

Comfort My People: Loving the Sick

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As the world continues turning, everyday babies are ushered in to their new life, while others find themselves at the end of their life journey. For those who are moving toward their heavenly home, it is important that many support them in the final days that surround them. It seems everyone knows someone in his or her family, neighborhood or community that can be cared for during this trying time.

Of course, as human beings, we know that life doesn't go on forever in this world but, when faced with it in such a personal way, it can cause inner turmoil and be frightening. Caring for the sick can be a challenge for some while it comes easily for others. When you feel like there is nothing you can do and your hands are tied, stop for a moment and think about what it is that Jesus would do.

The Bible tells us that Jesus said, "Comfort my people". We are called by God to be a servant of Christ to those in need. There is much you can do to care for those in need. In my life, I have someone who I care for as I watch his health and mind deteriorate before my eyes. He is my father.

My father was once a strong and vibrant man with energy from sun up to sun down. He worked for many years, doing physical labor. But, time took its toll on his body. Nonetheless, he never complained or shrugged his duties as the provider for his family. And now? To make a simple trip to the mailbox is a challenge. Before he makes it back to his chair, he is huffing and puffing struggling to breathe. Some days, that is the most that he can even do.

He wears oxygen in the house and at night while he sleeps. He has congestive heart failure, diabetes, emphysema, and high blood pressure with a few other complications thrown into the mix. It is frustrating for him that he isn't able to do for himself the things he once could. He has to rely on the help of others to care for him. As much as I know that he appreciates all the help the family and neighbors give him, he also feels his loss of independence. It seems that is easier to give than to receive. And what you can give, that is more precious than anything else, is your time.

I have learned that I can spend time taking care of the house, weeding the yard, vacuuming the carpets, doing the dishes, washing the windows and so on; but, at the end of the day, the time I spend just sitting and talking to him seems to be the best medicine for him. It is important to me that he is comfortable in his home and that it is clean. But more than that, I have learned the importance of giving my time to him.

There have been times that we have sat with a cup of coffee and not said a word to one another. He'll turn to me and say how much he appreciates my company. Most of the time, I will look over to him only to find him sleeping! When he wakes, he always tells me, "I sleep so much better when you are here!" It's a secure feeling to know there is someone with you. These are the moments that we share how much God has blessed us in our lives and, if we are able to love one another as much as we do, how much more God must love us.

Tips:

God puts people on our journey to care for and learn from. He wants us to give as well as receive. No matter how much my father feels I am doing for him, I must admit I am gaining much more than I am giving. He allows me to care for him, spend time with him and comfort him. If there is someone in your life that you can comfort, why not give it a try? Here are a few simple things you can do that will make a difference:

- Take them a hot homemade meal once a week.
- Offer to do a little housekeeping for them.
- Read to them (the news is always good to know!) or their mail.
- Wash their bedding weekly.
- Bring them flowers.
- Share stories. Everyone loves to share memories!
- Most importantly offer to spend TIME!
- Remember God has called you to share the one thing no one else in the world can ...YOURSELF!