

## SUGGESTIONS IN CAREGIVING

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- 1) Why take INITIATIVE? God did with us, uniquely in Jesus Christ.
- 2) Maintain FIDELITY. God remains faithful to Israel-and us-even when we do not.
- 3) Take some risks. God chose to become VULNERABLE in creating us, and loving us
- 4) Show up. God always uses a TANGIBLE PRESENCE to represent God's love
- 5) RELEASE CAPTIVES. Christ offered grace to sinners, judgment to judges
- 6) Act as a TEAM MEMBER. We are *one* of a "cloud of witnesses" who help
- 7) Assume that Christ died for each person you care for-and that they are valued

### HOW TO TAKE INITIATIVE

\*Call the church office/minister for information, then call the home

\*Write a note expressing care and offering specific help (leave a message!)

\*Make a brief visit, focus on the issue (avoid small talk)

When you pray with them: Focus on *their* need in prayer

Avoid clichés and pat answers

Ask what you may pray for

Acknowledge their feelings

Particularize your requests (as Paul did)

\*Things you (or a SS class) may do: See that they have a system to pay bills, provide transportation, make sure they get food, have family contact, mow /shovel the drive, report daily(?), housesit, pick up prescriptions, call relatives, e-mail friends, run errands, \*Help the person find a needed community resource they may require

### HOW TO LISTEN ATTENTIVELY

\* Focus on the person: look at them, observe facial expressions, touch

\* Acknowledge what they say/share (register a response)

\* Invite further conversation with "cues": "And then what happened?"

\* Summarize: Restate what you think they said-to make sure you heard right

\* ASK for more information, clarification (it shows interest!)

### THINGS TO REMEMBER

\* You are only responsible for trying to care - not for their *response* to your care

\* There is as great a risk in NOT trying as there is in trying imperfectly

\* You are not caring alone; you belong to a team of caregivers who have a variety of skills, and can help in ways you feel unequipped to offer

\* When people who are grieving show emotion, you did not create the emotion-nor cause them harm: you are, in fact, causing them good by helping them release the pain

\* Sometimes people don't know what to ask for when we offer care; sometimes they don't need help that moment, but later; sometimes someone else can help them

\* Remember that love covers a multitude of sins...You never care alone! Holy Spirit

\* Often the presenting issue is not the main issue as people talk

### REMEMBER:

1. Hospitalization interrupts family stability, patient independence
2. Financial costs (loss of income, hospitalization) are stress issues
3. Institutionalization can weaken persons, contribute to dependence
4. Length of illness and clarity of diagnosis affect family hope
5. Interpretation of God's care in mental illness is crucial
6. Patients and family members are already experiencing pain/fear
7. Home re-entry moments are as fragile as hospital admission time