

# Review: Can You Just Sit With Me?

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## *Can You Just Sit With Me?*

**By Natasha Smith (InterVarsity Press)**

Books about grief fill library and bookstore shelves. Some are sentimental and superficial. Some are cold and technical. Some are hammered out in the crucible of personal experience and offer helpful suggestions to others who are grieving. Natasha Smith's book fits into the latter category.

The title—*Can You Just Sit With Me?*—is a three-fold invitation.

First, it is the author's invitation to the reader to sit by her as she shares insights from her own experiences. Natasha Smith's early acquaintance with grief came when she became pregnant as a teenager and made the unselfish—but deeply painful—choice to give up the baby for adoption. Later, she experienced the loss of two sisters, Angie at age 32 and Sharon at 42. She went through the unspeakable heartache of delivering a stillborn baby. She lost her father to cancer and a 28-year-old nephew to a gunshot wound. Smith transparently reveals her own faith-informed journey of grief.



The title also is God's invitation to all who are going through grief. God

does not intend for anyone to suffer alone. We worship a God who is big enough to handle the full range of a grieving person's honest emotions. We worship a Father who knows what it is to experience the death of a beloved Son. We worship a Savior who showed us it is all right to weep when a friend dies, and who even knows what it's like to feel abandoned by God. We worship a God who gives his Holy Spirit to us as the Comforter.

Finally, the title is an instructive invitation to readers to come alongside a person who is grieving and offer the gift of presence. Sit and listen attentively—not judging, not offering advice, and not trying to “fix” the person experiencing grief. Just sit and be fully present.

Each chapter ends with a suggested healing exercise for a person who is experiencing grief, along with an appropriate Bible verse and a prayer. This is the kind of book a pastor, deacon or care-group leader could offer to a grieving individual. InterVarsity Press will release it Sept. 26. It's not too early to order a copy in advance.

*Ken Camp, managing editor*

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