

Facts about the role of a caregiver...

- Caring for the aging population is a growing national concern. Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter explained it best, saying, *“There are only four kinds of people in the world - those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need caregivers.”* Caregiving is a lifespan issue that impacts nearly every family at some point.
- The nation’s 70 million caregivers provide 80% of long-term care, yet 89% do not take time out to use respite or educating themselves in necessary caregiving skills. A recent survey indicates that 4 in 10 adults are caring for a spouse or family member with a significant health issue, up 35% from just two years ago.
- The physical and mental demands of caregiving increase the risk for health problems to include: high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, and a compromised immune system to name a few. In particular, elderly caregivers have a 63% greater chance of mortality than their counterparts who are not caregivers.
- Most family caregivers are at a total loss and overwhelmed as to how to manage their life while caring for a family member. Attending a support group on a regular basis is extremely helpful for a family caregiver: to help with the relief necessary to maintain their own health; to help bolster family stability; and perhaps delay more costly facility based placements.

A Prayer for the Caregiver

by Bruce McIntyre

Unknown and often unnoticed,
you are a hero nonetheless.

For your love, sacrificial,
is God at his best.

You walk by faith in the darkness
of the great unknown,
And your courage, even in weakness,
gives life to your beloved.

You hold shaking hands and
provide the ultimate care:

Your presence, the knowing,
that you are simply there.

You rise to face the giant of disease
and despair,

It is your finest hour,
though you may be unaware.

You are resilient, amazing and
beauty unexcelled,

You are the caregiver and
you have done well!



FIRST CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST FAMILY

Caregivers Support Group



We are dedicated to educating
and empowering caregivers
whose work is vital for the welfare
of a chronically ill and/or
disabled family member.



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The Emotions of Caregiving

Your whole world changes when a loved one receives a diagnosis that requires long term care. Adjusting to the role of caregiver can lead to periods of anger, resentment and guilt. When you experience these emotions, it can be difficult to care for someone else. You may feel overwhelmed by the new responsibilities, which may come up at any time night or day, especially when combined with the grief of watching a loved one's health deteriorate.

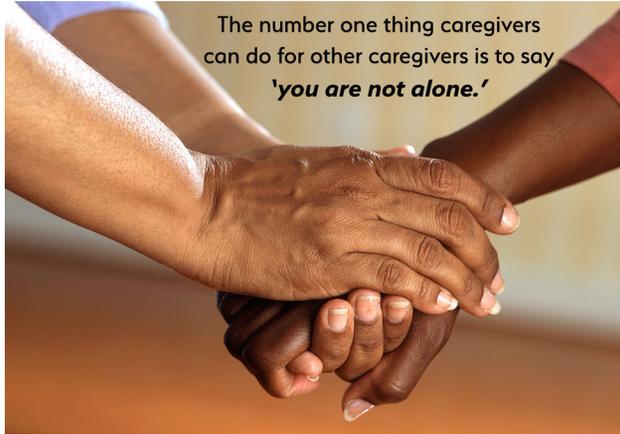


Every caregiver experiences a wide variety of emotions that may materialize unexpectedly. You should not feel guilty if you are struggling. You may feel vulnerable and depressed, especially if you are not setting aside personal time for your own well-being. Caregivers need a safe place to share experiences and learn healthy coping skills.

"The collective information shared in our caregivers support group is an immeasurable help. We also support each other by listening and offering encouragement. All of these are important, not just if you are caregiver for the first time but if you are going through the process a second time."

- Support Group Participant

First Church's Caregivers Support Group



About our Caregivers Support Group

Our support group offers opportunities to learn specific skills that are helpful in managing daily caregiving responsibilities. Participants discuss issues that arise including loneliness, worry and lack of self-care. Sharing joys and concerns provides comfort and support throughout the caregiving experience.

"I highly recommend the Caregivers Support Group to any who might be in need of this group. Identifying all of the complex emotions involved in caregiving, as well as learning strategies to deal with those emotions has been extremely helpful to me. The caring support of others is wonderful, and learning practical tips to help both the patient and the family is invaluable."

- Support Group Participant



Join the Caregivers Support Group on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

in room 301 at the Downtown campus.

Our mission is to educate and empower caregivers whose work is vital for the welfare of a chronically ill and/or disabled family member.

About the Facilitators

John & Janie Koonce provided care for her mother after her diagnosis of vascular dementia. While caring for her, they realized they were unprepared for the myriad of challenges they would face. Subsequently, John enrolled in a professional caregivers training program. This training provided information and guidance they needed to become more effective caregivers. God used this experience to inspire them to help others in similar situations. John facilitated a support group at the FUMC in Bella Vista, AR as well as working in both individual and group settings as a direct care professional and life enrichment coordinator. In 2015 John became a Certified Dementia Practitioner. Janie now combines her knowledge with John's to support those in caregiving roles.

"It has been nice to connect with others who are in similar situations, as you don't feel so alone. John & Janie come to each meeting with relevant information to share, and are always open to us bringing our concerns or problems to them."

- Support Group Participant