

## Romans 12:15

### Empathy

*In joy and in sorrow ...*

#### I. Feeling Others Feelings

##### A. Our Supreme Example

1. Jesus on the Earth
2. Jesus in Heaven

##### B. Our Sympathetic Experience

1. Altruistic Joy
2. Empathetic Sorrow

#### II. Bearing Other's Burdens

##### A. Hope for the Heavy Laden

##### B. Help for the Heavy Laden

1. On Our Knees
2. On Our Feet

*... and everything in between.*

#### **Children, Listen ...**

1. Can you describe a time when Jesus rejoiced with others?
2. Can you describe a time when Jesus wept with others?
3. Is it always easy to be happy when others receive special blessings?
4. Why is it important to be with our friends when they are really sad?
5. Will you pray that Jesus will help you be a good friend to people in your life whether they are happy or sad?

## Real Time Friends

I have heard it said "it is easier to mourn with those who are mourning than it is to rejoice with those who are rejoicing." I suppose this may be true to some degree due to our often jealous nature. Perhaps it confronts in us the sin of envy. But it is also a deep and sometimes extremely difficult thing to really enter into someone raw grief. To feel the depth of heartache a brother or sister is feeling takes us far beyond the safety of personal comfort. We need much grace to minister Christ at both ends of the spectrum. In order to even come close to true empathy we also need to enter each other's world of experience and emotion to a degree appropriate to the relationship. What we are striving for is a Christ-like friendship that is defined by love – we might even say we are seeking to have His love incarnate in us. Such genuinely caring love is always in real time, in other words it connects in the here and now whatever the occasion may be; sorrow, gladness and everything in between. Jesus is never a fair weather friend to us – in imitation of Him let us show consistent, compassionate care for one another through all the twists and turns and ups and downs of life.