

- Caring For the Elderly
- “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
- Gal. 6:2
- SEMINAR OBJECTIVES
  - Caring begins for the church in the household of faith.
  - Caregiving can’t be done alone.
  - Planning for old age is a necessity
- Overview
- Caring for the elderly is a complex subject
  - Who are the care givers
  - What issues do caregivers face in providing care?
  - Why should the church care?
- CAREGIVERS
- 44 million Americans (21% of the adult population)
  - 80% work in long term care
  - 66% are women
  - Most are middle aged
  - 13%≥ 65 years old
  - 59% informal caregivers have jobs in addition
- WHO ARE CAREGIVERS?
- Adults caring for relatives
- Spouses
- Middle-aged parents caring for severely disabled adult children
- Adults caring for friends & neighbors
- Children caring for a disabled parent or grandparent

- Caregivers
- Unpaid Caregivers:
  - Spouses
  - Children
  - Grandchildren
  - Relatives
  - Friends
- CAREGIVERS cont.....
- Paid Caregivers
  - Nurses
  - Aides
  - Therapists
  - Social Workers
  - Companions
- Caregiving Duties
- Grocery shopping
- House cleaning
- Cooking
- Shopping
- Paying bills
- Giving medicine
- Bathing, Using the toilet, Dressing, Eating
- CAREGIVER REWARDS
- Feelings of giving back to a loved one
- Stronger relationship with loved one

- Greater appreciation for life
- Sense of fulfillment in following God's commands.
- CAREGIVER STRESS
- Frustration and Anger
- Guilt
- Loneliness
- Exhaustion
- AFFECTS ON HEALTH
- More likely than general population to be depressed or anxious.
- More likely to have a long-term medical condition, i.e. heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, more frequent infectious disease episodes annually.
  - Higher levels of stress hormone, Cortisol.
- AFFECTS ON HEALTH cont.....
- Weaker immune response.
- Slower wound healing.
- Higher level of obesity.
- Higher risk for mental decline, including memory and attention deficits.
- Increased risk of dying within four years after caregiving ceases.
- CAREGIVER SELF NEGLECT
- Less likely to take good care of self
- Less likely to fill prescriptions because of costs.
- Less likely to get mammograms.
- Less likely to get adequate sleep.
- Less likely to cook healthy meals.
- Less likely to get physical activity/.
- INDICATION OF CAREGIVER STRESS/BURNOUT

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Too much or too little sleep
- Gaining or losing a lot of weight
- Feeling tired most of the time
- Loss of interest in activities one used to enjoy
- Easily irritated or angered
- Always worried
- INDICATIONS Cont.....
- Often feeling sad
- Frequent headaches, body pain, or other physical problems
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs including prescription drugs
- METHODS FOR REDUCING STRESS
- Ask for help!
  - Relatives
  - Friends
  - Church affiliation
  - Community agencies
- STRESS REDUCTION Cont....
- Make a list of ways you could use help:
  - Someone who will walk with the person with dementia 2-3 x's a week.
  - Shop for you or sit with the person so you can shop, drive, or just get away for a couple of hours a week
- STRESS REDUCTION cont....
- JUST SAY NO! Your life is not the same so you can't do the things you used to routinely do like holiday meal hosting, birthday parties, committee membership etc.
- There is no such thing as a "perfect caregiver". Give yourself a break.

- KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

- Identify what you can and cannot change.
- Set realistic goals.
- Prioritize, make lists and establish a daily routine.

- FIGHT ISOLATION

- Make the effort to stay in touch with family and friends. Social Networking helps.
- Join an Alzheimer's support group.
- Make time each week to do something you want to do.
- Take care of your health by engaging in physical activity, eating a well balanced diet, getting rest and seeing your Dr.regularly.

- KEEP A SENSE OF HUMOR

- Some things really are funny and it's O.K. to laugh!

- BIBLICAL PRINCIPALS

- God's Word gives us principles for:
  - Direction in decision making;
  - Comfort in individual times of crisis;
  - Strength as we bear one another's burdens.

- HONOR

- Lev. 19:32 "Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly, and revere your God, I am the Lord."
  - The bottom line for everything we do when we consider this subject of caring for the elderly is "honor". God requires it and it is our duty to obey His command.

- HONOR, cont..

- Proverbs 16:31 "Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life."
- Proverbs 20:29 The glory of the young men is their strength, gray hair the splendor of the old."
- I Timothy 5:1,2 "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as though he were your father."

- HONOR cont..

