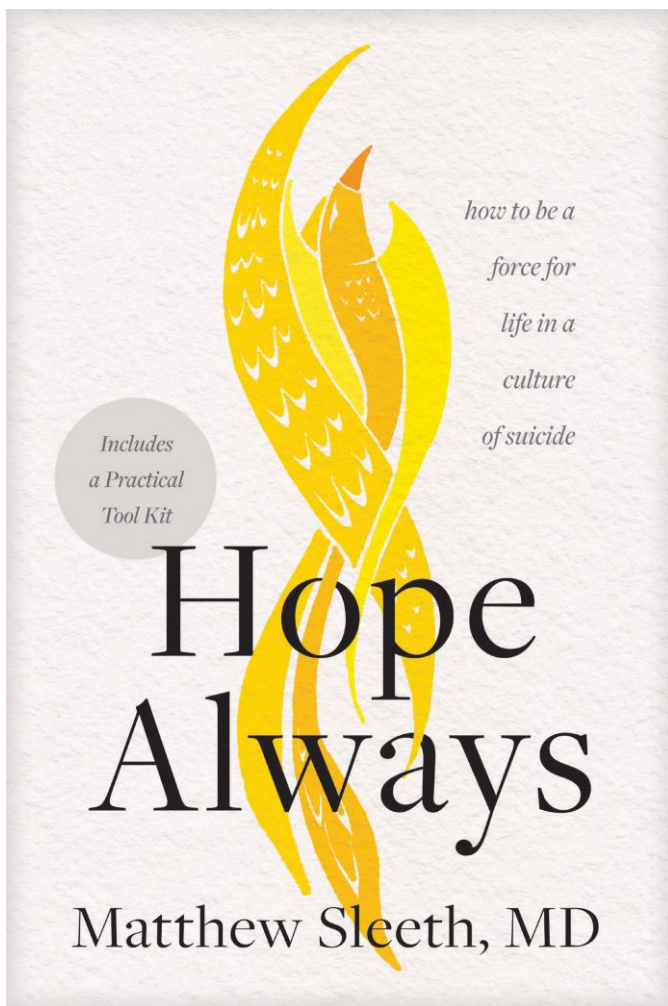


# THE HOPE ALWAYS TOOL KIT

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the  
tune without the words -And never stops at all

EMILY DICKINSON



# THE HOPE ALWAYS TOOL KIT

*Dear brothers and sisters, one final thing.  
Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and  
right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about  
things that are excellent and worthy of praise.*

Philippians 4:8

This toolkit includes practical resources for you to reach people who are depressed and suicidal in your community. In it you will find:

- Twelve ways you can help save a life
- Lists of Scripture passages and quotes
- Playlists of uplifting hymns and songs
- Movies that can refill the well
- Fiction and nonfiction book recommendations
- A sample church policy
- Additional resources

If faith has helped you or a loved one overcome depression or suicide, I would like to hear your story! The same goes for churches that have started a suicide prevention initiative.

You can reach me at [matthew@blessedearth.org](mailto:matthew@blessedearth.org). I hope to hear from you soon!

# TWELVE WAYS YOU CAN HELP SAVE A LIFE

Here are twelve ways that you can encourage someone who is feeling depressed or suicidal. These ideas are things anyone can do to help.

- 1. Visit.** People need to know that someone cares, and nothing does that more than spending time together. Visit at their home or yours, at a restaurant or a coffee shop. Sit in a park or take a walk. There is no replacement for human touch, the human voice, and the presence of another person.
- 2. Call.** A timely phone call and a listening ear can be lifesaving. If you don't know what to say, start with something like "I was thinking about you this morning and just wanted to check in and see how you are doing." Or "Is this an okay time to talk? I just wanted to tell you how much I love you and that I've been praying for you." No matter how you start, the important thing is to pay attention and listen.
- 3. Ask questions.** Whether it's in person or over the phone, ask open-ended, nonjudgmental questions. Here are some examples:
  - "What are you doing for fun lately?"
  - "Are you getting outside?"
  - "What music are you listening to?"

- “What does your routine look like these days?”
- “Are you having trouble sleeping?”
- “What was the high point and low point of the past week?”
- “On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you feeling today?”

The point is to get a fuller picture of their interior life and gently suggest ways to combat their despair.

