

## Practical Ideas to help grieving friends and family

1. [www.lotsahelpinghands.com](http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com) This is a website to help organize all the people who want to help with meals, laundry, etc. in the first few weeks after a death (or other times families need support.) One person sets up the account, others are invited to participate, so it's not available to just anybody. It organizes support so that not too much is brought the first couple of days and then nothing later.
2. Offer to launder bedding, towels, etc. after the company leaves.
3. Purchase staples that the family uses (have someone familiar look in the home, or ask what brands they prefer.) Some suggestions:
  - a. Kleenex – the softest kind available
  - b. TP
  - c. Shampoo
  - d. Cream Rinse
  - e. Toothpaste
  - f. Hand Soap
  - g. Laundry Soap
  - h. Fabric Softener
  - i. Tampons/Pads (if women in the home)
  - j. Deodorant
  - k. Paper towels, plates, cups, napkins
4. Address envelopes (for thank-yous, bills, etc.) They will likely want to write thank-yous & bills themselves, but having the envelopes already addressed & stamped is helpful.
5. If they are comfortable with it, have friends come in and clean at least weekly.
6. Or Hire a cleaning service for one or more months.
7. Through the first few weeks, have someone who will call to say "I'm going to the store, (or the post office, or drugstore, or whatever) is there anything you'd like me to pick up for you?" (Often it's extremely hard to be in a store where everyone is doing "normal" things.)
8. Take turns calling or sending a note at least weekly, then monthly, then on the "special days" – birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's/Father's Day, holidays, and some days just to say "I'm thinking of you."
9. Encourage people to write down favorite memories of the person who died and send them to the family. Especially when the person who died is young, you feel like you didn't get enough memories to last a lifetime.
10. Shovel the driveway/sidewalk, rake leaves, etc. without asking.
11. Listen without giving advice unless asked for.

12. Ask them to share the memories/pictures/stories about the person who died, and let them talk about how they learned of the person's death, the first few days, the funeral, etc.
13. Designate friends to answer phone.
14. Designate someone to act as buffer for the family.
15. Arrange accommodations for out-of-town family & friends.
16. Provide food for after memorial service.
17. Fix frozen family size meals to heat up in the future (spread out over several months depending on freezer size.)
18. Clean refrigerator and/or freezer after a week and after a month to clear out unused leftovers.
19. Organizing/assist with bill paying.
20. Ongoing support for family, such as monthly cards, flowers, other tokens to let them know you're thinking of them.
21. Cards on birthdays, anniversary of death, holidays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, etc.
22. Child care.
23. Cleaning
24. Laundry
25. Packing school lunches for kids
26. Invite kids to make cookies, go on outings, etc.