- Ephesians 6:1-3 “Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” “Honor your father and mother”, “which is the first commandment with promise\_\_3 that it may go well with you and that you may live long here on the earth.”

- Old Age is the Reward of an Obedient Life

In Genesis 15:15 Abraham was assured by God “You, however, will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age.”

Exodus 20:12 tells us that honor of father and mother will result in a long life.

- Reward cont..

- Ps. 91:14-16 “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

- God’s Covenant Promises are Given to the Elderly

- Is. 46:3,4 “Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all of you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth.

- Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you.

- I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”

- Covenant Promises, cont..

- Psalm 71 is called the prayer of an old man for deliverance. He praises God for his righteousness and faithfulness and then calls on God in his time of need.

- Psalm 92:14,15 is God’s promise that the elderly will still bear fruit in old age.

- The Church’s Responsibility to the Elderly

- The church needs to be the vehicle through which honor is demonstrated to the elderly.

- Gal. 6:10 states, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

- Church’s Responsibility cont..

- I Timothy 5:4,8,16 These verses clearly instruct the family in its responsibilities for care of parents and grandparents.

- The family has primary responsibility to care for its elderly members. The church has a responsibility to teach families to be obedient to God’s word in this area.

- Church's Responsibility cont..
- James 1:27a "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..."
- Deut. 16, 11,14 God instructs the church in these verses that widows and orphans are to be included in the community life of the church. We should make sure that the elderly in these categories are not excluded.
- Church's Responsibility cont..
- Ps. 146:5-9, Ps. 147:3,6, James 1:27 all list people for whom God provides special care.
  - Oppressed
  - Hungry
  - Prisoners
  - Blind
  - Weighed down with trouble
  - Broken hearted
  - Wounded
  - Distressed widows and orphans
- TRIALS OF OLD AGE
- Ps. 71:9 Old age is a time of reduced strength
- I Kings 1:1-4 David is always cold
- Gen. 27:1, Gen. 48:10, Ecc. 12: 1-7 speak of poor eyesight, loss of hearing, weakened bones, loss of teeth, insomnia and loss of the ability to enjoy the pleasures of life.
- God's Desire for the Kind of Care We Should Give:
- Is. 58:6,7 "Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: To loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter---when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"
- Statistics
- In the U.S. today there are 35 million geriatric patients—defined as over the age of 65.

- By 2020 there will be an estimated 53 million Americans older than 65. 6.5 million of these will be in the “old old” category of over age 85.
- Things to think about...
- 1. How do you make decisions about how your loved one should be cared for?
  - What kind of services are available?
  - How will expenses be handled? Does a house need to be sold now or later?
- 2. When should children step in as the parent or guardian of their parents?
- Things to think about cont.....
- Important documents:
  - Advance Directive
  - Power of Attorney
  - Funeral Plans
  - Insurance policies
  - Bank accounts
- Suggestions for Congregations:
- Develop a deep respect for the needs of the elderly.
  - Physical disability often limits what an elderly person can do.
    - Step in and help: drive an elderly person to his/her appointments or meetings.
    - Be available to help an elderly person get into and out of church. Is your church handicap accessible?
    - Speak louder and slower so the person experiencing hearing difficulties is able to understand.
    - Realize that brighter lights may be needed for an older person to see well. How are the lights in your worship center?
- Suggestions for Congregations cont..
- Emotional Needs



- Almost all emotional needs require a developed relationship in order for them to be met. People do not open up to strangers.
- Suggestions for Congregations cont..
- Spiritual Needs
  - Read scripture,
  - provide recordings of sermons,
  - pray with and for the older person.
- Suggestions for Congregations, cont..
- Remember your older friend with gifts and cards on their birthdays and other important Holidays.
- Remember the greatest gift that you can give to the elderly is yourself and your time.
- Suggestions for Congregations, cont.
- If someone in your congregation is caring for an elderly relative show concern for the caregiver as well as the person receiving the care.
- Provide regular breaks for the caregiver.
- Pray that God will grant strength to the person providing the physical care, emotional care and the patience to keep going 24/7.
- RESOURCES
- How to find help:
  - Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
  - Alzheimer's Foundation of America ([www.alzfdn.org](http://www.alzfdn.org))
  - <http://www.webmd.com/alzheimers-caregivers>
  - Local Alzheimer's Disease Assoc.
  - City or County government sections of the telephone directory under 'Aging' or Health and Human Services
  - National Eldercare locator-a service of the U.S. Administration on Aging

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