- 4. Send a passage from Scripture or an uplifting quote.** This can take many forms: emails, texts, handwritten notes on index cards, calligraphy posters, or even needlepoint. It can be quick and simple or framed and beautiful. A list of Scriptures to get you started is found in this tool kit (pages **177–194**). Encourage your friend to claim God’s Word as promises they can count on.
- 5. Make a playlist or burn a CD of uplifting songs and hymns.** Music is one of the important ways many people hear the voice of God. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, in times of care and sorrow, music “will keep a fountain of joy alive in you.” This resource section includes a sampling of both Christian and secular music across the spectrum to get you started. Musical tastes vary; the important thing is to personalize the playlist for the individual you are trying to help.
- 6. Write a letter and send it via snail mail.** In the age of electronic communication, receiving a card or letter in the mail is a special treat. The bonus is that the person can hold on to the letter and reread it when feeling despondent or hopeless.
- 7. Share a prayer.** When my wife receives emails or texts asking for prayer, instead of responding with a promise, she sends a prayer right then and there. If you don’t feel comfortable with unscripted prayer, you can send a few personalized lines followed by the Aaronic blessing:

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee:

The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Numbers 6:24-26, kjv

8. **Share a meal.** More people than I can count have eaten around our table. Jesus did much of his teaching over shared meals for a reason: something about the relaxed environment helps people let down their guard and share what is really on their hearts. Your relationship is never the same once someone has been welcomed into your home. Note that the root of “hospitality” and “hospital” are the same; hospitality heals!
9. **Take a walk.** My wife keeps up with most of her friends on walk-talks. The lack of interruptions, the release of endorphins, the connection with God’s creation, and the rhythm of walking side by side all help to build deeper connections. At the end, she holds hands and prays with the friend, reflecting what they have learned together and offering up any concerns to our Lord, the Great Healer.
10. **Sabbath together.** The Hebrew word for holy is *kadosh*, which means “set apart.” Think of Sabbath time as a time set apart from worldly concerns, commerce, and work. If your friend has been withdrawing, ask them to join you for church or for a walk and a meal after worship. Or try practicing screenless Sundays together, a holy time set apart for family, friends, and God. It’s been shown repeatedly that time spent in nature can be both uplifting and healing.
11. **Do something fun.** Sometimes just being together is more important than what you say. Play a board game, watch a movie, or listen to some favorite music together. Push back the furniture and dance. Read an uplifting fictional work or a book from the Bible aloud. Find a south-facing hill and soak up the sun. Go outside on a clear night and look

at the stars. People who are depressed tend to isolate and turn inward. Jesus sought joy in community, and so should we.

**12. Get help.** One of the most important lessons I have learned is to know when I am in over my head. Don't try to do this alone. Often a person who is depressed doesn't have the energy to seek help. Or they might not have the clarity of mind to know where to begin looking. Having a couple of excellent Christian counselors that you can trust and can refer folks to is invaluable. Ask your pastor and friends for references so you are prepared when the need arises. Helping a person who is depressed can be taxing, so be sure you have people praying for an extra measure of strength, wisdom, and patience for you, too.



## SCRIPTURE AND QUOTES: GIVING VOICES TO OUR PAIN

People often find comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their pain. David, Solomon, Jonah, Elijah, Job, Jeremiah, and many other biblical characters experienced extreme depression, yet faith in God carried them through their darkest days. Even Jesus cried out to his Father. The bottom line: encourage your loved ones to share their pain with God and others. Voicing our pain is not only okay; it's a sign of strength and can be an important part of the healing process. The Scripture passages in this section will help you give voice to your pain and show you that you are not alone.

[Elijah] went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died."

1 Kings 19:4

Why wasn't I born dead?

Why didn't I die as I came from the womb? . . .

I cannot eat for sighing;

my groans pour out like water.

What I always feared has happened to me.

What I dreaded has come true.

I have no peace, no quietness.

I have no rest; only trouble comes.

Job 3:11, 24-26

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Why are you so far away when I groan for help?

Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.

Every night I lift my voice, but I find no relief.

Psalms 22:1-2

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my

heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to

my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

Psalms 22:14-15, kjv

Day and night I have only tears for food,

while my enemies continually taunt me, saying,

“Where is this God of yours?”

Why have you tossed me aside?

Why must I wander around in grief, oppressed by my enemies? . . .

O God, my God!

Why am I discouraged?

Why is my heart so sad?

