

# Care for Long-Distance Caregivers

## Bible Study • Study Guide

**Opening Prayer:** Lord God, heavenly Father, please bless our time together in Your Word. As we discover the truths concerning the compassion and care that Jesus shows us, may we be led by the Holy Spirit to show the same compassion and care for those around us who are engaged in long-distance caregiving. Open our hearts to ways we can provide meaningful help to those who care for loved ones who do not live close by. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

### Introduction: Who is a “Long-Distance Caregiver”?

At 6 a.m. on a chilly October morning, I was awakened by the sound of a ringing phone. When I answered, an anxious voice pleaded, “Diane, it’s your father. I need you to come home this morning. Something is not right with your mother.”

“What do you mean, Dad?” I replied. “I just spoke with Mom on the phone yesterday, and she seemed to be doing well.”

“I don’t know,” my father answered. “She’s having trouble moving, and she’s not making any sense when she talks. Please come now.”

“Okay, Dad. I’ll be there early this afternoon,” I reassured him.

For the two and a half years before that phone call, my mother had been battling pancreatic cancer. During that time, I had physically visited my mom as often as possible. In between those visits, I made frequent phone calls, mailed cards of encouragement, and sent small gifts to let her know that I was thinking of her. That October phone call was not the first anxious one I had received from my dad since my mom was first diagnosed. The ups and downs of cancer treatments and situations at home had led him to call me a number of times before. In each of these calls my dad always said, “Please come now.” Every trip over those years, whether previously planned or those that were urgent in nature, involved a 4 1/2 hour drive for me to reach where my parents lived.

As I hung up the phone that October morning, my mind reeled with concern for my mom and for my dad. I quickly packed the clothes and the other items I would need to take with me. I made a mental list of the people I needed to call concerning my job and my volunteer duties. I wondered if there was any food in the house for meals for my husband while I was away. As I did all of these things, I prayed. I prayed for comfort for my mom and strength and patience for my dad. I prayed

for God to give me the mental clarity to plan for what I was leaving behind at home. I prayed for safe travel, and I prayed for God to give me the strength to handle the unknown challenges ahead.

1. **Based on the paragraphs above, define a “long-distance caregiver.”** \_\_\_\_\_

---



---



---

Caregivers who live near their loved one and long-distance caregivers both face some of the same challenges as they care for their ill relative or friend. However, there are some challenges that are unique for each kind of caregiver.

2. **With your group, compare the similarities and differences between the challenges each type of caregiver faces. Write your responses below.**

**Challenges both types of caregivers face**

**Challenges close-by caregivers face**

---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

**Unique challenges long-distance caregivers face**

---



---



---



---

3. **The illness of a loved one is not the only reason long-distance caregiving is necessary. Why else might such caregiving need to take place?**\_\_\_\_\_

---



---



---

## A Study of Jesus' Ultimate Caregiving

Jesus, our Lord and Savior, is all about caregiving. The Gospel accounts are full of examples of how Jesus cared for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those He encountered.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus cared for the physical needs of people through miraculous acts of healing and restoration of physical function. Jesus healed those who were lame, paralyzed, demon-possessed, afflicted with chronic conditions such as leprosy or bleeding, and ill with fevers. He restored sight and hearing to those who were blind and deaf. He even raised the dead to life.

**4. Read the following Scripture references. What other types of caregiving did Jesus give for people's physical needs?**

- a. Matthew 15:32–39: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. John 8:1–11: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. John 19:25–27: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Read each Scripture reference and describe the caregiving Jesus showed for people's emotional needs.**

- a. Matthew 11:28–30: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Mark 6:45–51a: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Luke 7:11–15: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Luke 12:22–31: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Read each Scripture reference and describe the caregiving Jesus showed for people's spiritual needs.**

- a. Matthew 9:1–2: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Mark 10:13–16: \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Luke 19:1–10: \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Luke 19:41–44: \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Luke 23:32–34: \_\_\_\_\_
- f. John 17:6–23: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Read Romans 5:6–11 and Romans 6:1–11. Why is it true that the greatest caregiving act Jesus ever did was His death and resurrection?** \_\_\_\_\_

---



---



---

## Looking to Christ's Example as We Care for Long-Distance Caregivers

8. How do we often fail to follow Christ's example for showing care to long-distance caregivers? \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

9. When we do fail to acknowledge the need for care or to show it, what reassurance do we have, based on Jesus' spiritual caregiving for us? \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

10. Review your responses to questions 4–6. Which of Jesus' caregiving acts are especially important to apply when providing care for long-distance caregivers? \_\_\_\_\_

---



---

God's Word directs us to *put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another* (Colossians 3:12–13a). The Holy Spirit works compassion and patience in us so that we are able to “put ourselves in the shoes” of a long-distance caregiver and relate to her needs.

In 1 Peter 1:22b–23, we are reminded to *love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God*. The kind of love spoken of here is “agape love.” This Greek word means “self-sacrificing love.” It's the kind of love that Jesus shows us as our servant and our Savior.

11. Think of people you know who are serving as long-distance caregivers. Make a specific plan for at least one way that you can care for them. Then carry out your plan! \_\_\_\_\_

---



---



---



---

### A Footnote to This Study

As this Bible study was being written, the world was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. This virus made it necessary for many of us to become long-distance caregivers, even if we were in physical proximity of our loved ones. For their protection and ours, loved ones in nursing homes and various care facilities had to be visited via phone calls, video chats, and with waves

and smiles through windows. To keep the virus from spreading, we could not physically worship together, social distancing measures were put in place, students of all ages could not attend school with their classmates, and many adults had to work from home, while many others lost their jobs when businesses could not open. Hugs and handshakes were largely banned. Loved ones of those affected by the virus could not physically be with their ill relative or friend to offer comfort and encouragement. Families whose loved ones died during the pandemic, whether from complications due to COVID-19 or from other causes, were unable to have funeral visitations or funeral services in the usual way. The situations we experienced in this pandemic give us insights concerning the challenges faced by long-distance caregivers.

In whatever challenges we face in life, our almighty God is always there with us. When chaos surrounds us, we can always count on Him to love us, to care for us, to protect us, and to help us. Whenever we don't understand, have an explanation for, or know when a challenging time will end, *we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose* (Romans 8:28). By the power of the Holy Spirit, we can trust in these reassuring words from Romans 8:35, 37–39: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Closing Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we thank and praise You for the love and care You constantly show us. We are especially thankful for the care You showed us when You came from heaven to earth to be our Savior. It is only because of Your death on the cross that we are freed from the bondage of sin. It is only because of Your resurrection that we have eternal lives and a home in heaven. Thank You for making these truths our own through Holy Baptism. Open our eyes, Lord, to the needs of those in our lives who are providing long-distance care for a loved one. Help us to care for their physical and emotional needs with loving and compassionate hearts. Help us to share Your Word with them so they may be reassured that You are their ever-loving, ever-caring, ever-present Lord and Savior. In Your name we pray. Amen.

**Sing:** “Blest Be the Tie That Binds” (LSB 649; TLH 464)

Bible verses are taken from the ESV translation unless otherwise noted.

*Care for Long-Distance Caregivers* by Diane J. Grebing, Renault, Illinois

Published by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, 2021

*lwml.org*