mary & Martha's case, the neighbors noticed that Jesus loved them before they did. John 11:36 "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!"

II. CHRIST IS WITH YOU

The second assurance is Christ is WITH YOU. We have an advantage that Mary & Martha did not have. Jesus had to come to Bethany. He was limited to His physical body then. But now He is ALWAYS with us. Heb. 13:5 "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*"

- A. He Knows Your Sorrow. Ps. 56:8 "Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book?" The suggestion here is that God keeps a record of your tears.
- B. He Shares Your Sorrow. He not only KNOWS your sorrow, but He SHARES your sorrow. John 11:35 "Jesus Wept." Isa 53:3 says He is a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.
- C. He Can Transform Your Sorrow. He KNOWS your sorrow. He SHARES your sorrow. He can TRANSFORM your sorrow. He said to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die (John 11:25,26)." Death for the believer is only sleep. Jesus said in verse 11, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The body sleeps in the grave, the spirit goes home to be with the Lord.

III. GOD'S WILL IS BEST

Assurance number 1 is that GOD LOVES YOU. Assurance number 2 is that CHRIST IS WITH YOU. Assurance number 3 is GOD'S WILL IS BEST.

- A. God Has His Time. The disciples couldn't understand why Jesus waited 2 days. Jesus said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day" John 11:9. He has a divine time schedule.
- B. God Has His Purposes. One purpose was to strengthen the people involved. Jesus said (John 11:15) "And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe." The faith of the disciples was increased by this experience.
- C. I Don't Know God's Purposes In What You Are Going Through. It is not mine to question. From past experiences, I know God's way is always the best way... even though I don't understand.

IV. THE FOURTH & FINAL ASSURANCE IS THAT GOD WILL

WHAT TO EXPECT FOLLOWING THE LOSS

Every person handles the loss of their spouse differently. It is almost impossible to come up with an orderly sequence of events that apply in every case. Everyone's emotions are different. However, from my own experience as well as what I have learned from others who attend our Precious Memories Support meetings, I will attempt to give you the normal process experienced by most people.

SHOCK AND UNBELIEF—This is normally true for those whose spouse died suddenly by an accident or a short illness. However, it is often true when it is expected due to extremely old age or a very long illness. This is the time when comfort is needed the most. Merely saying, "Well, he's in a better place," or "Well, she's not suffering any more" does not relieve the sorrow.

ANGER—Not all, but a good number of people go through this stage. "Why did You take my husband?" "Why did You let her suffer so long and then take her?" "God, You know everything. Why didn't you heal him?" These are just some questions people ask God. I have been told by "professionals" whose business it is to help people, that is a very common attitude.

LONELINESS—The realization that "I am alone!" is without a doubt the height of loneliness. Nothing can compare with the loneliness of sorrow. I have read that "more than 50 percent of heart patients admitted that they were lonely before they had their heart attack. It affects the entire body. Some become so lonely that they feel like ending their own life. Loneliness has physical, emotional and spiritual consequences. God made both man and woman because He knew they needed the comfort of each other. The Bible tells us in Gen 2:18, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." We were not made to handle loneliness, but with God's help and the comfort of others, especially those who have gone through the valley of loneliness, one can overcome. That's why the Precious Memories Support Ministry was born.

HOW TO CONDUCT THE MEETING

1. Decide if your meeting is to be a luncheon or a coffee, juice, donuts and cookie time.
2. If a luncheon, you might ask the people to bring a pot-lunch dinner.
3. If a social time with coffee and juice, perhaps the church could provide the drinks and donuts.
4. It is a good idea to have a name tag for each person to wear.
5. A card should be given to each person to be filled out with:
 - (a) Name, address, phone number
 - (b) Name of departed one and date of his/her birth, death, birthday.
6. While people are bring in the food, have chairs prepared for them to sit and chat with each other.
7. After most of the people are almost through eating, give your own testimony of how you are coping with your loss and urge those who wish to do so, to give their testimony.
8. Talking about their loved one should be encouraged. Most friends at church don't know what to say and even avoid mentioning the name of the departed person. At this meeting, people can talk freely to each other about their loved one.
9. A short devotion should be given that is geared to encourage and comfort.
10. Announce when the next meeting will be held.
11. Make an announcement that the leader will remain after all have gone in order to speak personally with any who desire such a meeting.
12. Sample business card for this ministry.



DR. C. "BILL" HATHAWAY
-Precious Memories Support Ministry-

3149 Maranatha Lane, Apt. 8
Springfield, MO 65803
Phone: (417) 368-3792 • Fax (806) 398-7090
Cell: (417) 569-4373 sos4souls@mchsi.com

**A MINISTRY GEARED TO HELP THOSE WHOSE LIFE'S MATE
HAS GONE TO BE WITH THE LORD**

A time of fellowship, luncheon & devotion at the following locations:
BAPTIST TEMPLE, SPRINGFIELD (2nd Saturday each month at 12 noon)

SAMPLE DEVOTION OUTLINES

BY BILL HATHAWAY

THE LONELINESS OF SORROW

INTRO. The most difficult kind of sorrow is the Loneliness of Sorrow. No one knows this except those who have experienced it. I guess the most used remark I get is "I can't imagine." Or "I've never experienced it and hope I never will." Or "I don't think I could handle it." **1 Thes 4:13 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."** It is not wrong to sorrow...it is wrong to sorrow "as others who have no hope." I want to bring you a few thoughts of encouragement today.

I. GOD LOVES YOU

Some think that if God loves you, you shouldn't get sick, but Lazarus got sick...and died. Perhaps Mary and Martha might have questioned the love of the Lord Jesus. Lazarus certainly must have been walking in the will of God, but still got sick. But God still loves you!

- A. Love & Suffering. Suffering is not incompatible with love. Sometimes we ask for our problems or sickness. It's our own fault. If God intervened every time we were heading for a calamity, this world would really be a mess. The cross is proof that suffering is not incompatible with love.
- B. Love & Delays. Mary and Martha might have questioned God's love because of our Lord's delay. John 11:6 "When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was." Jesus didn't hurry...He didn't have to.
- C. Love & Disappointment. The Sisters were disappointed. Listen to Martha. John 11:32 "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." There is no need to question God.
- D. Love & God's Word. How do we know that God loves us? Because the Word of God tells us so. *Never judge*