Psalms 43:2, 4-5

You have taken away my companions and loved ones.

Darkness is my closest friend.

Psalms 88:18



I came to hate life because everything done here under the sun is so troubling. Everything is meaningless—like chasing the wind.  
Ecclesiastes 2:17

Oh, that I had died in my mother's womb,  
that her body had been my grave!  
Why was I ever born?  
My entire life has been filled  
with trouble, sorrow, and shame.

Jeremiah 20:17-18

Just kill me now, Lord! I'd rather be dead than alive.  
Jonah 4:3

At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"  
Matthew 27:46

It's not just biblical characters who suffer from depression and despair. Throughout history, countless people have expressed a desire to die yet have found the strength to face one more hour, one more day, and to go on to be a blessing to the world. Here are a few quotes that may help the people in your life who have lost hope to realize that they are not alone:

I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth. Whether I shall ever be better

I can not tell; I awfully forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible; I must die or be better, it appears to me.

Abraham Lincoln, letter to first law partner John T. Stuart, 1841

I suppose some Brethren neither have much elevation or depression. I could almost wish to share their peaceful life, for I am much tossed up and down, and although my joy is greater than the most of men, my depression of spirit is such as few can have any idea of.

Charles Spurgeon, *Israel's God and God's Israel*, Sermon 803, 1868

I don't like standing near the edge of a platform when an express train is passing through. I like to stand right back and if possible to get a pillar between me and the train. I don't like to stand by the side of a ship and look down into the water. A second's action would end everything. A few drops of desperation.

Winston Churchill, description of the "black dog" to his physician, Lord Moran, 1944

Lord, my God, who am I that You should forsake me? The child of your love—and now become as the most hated one—the one You have thrown away as unwanted—unloved. I call, I cling, I want—and there is no One to answer—no One on Whom I can cling—no, No One.—Alone.

Mother Teresa, letter to Father Picachy, 1959

Part of every misery is, so to speak, the misery's shadow or reflection: the fact that you don't merely suffer but have to keep on thinking about the fact that you suffer. I not only live each

endless day in grief, but live each day thinking about living each day in grief.

C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*, 1961

To be in a state of depression is like that. It is to be unable to occupy yourself with anything much except your state of depression. Even the most marvelous thing is like music to the deaf. Even the greatest thing is like a shower of stars to the blind.

Frederick Buechner, *Whistling in the Dark*, 1993

The anguish completely paralyzed me. I could no longer sleep. I cried uncontrollably for hours. I could not be reached by consoling words or arguments. I no longer had any interest in other people's problems. I lost all appetite for food and could not appreciate the beauty of music, art, or even nature. All had become darkness. Within me there was one long scream coming from a place I didn't know existed, a place full of demons.

Henri Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey through Anguish to Freedom*, published 1996

## SCRIPTURES AND QUOTES: HOPE

God's promises are more powerful than our despair. He is always with us, even when we feel most alone. Below is a sampling of the many Scriptures you can send to loved ones who are feeling hopeless and helpless.

When Charles Spurgeon, who suffered from lifelong depression, was in a dark hole, he would look for a Scripture that exactly fit his need. He would then pray something like this: "Lord, this is your promise, and I have faith in your Word. I humbly plead for you to show me that this promise is true in my case."

A passage that Spurgeon turned to repeatedly was Psalm 103:13: "The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him." Spurgeon took God at his word and appealed for his Father's compassion to manifest itself in his life.

The righteous person faces many troubles,  
but the Lord comes to the rescue each time.  
Psalm 34:19

He also turns deserts into pools of water,  
the dry land into springs of water.  
Psalm 107:35

Restore our fortunes, Lord,  
as streams renew the desert.  
Those who plant in tears  
will harvest with shouts of joy.  
They weep as they go to plant their seed,  
but they sing as they return with the harvest.  
Psalm 126:4-6

I will open up rivers for them on the high plateaus.  
I will give them fountains of water in the valleys.  
I will fill the desert with pools of water.  
Rivers fed by springs will flow across the parched ground.

God, the Lord, created the heavens and stretched them out.  
He created the earth and everything in it.  
He gives breath to everyone,  
life to everyone who walks the earth.

I will brighten the darkness before them  
and smooth out the road ahead of them.  
Yes, I will indeed do these things;  
I will not forsake them.

Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you.  
I have called you by name; you are mine.  
When you go through deep waters,  
I will be with you.  
When you go through rivers of difficulty,  
you will not drown.  
When you walk through the fire of oppression,  
you will not be burned up;  
the flames will not consume you.

Do not be afraid, for I am with you.

From eternity to eternity I am God.  
No one can snatch anyone out of my hand.  
No one can undo what I have done.

I am about to do something new.  
See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?  
I will make a pathway through the wilderness.  
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.

Isaiah 43:19

I have swept away your sins like a cloud.  
I have scattered your offenses like the morning mist.  
Oh, return to me,  
for I have paid the price to set you free.

I am the Lord your God,  
who teaches you what is good for you  
and leads you along the paths you should follow.

Can a mother forget her nursing child?  
Can she feel no love for the child she has borne?  
But even if that were possible,  
I would not forget you!  
See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands.

Who among you fears the Lord  
and obeys his servant?  
If you are walking in darkness,  
without a ray of light,  
trust in the Lord  
and rely on your God.

“The mountains may move  
and the hills disappear,

but even then my faithful love for you will remain.  
My covenant of blessing will never be broken,”  
says the Lord, who has mercy on you.

Seek the Lord while you can find him.  
Call on him now while he is near.

You will live in joy and peace.  
The mountains and hills will burst into song,  
and the trees of the field will clap their hands!

I restore the crushed spirit of the humble  
and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.

The Lord will guide you continually,  
giving you water when you are dry  
and restoring your strength.  
You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like an ever-flowing spring.

Listen! The Lord's arm is not too weak to save you,  
nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call.

Darkness as black as night covers all the nations of the earth,  
but the glory of the Lord rises and appears over you.

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me,  
for the Lord has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted  
and to proclaim that captives will be released  
and prisoners will be freed.

For since the world began,

no ear has heard  
and no eye has seen a God like you,  
who works for those who wait for him!

I will answer them before they even call to me.  
While they are still talking about their needs,  
I will go ahead and answer their prayers!

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord  
and have made the Lord their hope and confidence.  
They are like trees planted along a riverbank,  
with roots that reach deep into the water.  
Such trees are not bothered by the heat  
or worried by long months of drought.  
Their leaves stay green,  
and they never stop producing fruit.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They  
are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future  
and a hope.”

Tears of joy will stream down their faces,  
and I will lead them home with great care.  
They will walk beside quiet streams  
and on smooth paths where they will not stumble.

I will turn their mourning into joy.  
I will comfort them and exchange their sorrow for rejoicing.

Jeremiah 31:13

What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not  
a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father  
knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So



don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.

Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, "Rivers of living water will flow from his heart."

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation.

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.

If God is for us, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

Romans 8:31-32

Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? . . . No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.

Romans 8:35, 37

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted

down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

Our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

2 C o r i n t h i a n s 4:17-18

Take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

Hebrews 12:12-13

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

James 4:8

Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.

Your loved one may also be inspired by quotes from people through the ages who have experienced pain and suffering and yet endured. Below are some uplifting quotes to share with loved ones:

In my deepest wound I saw your glory, and it astounded me.  
Augustine (354-430)

God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.  
Augustine (354-430)

We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.  
Martin Luther (1483-1546)

So when the devil throws your sins in your face and declares that you deserve death and hell, tell him this: "I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction on my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, Son of God, and where He is there I shall be also!"  
Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Our righteousness is in Him, and our hope depends, not upon the exercise of grace in us, but upon the fullness of grace and love in Him and upon His obedience unto death.  
John Newton (1725-1807)

Remember, in the depth and even agony of despondency, that very shortly you are to feel well again.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul and sings the tune without the words—And never stops at all.

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

All our infirmities, whatever they are, are just opportunities for God to display his gracious work in us.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

I know, perhaps as well as anyone, what depression means, and what it is to feel myself sinking lower and lower. Yet at the worst, when I reach the lowest depths, I have an inward peace which no pain or depression can in the least disturb. Trusting in Jesus Christ my Savior, there is still a blessed quietness in the deep caverns of my soul, though upon the surface, a rough tempest may be raging, and there may be little apparent calm.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

I note that some whom I greatly love and esteem, who are, in my judgment among the very choicest of God's people, nevertheless, travel most of the way to heaven by night.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

No sin is necessarily connected with sorrow of heart, for Jesus Christ our Lord once said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." There was no sin in him, and consequently none in his deep depression.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

The iron bolt which so mysteriously fastens the door of hope and holds our spirits in gloomy prison, needs a heavenly hand to push it back.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Let this one great, gracious, glorious fact lie in your spirit until it perfumes all your thoughts and makes you rejoice even though you are without strength, seeing the Lord Jesus has become your strength and your song, yes, He has become your salvation.

