



STAND IN THE GAP FOR WIDOWS CARD AND BOOK MINISTRY GUIDE

"After a few months, the cards, the calls, and the visits all stopped. No one said it to my face, but they had moved on with their lives." - Widow Voice

"We believe that greeting cards are a personal expression, a communication tool, and a means for building and strengthening relationships. We also believe that Christian greeting cards are something more; they are a ministry!

It is our purpose ... to create cards with a message. This message does something more than convey the thoughts of the sender; it conveys the light and the love that are found in Jesus Christ. ...Cards express the love that flows from God's heart into our hearts and out to the hearts of others." - DaySpring.com

Express Your Heart

Care that is felt, and then expressed, is like fruit from the vine that delights the heart, nourishes the spirit, and brings needed strength to the soul. Sending a greeting card that expresses the thoughts of your heart for a friend or loved one is a tangible way of showing you care. When you sign your name to a card you are saying, "Here is what is in my heart for you. Please receive it as something I truly want you to know and hear." When you send a card you are really sending a little part of yourself.

Express God's Heart

A Christian card not only gives you the opportunity of expressing your heart, it also gives you the wonderful opportunity of expressing God's heart. It tells the receiver that you care, and that God cares too. Many Christian cards contain a passage of Scripture somewhere in the design. The powerful connection between sentiment and Scripture in a Christian greeting card has the potential of making an eternal difference in someone's life and provides the basis for true hope and encouragement.

Receptivity

Few things can light up a face like the arrival of a greeting card. A greeting card is one of the most welcomed forms of communication. It allows you to convey heartfelt emotions, in a non-threatening way, through a universally accepted medium. One of the benefits of sending a card is that the message is quickly grasped and easily understood. It creates a doorway into someone's heart that may not be opened in any other way."

-DaySpring, Ministry of Cards

Ministry Ideas

Advertise the ministry through your church and recruit volunteers.

Choose which significant dates you wish to remember the widow.

For example:

- * Widow's Birthday
- * Spouse's Heavenly Birthday

Some widows have shared that they want their spouse to be remembered. A card to her on his birthday would remind her that his life mattered and that he has not been forgotten.

- * Wedding Anniversary
- * Valentine's Day
- * Christmas
- * Thanksgiving

Identify the widows in your church. The church office, woman's groups, and church communities can be helpful in identifying the widows.

Collect supplies. Ask for donations from church members, craft stores, stationery stores, etc. You may use ready-made cards or make your own. The Dollar Stores also have a great supply of cards.

Select a time and place your ministry will meet. Some card ministries meet once a month throughout the year.

On the day you work, organize your volunteers into different workstations: create, assemble, write and address.

Widow Book Ministry

Stand in the Gap recommends Doug Manning's, Special Care Book Series. The Special Care Series consists of four books designed to be read or sent to someone the third week, third month, sixth month and eleventh month following a death. They offer great comfort and gentle wisdom for grieving individuals.

In addition to the four 24-page books, the set comes with envelopes for mailing and a record card to keep track of when to send each book. Book 1 *Discovering Permission to Grieve*; Book 2 *Discovering Significance*; Book 3 *Discovering Comfort*; Book 4 *Discovering Understanding*; This is a great way to let a friend or loved one know they are in your thoughts long after the funeral flowers have faded.

Doug Manning also has a follow up book entitled *Grief's Second Mike, Beyond the First Year*.

Stand in the Gap also recommends gifting new widows (or use it as a resource for your widow small groups) Donna S. Thomas's Journal, *Hope for Today and Tomorrow*.

"Going through the loss of your husband is so hard. It certainly was for me. In these difficult days I discovered it was a great help just to write out my problems and pain and leave them in my journal. This journaling book is my gift to you to help you know that you are not alone and whatever you are feeling can be dealt with. It lists the different emotions and problems that hit us in the face and gives suggestions and ideas on how to conquer them. But it is your book, your grief, your plans, and your victory as you walk a new road now without your husband."

Stand in the Gap believes...

we are called to serve as protectors of widows (Psalms 68:5), we are to honor widows (1 Timothy 5:3), and we are to look after widows in their distress (James 1:27).