

Question: Once I get to heaven will I be grieving that certain family members won't be there?

Answer: In heaven family will surround us all because of our essential identity as brothers and sisters, sharing a common Father. This is not a “pretend family” but a very real one. It's not that God merely uses the earthly family as an illustration of His eternal family; it's that the earthly family was designed after the ultimate; it's but a model of the real thing in heaven. (Sometimes the model is very good, sometimes very poor, but never is it as good as the ultimate thing it was made to reflect and point to.) Jesus spoke of family relationships that go far deeper than blood relations.

While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, His mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to Him. Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.’ But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, ‘Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother’” (Matt 12:46-50).

In heaven Jesus will wipe away our tears and there won't be any more pain (Rev 21:4), so we know we will not be gripped by remorse at anything, including the fact that certain family members from earth aren't there. We will have an eternal perspective, we will know that God has been just in his judgments, and will not be plagued by doubt. Naturally, we can't imagine that now, but that's because we're not in heaven—far from it! When the child is in the womb he can't imagine what awaits him on the outside, but it's true nonetheless.