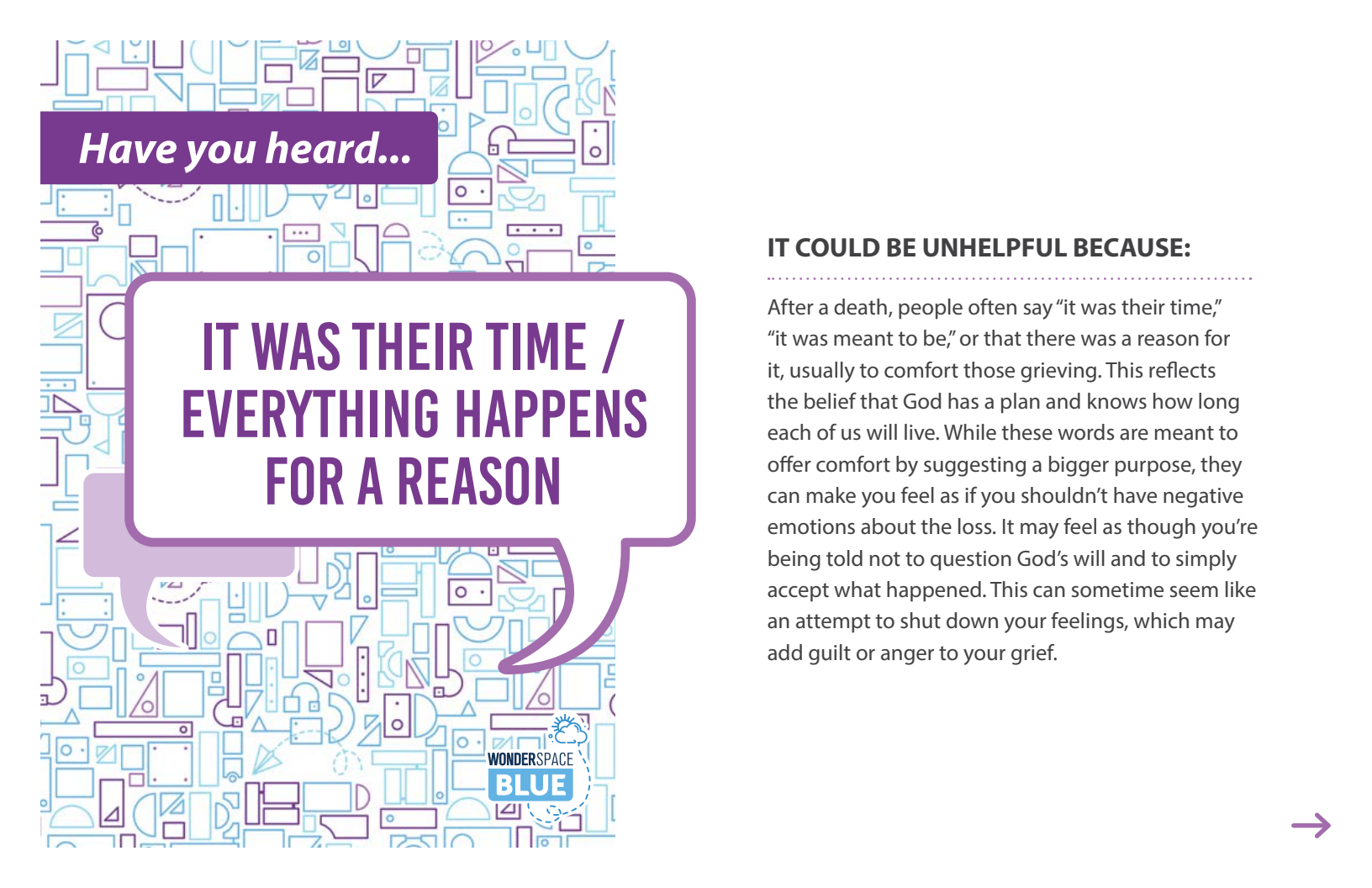




Have you heard...

**IT WAS THEIR TIME /
EVERYTHING HAPPENS
FOR A REASON**

WONDERSPACE
BLUE

IT COULD BE UNHELPFUL BECAUSE:

After a death, people often say “it was their time,” “it was meant to be,” or that there was a reason for it, usually to comfort those grieving. This reflects the belief that God has a plan and knows how long each of us will live. While these words are meant to offer comfort by suggesting a bigger purpose, they can make you feel as if you shouldn’t have negative emotions about the loss. It may feel as though you’re being told not to question God’s will and to simply accept what happened. This can sometime seem like an attempt to shut down your feelings, which may add guilt or anger to your grief.





HERE'S THE TRUTH:

Scripture does support the idea that God knows the length of our lives even before they begin (Ecclesiastes 8:6, Psalm 56:8, Job 14:5), meaning that God knew when your person would die, as well as the impact it would have on you and others. But that doesn't mean you were prepared or felt ready. Psalm 103 also tells us that God knows our human limitations and has compassion for us. God knows that a normal, human experience of grief involves mixed emotions, often including shock, sadness, anger, and a wish that things would be different.

The idea that "everything happens for a reason" is often used to suggest that an event is justified because of the bigger picture, rather than recognizing that God can redeem all things, even those that are harmful. In Genesis, Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers, unjustly accused and thrown into prison, then moved to a position of power before telling his brothers that "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done" (Genesis 50:20). Even though it recognizes a positive outcome, this narrative does not defend the actions of Joseph's brothers or other people who hurt him or condemn Joseph for feeling sad or angry because eventually God worked through the situation. There may be parts of your loss or grief process that involve harm. You can recognize that God knew what would happen, that people made wrong choices, and that redemptive action is possible at the same time.

You could say:

- **"God knew what would happen to our person, and also knew that we would have strong feelings about it."** God isn't surprised by anything and has a plan for the whole world. That doesn't mean that we should have been ready or did feel ready for our person to die. Because God knew how we would react and what we would need, we can talk to Him about all our feelings about what happened.
- **"Sometimes, good things can come out of hard situations. We can recognize that some things that happened were wrong, and that good change can happen at the same time."** Thinking about why our person died can be hard and confusing, especially if other people say that there was a reason it happened. It's okay to say that bad and harmful things happened, and to notice good that might have come out of it. What bothers you most about how our person died, or how other people have responded? What has been helpful, or made you feel hopeful?