



**Do not fear...I
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name, you are
mine.**

— Isaiah 43:1

At the Time of Death Milestone Moment

In these changing times, more and more families and friends are experiencing the death of a loved one away from the presence of a clergy person or congregational support. Some people have simply disassociated themselves from the church. Others find themselves in settings where clergy or a home congregation may or may not be immediately available. No matter the reason, people still need—and want—spiritual care at the time of the death of a loved one. This Milestone Moment is designed to help clergy or friends and family offer comfort to the dying person and to say good-byes with words of love and faith in Christ.

The dying of a loved one is a tender moment filled with meaning. The At the Time of Death Milestone Moment helps those gathered with the dying person to bring closure to relationships in a way that fosters reconciliation of any unfinished issues and the celebration of life and love. Dying well is a Christian practice that includes opportunities to express love for the dying person, confidence in the Christian faith, and hope in God’s eternity. This Milestone Moment includes biblical resources and practices that have sustained Christians over the centuries.

This Milestone Moment provides an opportunity for family and friends to talk, sing, pray, and sit in silence with their loved one. Conversations, prayer, and blessings help us recognize God in the moment.

Knowing your loved one will die soon is both painful and precious. This At the Time of Death Milestone Moment is intended to help and support those who are dealing with this moment and uses a simple structure that includes the following:

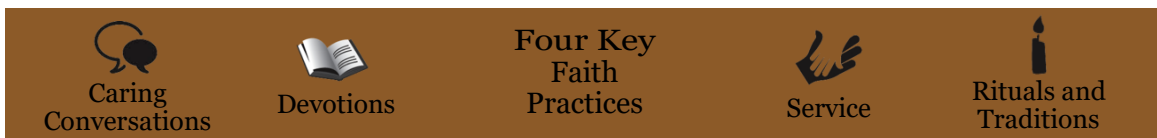
Naming – Recognize that a loved one is at the point of death and is in need of the presence of others who will help the person die in peace and with the assurance of God’s eternal care.

Equipping – Providing conversation topics, scripture, prayer, and Christian rituals and traditions are ways to assist those at the bedside of a dying person. Loved ones can provide essential care and the dying person will be surrounded by a community of faith expressing love and God’s eternal care so that the individual may die in peace.

Blessing – Offering a blessing that gives the assurance of God’s love and the love of others is a beautiful way to say good-bye and help the dying person with a sense of calm and peace in their final moments.

Gifting – In this unique moment, the presence of loved ones shortly before a person’s death is itself a great gift. Any mementos, pictures, or memories that can be taken from that time will offer solace for years to come.

Reinforcing – Reconnecting with others who were present at the time of death—and others who could not be present—helps the community of family and friends to move forward in faith and love.





At the Time of Death Milestone Moment

For a Small Group or Family Gathering



Growing People in Faith when at Home and Away

“and talk about them when you are at home and when away, when you lie down and when you rise.”

– Deuteronomy 6:7b

A follow-up for *At the Time of Death Milestone Moment* can be done by having caring conversations with family and friends to reflect on the deceased’s life and the precious time together before the death of the loved one. These subsequent conversations provide opportunities to comfort one another, grieve together, and give thanks for the person’s life and the Christian faith that gives comfort and hope in Christ.

An important step after experiencing the Four Key Faith Practices is to bless and equip friends and families by living the Christian faith through the ongoing use of faith practices. This serves as an intentional step to encourage faith traditions in the home.

A suggested resource for continued caring conversations:

[Taking Faith Home](#)
[Taking Faith Home Cards](#)
[For Everything A Season Book](#)

Additional Milestone Modules and Moments can be found at:
www.milestonesministry.org



At the heart of equipping people for their lifelong faith formation are the Four Key Faith Practices: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions. Take time during this holy moment to embrace a lifetime of meaningful memories and relationships. The next page is a discussion guide handout to assist with the conversations.



As you begin this tender and loving moment, start by saying something like, “[Name of the dying person], we are here to be with you as your life here with us comes to an end. We want you to know we love you and want to share God’s love with you.” Then say the following prayer: *Loving God, we thank you for [name of the dying person], whom you have given us to know and to love, and for the assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and promise of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*



Caring Conversations

Without forcing conversation--whether the dying person is conscious or not--consider these conversation starters to have meaningful closure:

- Take time to tell the person that you love them. Share important memories you have had with this person.
- Tell how this person has been a gift to you, and thank them.
- Take time to offer words of regret for any unresolved issues from the past. Make amends by seeking forgiveness and extending forgiveness for anything that may have hurt the relationship.
- Reassure the person of God’s love for them.



Devotions

Read the following: *I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, or height, or depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 8:38-39 (NRSV)

After reading this scripture, what gives you comfort in these words?



Service

Your role is to support the dying person however you can. You can ask how the dying person would like to be remembered and wonder with them how you can support that legacy through your efforts and those of others.



Rituals and Traditions

Sing, play, and/or recite favorite hymns, Bible passages, and other meaningful texts as time and energy allows.

Pray the Lord’s Prayer.

Offer this blessing from Luke 2:29-31. If possible, place a hand and/or make the sign of the cross on the person’s forehead or hand when you extend the blessing.

Lord, now let your servant [name], depart in peace, according to your word; for our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.



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At the Time of Death Discussion Guide



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