Family and Friends



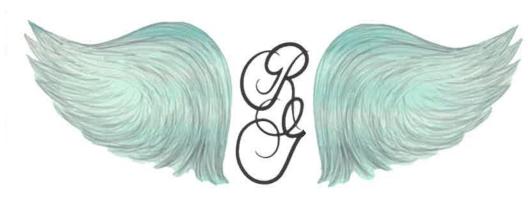
922 Highway 81 East PMB 153 McDonough, GA 30252

www.RachelsGift.org

24 Hour Hotline: 470.278.1956 Fax: 888.290.4487

Rachel's Gift, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization.

All proceeds go directly into the operation of this organization to support the services and resources provided for families in need and education of hospital staff.



Rachel's Gift

Providing comfort during the greatest of losses

We understand your immediate yearning to help your friends or family in need. Here are some very practical ways to help.

Immediate Ways to Help:

- Use the baby's name.
- Ask the parents if they would like help telling others about the baby's death.
- Attend the funeral or memorial service.
- Listen.
- Be patient.

What may seem like effortless, everyday tasks will be difficult for the parents for a while. In most cases, it's better just to "do," rather than ask.

To Say or Not to Say

Please be thoughtful with your words when trying to comfort the parents. Be sure to use the baby's name. Don't just say "the baby."

To Say:

- I am so sorry.
- What do you need?
- I'm here when you are ready to talk.
- How are you feeling?
- When are your most difficult times?
- I can't imagine how you feel.
- I am hurting for you.
- I am here for you.

Not to Say:

- Everything happens for a reason.
- I know how you feel.
- Now you have an angel in heaven.
- You can have another baby.
- At least you have other children.
- Time heals all wounds.
- At least you had some time with your baby.
- It was probably for the best.
- At least you didn't have time to get to know your baby and get attached.
- Try not to think about it.
- The baby is in a better place.

Suggestions to Pay Respect:

- Plant a tree in memory of their baby.
- Make a donation to a charity in memory of their baby.
- Give a gift of a keepsake with their baby's name for Mom or Dad.
- Offer to take them to the cemetery or where the ashes were scattered; sometimes it's hard to face alone.
- Give a gift certificate to the mother's favorite salon or father's favorite golf course.

Later Ways to Help:

- With permission, return unused and unwanted maternity clothes or baby items.
- Bring meals.
- Pick up groceries. (easy-to-prepare or already-prepared food)
- Offer to take the Angel Mom to postpartum doctor visits. This usually occurs at the six-week mark. For an Angel Mom, revisiting the doctor's office that she frequented throughout her pregnancy is a traumatic experience and she should not go alone.
- Make arrangements to get the other children out of the house. Take them to the movies, bowling, to a park etc. This will not only help the parents, but it will also be a welcome distraction for the kids.
- Arrange for housekeeping services. This can be expensive, so enlist other friends and family to go in together, or take turns doing it yourselves.
- Take over yard work or simple home maintenance tasks for a period of time or hire someone else to do it.
- Go take a walk with the Angel Mom. It will be good for her to get out and get some fresh air and exercise. It will also give her a chance to talk or just listen. If possible, make it a weekly date.
- Take the couple out for coffee or lunch. Pick them up.
- Run errands for the couple or go with them.
- Invite them to your home for dinner. A change of scenery can be helpful.
- Plan a girl's night or guy's night out. This will give them a break and some fresh conversation and fun.
- Send a card. Let them know that you are thinking of them in the recent days of their Angel's death and long after.
- Remember the anniversary of the baby's death. Respond by sending cards, email, flowers, etc.
- Remember them on the holidays. Regular holidays can be particularly difficult, especially on Mother's Day and Father's Day, even long after the baby's death.

The 3-4 month frame is when shock completely lifts, and this can be a particularly difficult time. Watch for signs of chronic depression, fatigue, and hopelessness. If you feel that the parents need professional help, don't hesitate to get involved. A good place to start is their physician(s). Six months and one-year anniversary dates are very painful. Try to mark the one-year anniversary by doing something special for the parents.