

DAY 11

NOT ALONE

Thrown into a new job in the midst of indescribable grief, Pastor Jodi Van Rhee shares how the Lord was always with her.

BY JODI VAN RHEE

senior pastor of The Adventure (Draper Foursquare Church) in Draper, Utah

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” ([Ps. 34:18, NLT](#))

In 2016, following many unmistakable promptings from the Lord, I became the senior pastor of the church my husband, Eric, and I had planted 16 years earlier.

Six weeks later, Eric passed away unexpectedly from an aortic aneurysm. For the first time in my life, I was experiencing a profound sorrow for which I had no way of preparing myself. It was difficult to imagine I would ever know joy, hope or contentment again.

Grief is extremely intimate, and everyone experiences it in a unique way. Widowhood is lonely, scary, inconvenient, dark, hopeless and terrifying.

And yet, the Lord consistently brought to my mind [Josh. 1:9](#): “This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

I was not strong. I was not courageous. I was afraid and discouraged. But regardless of everything I’d experienced, I had an overwhelming sense that the Lord was near to my broken heart. His presence held me, and I absolutely knew I was not alone.

Jodi recorded her testimony that she shared with her local congregation following her husband’s passing. Watch it at youtu.be/loK-W8hh1Hg.

PRAYER + REFLECTION

1. When you are going through dark times, pray for the Lord to show you that He is your strength.
2. Ask the Lord to show you that you have courage when you are afraid.
3. Ask the Lord to stay near you, in your darkest hours.