

**SHATTERED DREAMS: PASTORAL CARE WITH PARENTS
FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF A CHILD**

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study focuses on the stories of a bereaved couple living with the death of two of their children. The effect of the children's death on the parents is explored, as well as the way in which the parents live with the death of their two sons. The stories of the bereaved couple show their courage and resilience in continuing with their lives, maintaining their bond with their deceased sons and trying to make meaning of their death.

As a study in practical theology and pastoral care one aim of this study was to help transform the lives of the parents for the better.

In one of the chapters of the research report a study of some literature on bereavement and the death of children is presented. Dominant cultural discourses about death, bereavement, grief and mourning are discussed, as well as voices protesting against these discourses.

Key terms: bereaved parents; death of a child; narrative therapy; qualitative research; practical theology and pastoral care; dominant discourses about death; effect of child's death on parents; continuing bond with deceased child; rituals and symbols; theodicy.

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