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)

*The other gods were strong, but Thou wast weak  
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne  
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak  
And not a god has wounds, but Thou alone.*

Edward Shillito (1872-1948)

Remember Whose you are and Whom you serve. Provoke yourself by recollection, and your affection for God will increase tenfold; your imagination will not be starved any longer, but will be quick and enthusiastic, and your hope will be inexpressibly bright.

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)

Hope means hoping when things are hopeless, or it is no virtue at all. ....As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is a mere flattery or platitude; it is only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength.

G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936)

Our world today desperately hungers for hope, and yet uncounted people have almost given up. There is despair and hopelessness on every hand. Let us be faithful in proclaiming the hope that is in Jesus!

Billy Graham (1918-2018)

Death is not a period that ends the great sentence of life, but a comma that punctuates it to a more lofty significance. Death is not a blind alley that leads the human race into a state of nothingness, but an open door which leads man into eternal life.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968)

Genuine self-acceptance is not derived from the power of positive thinking, mind games, or pop psychology. *It is an act of faith* in the God of grace.

Brennan Manning (1934–2013)

Hope is called the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19), because it gives stability to the Christian life. But hope is not simply a “wish” (I wish that such-and-such would take place); rather, it is that which latches on to the certainty of the promises of the future that God has made.

R. C. Sproul (1939–2017)

The best we can hope for in this life is a knothole peek at the shining realities ahead. Yet a glimpse is enough. It’s enough to convince our hearts that whatever sufferings and sorrows currently assail us aren’t worthy of comparison to that which waits over the horizon.

Joni Eareckson Tada (1949– )

Suffering is at the very heart of the Christian faith. It is not only the way Christ became like and redeemed us, but it is one of the main ways we become like him and experience his redemption. And that means that our suffering, despite its painfulness, is also filled with purpose and usefulness.

Timothy Keller (1950– )

If you remember with grateful amazement that Jesus was thrown into the ultimate furnace *for* you, you can begin to sense him in your smaller furnaces *with* you.

Timothy Keller (1950 - )

As a man who seemed about to lose both his career and his family once said to me, “I always knew, in principle, that ‘Jesus is all you need’ to get through. But you don’t really know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.”

Timothy Keller (1950 - )

People with depression have something very valuable to teach us—how to live when it doesn’t ever feel good.

Kay Warren (1954- )

The church needs to value and recognize the incredible courage of those struggling with mental illness.

Kay Warren (1954- )

If my liver doesn’t work perfectly and I take a pill for that, there’s no shame in that. Why is it that if my brain doesn’t work perfectly and I take a pill I’m supposed to hide that?

Rick Warren (1954- )

# HYMNS AND SONGS TO UPLIFT

*Who hears music, feels his solitude peopled at once.*

R O B E R T B R O W N I N G

I have loved music forever. My tastes range from classical to electronic to rock and roll. Music has been my comforter in times of trouble, my solace while studying, and my tether to God when feeling most alone. Below are a few of the songs I can count on to lift me up:

- Handel's *Messiah* (I particularly love Christopher Hogwood and The Academy of Ancient Music's version)
- *The Four Seasons* (Vivaldi)
- *Brandenburg Concertos* (Bach)
- "The Hills of Home" (Kevin Braheny and Tim Clark—I was an early fan of electronic and minimalist music and started listening to it in undergraduate school. Some of my favorite artists include Tetsu Inoue, Solar Quest, Michael Hedges, and John Adams)
- "Hold It Up to the Light" (David Wilcox)
- "God Is Love" (Marvin Gaye)
- "Love Is the Key" (Tuck & Patti)
- "I Hope You Dance" (Lee Ann Womack)
- "Cornerstone" (Hillsong)
- "I Will Move on Up a Little Higher" (Mahalia Jackson)
- "People Get Ready" (Eva Cassidy)



I asked a number of friends to recommend songs that lift them up when they're feeling down, and the following lists are the result.

