

# T R A N S I T I O N S

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## PET REMEMBRANCES

*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.* James 1:17

To live with a pet is to live with family. These creatures grow on us and grow into the framework that is our family. Great Danes, gold fish, kittens, snakes, horses, canaries, and hermit crabs are named and engrafted into hearts and memories. Therefore, when a pet dies, sorrow follows. A member of the family has died.

Some people who experience the loss of a pet may be surprised at how such a loss grips them. *After all*, one may reason, *it was not a person*. However, the kind of relationship shared with pets is often unique and indelible. Pets give their love and affection in an unconditional and consistent manner. When that is gone, there is a large void to fill. Until a pet dies, people may not realize how much a pet's presence meant as a source of affection and acceptance; affection and acceptance given and received.

When we love someone or something, we give. The absence of a pet to care for and to give ourselves to is part of the pain of grief. When grief comes as a result of pet sorrow, it is a season of emotional, physical, and mental challenges. Routine activities, special events, and daily responsibilities are bland and perhaps arduous to manage. During times of grief, energy wanes and enthusiasm fades. Even activities preferred and pleasurable can lose their appeal. For a time. This is normal in a grief experience but it feels and seems abnormal.

Pet remembrances have a respectable place in our lives because these creatures make their mark on us. Therefore, expressions of sympathy, memorial services, cards, crying, humor, and story telling are essential components in a season of pet loss. These are compassionate and purposeful expressions of grief and expressions of gratitude for the gift of a pet that held a special place in one's life.

James 1:17 informs us that every gift is from above. Scripture's beautiful truth and reminder to us that all gifts are from God is a timely one to read when living with loss. All we have loved at one time or another is a gift from God. However short or long in duration, the opportunity to exchange love and time with a special person or a special pet is something God grants. In memory, this exchange remains blessed by Him. With the Holy Spirit's comforting presence, the ache of loss can gradually be softened into the magic of memory; memory to savor and to share forever.

*Father of giving, thank You, for the gift of pets. In the Bible, You gave to Adam the joy and the responsibility of naming the animals. In Your grace, You grant to us the joy of befriending some of Your creatures along with ways to share love and life with them. When they are gone, You know how much it hurts. Lord, as You have blessed with love, bless with comfort to soothe the spirits and minds of those who grieve their pets. Give to others sensitivity with which to comfort those who grieve and seek ways to foster meaningful pet remembrances. In Thee, Lord Jesus, our dearest friend, Amen.*