



Compassionate Caring Devotion

Therefore 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).

Let's begin this devotion with a few questions. Please answer each one by a show of hands.

How many of you make a daily phone call to a friend or relative to make sure he or she is okay?

How many of you make time to take a friend or relative shopping or to a doctor appointment during the week?

How many of you help a friend or relative with organizing his or her bills or paperwork?

How many of you regularly visit a friend or relative who is homebound or in a nursing home?

If you do any of the above, you are performing compassionate care for someone in your life. Too often people think compassionate care is a twenty-four hour, seven day a week commitment. In reality, giving even an hour per week can be a tremendous blessing to someone with a chronic illness who is homebound or in a nursing home.

I received that call that many of us dread—a relative with a chronic illness needed help and I was the only option available. In calls like these, human nature immediately focuses on the high level of commitment that may be required. How much time will I need to spend helping this person? How will this alter my life? Isn't there someone else who can help rather than me?

Having all these thoughts and concerns doesn't make a person horrible. It is very appropriate to consider the challenges you may encounter as you attempt to care for another person. However, something more should go into your consideration than just the impact on you that providing compassionate care might have.

As Christians we are always challenged to consider the needs of others. Philippians 2:3–4 reminds us, *Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Holy Scripture also shares the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who always allowed love and compassion to motivate how He treated others. Matthew 9:36 tells us, *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, for they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.* In Matthew 14:14, we are told, *When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.* When Jesus encountered two blind men outside of Jericho, *Jesus in pity touched their eyes, and immediately they recovered their sight and followed him (Matthew 20:34).*

Amazingly, once I moved beyond the dread of the task of being a compassionate caregiver, I found that God sent me enough help so that the task was not nearly as taxing as I anticipated. By asking and allowing my decisions to be guided by the Holy Spirit, I now find caring for my relative to be a true blessing.

The theme verse for this devotion from Ephesians 5 encourages us to be *imitators of God*. Following His example, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to allow the love of God to motivate us so that we can share our time and concern with someone God has set in our lives.

If you live long enough, someone will need your compassionate care and you will eventually need someone's care and assistance as well. When overwhelmed in a given moment, always remember Paul's proclamation, *I can do all things through him who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:13). God never asks us to do something He will not support, uplift, and bless.

Closing Prayer: Lord, You are my Source of strength and my Guide for compassion. Please help me to think of those in need and give me the desire to share my time and compassion with someone in need. May You be glorified in all I share and do. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, my Lord. Amen.

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Published by: Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 2019