### **MODERN WORSHIP SONGS**

- “As the Deer” (written by Martin Nystrom)
- “Blessed Be Your Name” (Matt Redman)
- “Come as You Are” (David Crowder)
- “Eye of the Storm” (Ryan Stevenson)
- “The Father’s House” (Cory Asbury)
- “His Eye Is on the Sparrow” (Lauryn Hill and Tanya Blount)
- “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” (Stuart Townend)
- “I Can Only Imagine” (MercyMe)
- “In Christ Alone” (Stuart Townend)
- “Join the Triumph” (Citizens & Saints)
- “O Church, Arise” (Keith and Kristyn Getty)/
- “O Come to the Altar” (Elevation Worship)
- Psalms (John Michael Talbot)
- “Remind Me Who I Am” (Jason Gray)
- “Surrounded (Fight My Battles)” (Michael W. Smith)
- “To God All Praise and Glory” (The Sing Team)
- “Together” (For King and Country)
- “Who You Say I Am” (Hillsong)
- “Your Great Name” (Natalie Grant)

### **TRADITIONAL HYMNS TO UPLIFT**

- “All Creatures of Our God and King”
- “Amazing Grace”
- “Be Thou My Vision”
- “Because He Lives”
- “Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine”
- “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”
- “For the Beauty of the Earth”

- “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”
- “Holy, Holy, Holy”
- “How Great Thou Art”
- “It Is Well with My Soul”
- “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”
- “Ode to Joy”
- “Rock of Ages”
- “Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus”

### **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

- “Amazing Day” (Coldplay)
- “Cups (D’ror Yikra)” (Maccabeats)
- “Drawn to You” (Audrey Assad)
- “Fireflies” (Owl City)
- “Good Shabbos” (Six13)
- “Heaven Is Around Us” (Stu Garrard feat. John Mark McMillan)
- “Heavy” (Birdtalker)
- “I Can See Clearly Now” (Jimmy Cliff)
- “Lay It Down” (Matt Maher)
- “Meant to Live” (Switchfoot)
- “Pilgrim” (John Mark McMillan)
- “Selah III (Fruits of the Spirit)” (Hillsong Young and Free)
- “Sheep May Safely Graze,” BWV 208 (Bach)
- “Suite for Orchestra No. 3 in D Major,” BWV 1068: II. Air (Bach)
- “The Sun Is Shining” (Third Day)
- “To My Knees (Live)” (Hillsong Young and Free)
- “The Valley Song (Sing of Your Mercy)” (Jars of Clay)
- “What a Wonderful World” (Louis Armstrong)
- “Where the Streets Have No Name” (U2)

# MOVIES TO UPLIFT

Below are some movie recommendations that you might want to watch together with a loved one. Most of these movies are uplifting and inspirational, with good triumphing over evil. They all have a hero or someone who learns important lessons that help them overcome the problems they face. Next to each movie is an age recommendation so you can determine if it's okay for family members to join you; please screen before sharing with a young friend, and use your best judgment based on the individual circumstances. (Most age suggestions are from Common Sense Media.)

- *The Adventures of Milo and Otis* (1986, 5+)
- *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989, 5+)
- *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988, 5+)
- *Homeward Bound* (1993, 6+)
- *Inside Out* (2015, 6+)
- *Ratatouille* (2007, 6+)
- *Up* (2009, 6+)
- *Batkid Begins* (2015, 7+)
- *Akeelah and the Bee* (2006, 8+)
- *Anne of Green Gables* (1985, 8+)
- *Fly Away Home* (1996, 8+)

- *Galaxy Quest* (1999, 8+)
- *The Princess Bride* (1987, 8+)
- *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (2005, 9+)
- *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946, 9+)
- *Spirited Away* (2001, 9+)
- *Back to the Future* (1985, 10+)
- *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* (2019, 10+)
- *I Can Only Imagine* (2018, 10+)
- *Newsies* (1992, 9+)
- *October Sky* (1999, 10+)
- *Queen of Katwe* (2016, 10+)
- *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* (2018, 10+)
- *Chariots of Fire* (1981, 11+)
- *Groundhog Day* (1993, 11+)
- *Little Women* (1994, 11+)
- *Pride and Prejudice* (1995, 11+)
- *The Robe* (1953, 11+)
- *Sense and Sensibility* (1995, 11+)
- *The Wind Rises* (2013, 11+)
- *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (2019, 12+)
- *Cranford* (2007, 12+)
- *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* (2018, 12+)
- *North and South* (2004, 12+)
- *We Bought a Zoo* (2011, 12+)
- *Wives and Daughters* (1999, 12+)
- *Mansfield Park* (1999, 13+)

# BOOKS TO UPLIFT

Without books, I'd be lost. Obviously, *the Book* should be a staple in anyone's reading. Consider this a beginning list of supplemental texts. These books have helped me (or some of my friends) through difficult seasons, providing inspiration and hope when all seemed dark and lost. Again, before recommending a book to a friend or giving them a copy as a gift, please read it yourself.

