

Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

Most of the women I know, especially Lutheran Women in Mission, are burden-bearers. They have learned the lesson from Galatians well: when you see a need, jump quickly to help. It is a blessing to serve. It is a blessing to share with someone who is “going through.” It is a blessing to bless others with the gifts, talents, and resources with which God has blessed us.

However, there is a flip side to the lesson of bearing one another's burdens, and that side is one at which many of us are not adept.

I had a friend. We were each other's sounding boards. She would “do for me” when she could, but when it came to receiving, it was another story. I planned to take her to lunch one day; another day I was going to clean her house when she was hurting. I tried several times with different offerings, but was met each time with an adamant, “You will NOT!”

One lesson I have learned throughout my husband's

hospital stays and treatments is: while we are to bear one another's burdens, we are also to receive — to cast our care on God and let others be His hands and feet as He cares for us. When we don't, as one pastor informed his mentee, we not only diminish the relationship we have with another person, it damages it as well. It may keep them from following a God-given need or want to help. In our desire not to be a burden, if we refuse help, we become a stumbling block, preventing one of God's children from learning how to bear others' burdens. It may even make us prideful enough to diminish our trust in and relationship with God.

Whether you're an expert burden-bearer or an expert care-receiver, I pray that the stories and studies of burdens borne and caregiving offered in this issue encourage you as you work for Him in His Kingdom.

May the Lord bless you to give and to receive.



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