

Reflections for Caregivers

**HE
CARES
FOR
YOU**

Carol Geisler

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

1 PETER 5:6-7



Introduction

As a caregiver, you are responsible for the supervision and care of those in need of assistance, perhaps a child or children, elderly parents, a sibling or another relative or friend. It is a time-consuming, overwhelming task filled with daily challenges. Yet by God's grace, your caregiving also reflects the love and joy of your Savior. The apostle Paul writes, "Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2). As a caregiver, you are imitating your Lord as you walk, day and night, in self-sacrificing love, giving yourself in the service of others as Jesus gave himself for you. While you care for others, he cares for you.

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Living for Two

He died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for the one who for their sake died and was raised.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:15

As a caregiver, you continue to live your own life, but at the same time you are living for those in your care. You provide for your own needs and for the care of others as well. Often, their worries, needs and fears may be added to your own.

As you live and care for one person or two or even more, there is another caregiver who is living for you, the Lord Jesus Christ. He died for all, and now you live, not for yourself but for him. You live for Jesus as you serve him through your love and service to others. He is always present in your life, listening to your prayers, answering according to his gracious will and providing encouragement through his Word. When you struggle to keep up with daily tasks or become impatient and angry in serving, he is present to forgive and strengthen you. Jesus died for you, and he rose from the dead. He lives for those in your care. He lives for you.

Lord Jesus, you live for me. Help me to live for you as I serve others in your name. Amen.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-19.

What needs of others are hardest for you to take on?

Brought to Jesus

They went up on the roof and let him down on the stretcher through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus.

LUKE 5:19

The friends in this verse were caregivers on a mission (something that might be said of every caregiver). They wanted to bring the paralyzed man to Jesus, but the house where Jesus was teaching that day was too crowded. The resourceful caregivers (another trait shared by all caregivers) removed the roof tiles and lowered the paralyzed man to the place he needed to be—right in front of Jesus. The Lord first forgave the man and then, to prove his authority and power to forgive, he healed him, telling him to rise, take up his stretcher and go home.

As a Christian caregiver, you do each day what was done by the friends of the paralyzed man. Through your help and care, in the comfort and encouragement you offer and in prayer, you bring those in your care to the place they need to be—to Jesus. By faith, you know the Lord's authority and power and, together with those in your care, you receive his forgiveness and the hope that he alone brings.

Dear Savior, bless those in my care and hear my prayers for them. Help me to reflect your love as I serve others. Amen.

Read Luke 5:17-26.

How has God helped you to be resourceful in caregiving lately?

In His Book

In your book were written all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.

PSALM 139:16

Some people enjoy keeping a diary or journal to record personal thoughts and experiences. You may choose to write in a journal, if time allows, or you may keep a detailed daily record of the personal needs, therapy, medications and appointments of the individual in your care. A daily journal can be a useful tool and an aid to memory.

Our Lord and Creator needs no help with his memory, yet according to the psalmist, God keeps a journal for each of us. His journal differs greatly from anything you might write because God recorded your days before you even *lived* those days, before you were born. He knows every one of your days: days of sorrow and joy, long days of loving care and days of weary frustration. The Lord knows every detail of your days, but he has another book too. It is Jesus' book, the Lamb's book of life. In that precious book, the Lamb of God who suffered and died to save you has carefully recorded your name.

My God and Savior, guide me as I live through the days you have recorded for me. Amen.

Read Psalm 139.

What would you like to journal to God about today?

Providing for Care

And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

JOHN 19:27

Apart from his birth and his visit to the Jerusalem temple when he was twelve years old, Scripture says very little about Jesus' childhood. We would like to know more, but in Scripture we are told what we need to know, all that we need to make us "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15, ESV).

After Jesus' early life, Joseph is no longer mentioned in the biblical stories, but Jesus' mother Mary is often present during the Savior's earthly ministry. Finally, she comes to stand at the foot of his cross. Jesus, even while dying, provides for his mother's ongoing care. His disciple John would be a son to her and care for her as his mother. The apostle Paul writes, "Let each of you look not only to his own interests but to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4). As you, like your Lord, provide loving care, you are looking to the interests of others. When you fail and struggle with guilt, go to Jesus and ask for his help. You will be forgiven because Jesus put your interests ahead of his own by suffering, dying and rising to provide for your eternal care.

Jesus, you put my interests above your own. Help me to do the same. Amen.

Read John 19:17-30.

How has looking more toward the interests of others helped you?

How Long?

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?

PSALM 13:1

David sometimes wondered if God was listening to his prayers. The psalmist was not afraid to make demands about it. He asks just what God is doing, if anything, to help him: “Why, O LORD, do stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?” (Psalm 10:1). “Why have you forgotten me?” (Psalm 42:9).

You may have some of those same frustrated questions and demands. Why isn't God answering your prayers? Has he forgotten you? Jesus himself asked that same question, using the words of a psalm to plead with his heavenly Father from the cross: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1). Yet David knew—as, of course, Jesus also knew—that God *is* listening. David continues, “But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation” (Psalm 13:5).

The psalms are inspired by the Holy Spirit. The prayers found there are words that God has given to you. Learn from the psalms. Make those prayers your own. By faith, in Jesus, you are God's precious child. You have petitions, you have questions, and God wants to hear them.

My God and Savior, hear my prayers, questions and demands, and answer me according to your gracious will. Amen.

Read Psalm 13.

What has enabled you to become more patient as a caregiver?

No Leisure

They had no leisure even to eat.

MARK 6:31

Surrounded by an enthusiastic crowd of people who came to seek healing, Jesus and his disciples didn't have time to rest or even eat. Jesus said to his disciples, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31, ESV). Even then, people followed them, and Jesus had compassion on the desperately searching crowds because "they were like sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34).

You have no doubt experienced what Jesus, and his disciples, knew. In your care for another you may at times be so busy that you have "no leisure even to eat." In especially distressing circumstances, you may have no interest in leisure or eating, and it might seem there is no time to rest. Yet even in the midst of exhausting yet necessary service for those in your care, Jesus' call to his disciples is a call to you as well: "Come away...and rest a while." He has compassion on you, and he is always with you. You may be able to find a few moments alone, but if not, you can "come away" in your heart to pray and rest in the forgiveness and peace of your Shepherd's care.

**Jesus, give rest to me and to those who need my care and concern.
Amen.**

Read Mark 6:30-44.

What has provided you with the most rest and relief from your work?

Giving care to those in need is a vital and important ministry in the lives of many Christians, and many more are taking on the role of caregiving than ever before. The tender yet honest reflections in this booklet help caregivers to find much needed rest, support and strength from God, who cares for us all.



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