## FICTION

- *All Creatures Great and Small* (James Herriot)
- *Anne of Green Gables* (L. M. Montgomery)
- *At the Back of the North Wind* (George MacDonald)
- *A Chameleon, a Boy, and a Quest* (J. A. Myhre)
- *A Christmas Carol* (Charles Dickens)
- *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (Sarah Orne Jewett)
- *The Chronicles of Narnia* (C. S. Lewis)
- *Cranford* (Elizabeth Gaskell)
- *Freckles* (Gene Stratton-Porter)
- *Frog and Toad Are Friends* (Arnold Lobel)
- *A Girl of the Limberlost* (Gene Stratton-Porter)
- *The Great Divorce* (C. S. Lewis)

- *Heidi* (Johanna Spyri)
- *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (J. R. R. Tolkien)
- *Les Misérables* (Victor Hugo)
- *The Little Engine That Could* (Watty Piper)
- *A Little Princess* (Frances Hodgson Burnett)
- *Little Women* (Louisa May Alcott)
- *Mansfield Park* (Jane Austen)
- *Oh, the Places You'll Go* (Dr. Seuss)
- “Perfection” and “Monday” (Mark Helprin—short stories in *The Pacific and Other Stories*)
- *The Screwtape Letters* (C. S. Lewis)
- *The Secret Garden* (Frances Hodgson Burnett)
- *Silas Marner* (George Eliot)
- *Stepping Heavenward* (Elizabeth Payson Prentiss)
- Swallows and Amazons series (Arthur Ransome)
- *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (Thomas Hughes)
- *The Trumpet of the Swan* (E. B. White)
- *Winnie the Pooh* (A. A. Milne)
- *A Wrinkle in Time* (Madeleine L'Engle)

## NONFICTION

- *And There Was Light: The Extraordinary Memoir of a Blind Hero of the French Resistance in World War II* (Jacques Lusseyran)
- *For the Glory: The Untold and Inspiring Story of Eric Liddell, Hero of Chariots of Fire* (Duncan Hamilton)
- *God in You: A Conversation* (John Stumbo)
- *Hinds' Feet on High Places* (Hannah Hurnard)
- *I Bought a House on Gratitude Street: And Other Insights on the Good Life* (or anything by J. Ellsworth Kalas)
- *Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* (Henri Nouwen)
- *One Man's Meat* (E. B. White)

- *The Problem of Pain* (really, anything by C. S. Lewis)
- *The Promise: God Works All Things Together for Your Good* (Robert Morgan)
- *The Red Sea Rules: The Same God Who Led You in Will Lead You Out* (Robert Morgan)
- *Spurgeon's Sorrows: Realistic Hope for Those Who Suffer from Depression* (Zack Eswine)
- *The Strength You Need: The Twelve Great Strength Passages of the Bible* (Robert Morgan)
- *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymn Stories* (Robert Morgan)
- *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* (Laura Hillenbrand)
- *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering* (Timothy Keller)
- *Walking with Henry: Big Lessons from a Little Donkey on Faith, Friendship, and Finding Your Path* (Rachel Anne Ridge)
- *When the Bottom Drops Out: Finding Grace in the Depths of Disappointment* (Robert Bugh)



# SAMPLE SUICIDE PREVENTION CHURCH POLICY

Below is a sample policy that you can adapt for your church.<sup>11</sup> Before including this or a similar policy in your church policy manual, we recommend seeking legal review and advice.

If a leader learns of an individual considering suicide or talking about self-harm, they are to contact \_\_\_\_\_ for instructions on how to proceed. If \_\_\_\_\_ cannot be reached immediately or the concern appears to be an emergency, immediately contact 911. Stay with the person until help arrives.

