



## WHEN FRIENDS HURT

When grief and disaster strike, well-meaning people can do more damage than good. When life is at its hardest, it's not the time to talk about God's good plan, how things aren't that bad, or they should get over it. The book of Proverbs says, *one who takes away a garment on a cold day, or like vinegar poured on a wound, is one who sings songs to a heavy heart* (25:20).

So what do we do when friends hurt? When our own children cannot be consoled?

**Show up.** Don't avoid the person or the tender subject because it's too hard or you're afraid you'll make things worse. Simply show up. Draw near. Your presence will speak volumes about your love and care.

**Listen.** Ask thoughtful questions. Ask how you can help, how they are feeling, and then remind them how much they matter to you. Be comfortable in the silence. Ask what you can pray for and if it's all right for you to pray right then and there.

**Repeat.** Show up. Listen. Pray. And if it's not your child who is hurting, invite her to come along, if appropriate, to see what love looks like when friends hurt.

## BIBLE VERSE

*When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him (Job 2:11).*

## DID YOU KNOW?

GEMS Girls' Clubs offers prayer support to all their clubs—including GEMS and their families. If you would like GEMS Prayer Friends to pray for you, please email your requests to [prayers@gemsgc.org](mailto:prayers@gemsgc.org). These praying women will only share your requests with our heavenly Father! Be quick to share your prayer needs today.

## AT THE TABLE

In a word, how would you describe your family's mealtimes? Compare it to Shauna Niequist's description. She writes, "Meals can be so much more than just refueling stops. When we slow down to enjoy the food and the company and think about what we're doing, meals can nourish our spirits as well as our bodies."

The next time your family gathers around the table, use these theme-related table talk questions to get your family talking about the things of God:

1. What are words that bring healing to friends who hurt?
2. What resource does your family have that can be shared with others?
3. What is your best advice about how to treat other people?

## FAMILY FUN

**Interviews:** Ask your grandparents or an elderly neighbor or friend if you can interview them. Prepare your questions ahead of time. Ask things like, "What was your favorite thing to do when you were my age?" "Who had the greatest influence on your life?" "What advice do you have for me about how to love God and people?"

**Care Packages:** Who is someone you know who is hurting right now? Create a care package for them! Maybe the items will all center on their favorite things (sports, animals, or travel) or a certain color (every item is yellow, orange, or green). Or maybe it will contain a Joy Jar—filled with sweets, scripture verses, and little notes about how much you care.

**Go Local!** Has your family explored every part of your local area? Think museums, parks, libraries, and trails? Plan a morning or evening that's close by, but is somewhere new to your family. Delight in all that is special and unique about the place you call home!