Below are five things to do before the individual leaves. If they do leave before you are able to have a full conversation with them, contact 911 immediately.

**1. Ask them the tough questions.** Asking them if they are suicidal will not give them the idea or make them stop talking to you. Here are some ways you can ask:

- Are you having any thoughts of harming yourself?
- Do you ever wish you could go to sleep and never wake up?

**2. Recognize the limits of confidentiality.** If they ask you to keep your conversation secret, your response needs to be, “I know this is hard to talk about, but I can’t make any promises until I know you are safe.”



- 3. Start a support network with others.** Connect them with someone they feel safe to talk with about their suicidal thoughts. If they are under the age of eighteen, you must inform their legal guardian(s). When you find someone to talk with them, make sure they are a good fit and that they understand what you are asking of them. Get them to confirm they are willing to do it.
- 4. Ask if they have professional counseling.** Ask if the individual is already in counseling, and if they are, get the name and phone number of the person they are seeing. If a person is talking about self-harm and/or suicidal ideation, there is a need for therapy. We encourage church leadership and congregation members to take the role of support and refer this person to a licensed professional counselor to do mental health treatment. Counselors are bound to HIPAA, so make sure as the lead support from the church for this individual, you ask the parent or individual (if they are over the age of eighteen) to sign a release so you can check how you can support the person.
- 5. Do not leave a person at imminent risk of suicide alone.** If you have any suspicions that a person is seriously considering harming themselves, let the person know that you care, that he or she is not alone, and that you are there to help. You may have to work with the person's family to ensure that he or she will be adequately supported until a mental health professional can provide an assessment. In some cases, you may have to accompany the person to the emergency room at an area hospital or crisis center. If the person is uncooperative, combative, or otherwise unwilling to seek help, and if you sense that the person is in acute danger, call 911. Tell the dispatcher that you are concerned that the person with you "is a danger to himself/herself" or "cannot take care of himself/herself." These key phrases will alert the dispatcher to locate immediate care for this person with the help of police. Do not hesitate to make such a call if you suspect that someone may be a danger to himself or herself. It could save that person's life.

Below are some additional guidelines that come from the Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

- **Take your loved one seriously:** Some people feel that kids who say they are going to hurt or kill themselves are “just doing it for attention.” But if your child, friend, or family member confides thoughts of suicide, believe them and get help.
- **Listen with empathy and provide support:** A fight or breakup might not seem like a big deal, but for a young person it can feel immense. Sympathize and listen. Minimizing what your child or friend is going through can increase his or her sense of hopelessness.
- **Learn the warning signs:** Friends sometimes let friends know if they are thinking about suicide or dying. Other times, changes in behavior may show that someone is struggling.
- **Don’t keep suicide a secret:** If your friend is considering suicide, don’t promise to keep it a secret. Tell him or her you can help, but you need to involve other people, like a trusted adult. Neither of you have to face this alone.<sup>12</sup>

Make sure you have the following resources always available to give out to people:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-8255

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

The Lifeline on Twitter: @800273TALK  
(<https://twitter.com/800273TALK>)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult to each other?*

George Eliot

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK [8255]): The national hotline to call if someone you love is suicidal.

Celebrate Recovery ([celebraterecovery.com](http://celebraterecovery.com)): A Christ-centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurt, pain, or addiction of any kind.

Fresh Hope ([freshhope.us](http://freshhope.us)): An international network of Christian support groups for those who have a mental health diagnosis and for their loved ones.

Soul Shop ([soulshopmovement.org](http://soulshopmovement.org)): An organization that helps train and equip churches and Christian leaders to address depression and suicide in their communities.

Remedy Live ([remedylive.com](http://remedylive.com)): A ministry that supports people with depression, suicidal ideation, and other mental health issues through live chat and text chat.

Alcoholics Anonymous ([aa.org](http://aa.org)): An international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem. Membership is open to anyone

who wants to do something about his or her drinking problem through a 12-step program.

Narcotics Anonymous (na.org): An international fellowship of men and women who have had a drug problem. Membership is open to anyone who wants to do something about his or her drug problem through a 12-step program.

Al-Anon Family Groups (al-anon.org): A mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.

*Mental Health: A Guide for Faith Leaders* and *Quick Reference on Mental Health for Faith Leaders* (psychiatry.org): These resources are good overviews for pastors and lay leaders for how to approach mental health in the church setting.<sup>13</sup>

