

**Caregiver
Support Ministry:
A Biblical Point of View**

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March 14, 2026**

CARE GIVERS SUPPORT MINISTRY

- ❖ **AMEC Federal Endorsed Chaplain**
- ❖ **Veterans Affairs Chaplain**
- ❖ **Board Certified National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains**
- ❖ **BCC Clinical Therapist**
- ❖ **Connectional Officers for Commission on Chaplains**

“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.” ~ 1 Corinthians 6:19-20



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Spiritual Struggles of Caregivers

1. Isolation/Loneliness – Feeling imprisoned in one's own home and feeling like no one understands.
2. Meaningless/Purposeless – Feeling detached from loved one and work. Feeling insignificant.
3. Despair/Hopelessness – Emotionless; Short-sighted and see no future joy. (Leads to clinical depression and even suicide.)
4. Sadness/Grief – Significant losses on many levels. Ambiguous Loss. Tears can be very healing.
5. Unfairness of Life/Situation – “I had to divorce the ideals, I held when we first married and re-marry him again in our new situation.” (situational change/situational grief and realignment).



Spiritual Struggles of Caregivers (Slide 2)

6. Anger – Angry at God/Higher Power for allowing caretaking situation, angry at loved one who is very demanding, angry at self for not being “more” loving.

7. Doubt and loss of morals – Feeling like everyone takes from me, so go after the “forbidden” as in an adulterous affair, embezzlement of funds, or tax fraud.

8. Guilt – Feelings of condemnation for not doing enough or enjoying life. (Example: Wife who stopped cooking for herself and going out to eat because her Veteran husband needed to be on a feeding tube after his stroke.)



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Losses Experienced by Caregivers

1. Loss of loved one as he/she was.
2. Loss of certainty about his/her future and thus my own future.
3. Loss of personal time. (Caregiver tasks, new roles, new identity, no free time.)
4. Loss of control over my life and his/her life.
5. Loss of a dream; thus loss of hope for a good future.
6. Loss of my identity. I am no longer a wife, a husband, a son, a daughter . . . I'm a caretaker.
7. Ambiguous Loss – Personal story.



Ambiguous Loss Requires Both/And Thinking

1. He/She is both gone -- and still here.
2. I take care of both him/her -- and myself.
3. I am both a caregiver -- and a person with my own needs.
4. There is both the anxiety of no closure and the opportunity to move forward with new relationships and interests.
5. I am both sad about my lost hopes and dreams -- and happy about some new hopes and dreams.



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What a Caregiver Needs

1. A safe presence with whom to lament.
2. A journey of meaning making and discovery.
3. A supportive network to “hold them up” during difficult times of painful struggle.



Pause for Self-Care

- ❖ Select a place to pause. This could be a quiet corner in your home, patio, study or even a special bench alongside the lake.
- ❖ Practice deep breathing and centering yourself in a place to go deeper.
- ❖ Create a Sanctuary...a safe place to be.
- ❖ Begin by expressing to God your desire for sanctuary. Simply a place to listen and pray.
- ❖ Meditation: take a moment everyday to pause, catch your breath and simply "be".



Pondering in Self-Care

1. Reflecting on my life story, journaling my story of faith, accepting what has shaped my life journey.
2. Where have I been? Who have been my supportive companions along the path of life? Do I have adequate support systems in my life?
3. What am I seeking in life? What gives my life meaning?
4. Do I have a direction for my life?
5. Do I take regular periods for rest and relaxation?
6. What do I want to lament? What kind of personal confessions do I need to make?
7. Are there losses in my life I need to name? What are those specific losses?



Pondering Guided Imagery – A Form of Restful Renewal

***Visualization, or guided imagery, can help relieve stress. When used as a relaxation technique, guided imagery involves imagining a scene in which you feel at peace, free to let go of all tension and anxiety. Choose whatever setting is most calming to you, whether a tropical beach, a favorite childhood spot, or a quiet wooded glen.

*See the sun setting over the water

*Hear the birds singing

*Smell the pine trees

*Feel the cool water on your bare feet

*Taste the fresh, clean air



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Practicing Self Care

Self-Care Practices Through Your Senses

1. Seeing: beautiful parts of creation, sculpture, art, paintings, photographs...going to a special place in God's creation.

2. Smelling: flowers, gardening, oils, massage, or anything that stirs memories, feelings or an image.

3. Tasting: cooking, trying new tastes from different part of the world.

4. Hearing: water lapping on the shore, birds in the trees, children laughing.

5. Touching: the hand of someone you love, pieces of creation, massage, tending to the earth or a pet.



Practicing Self Care (Slide 2)

Self-Care Practices Through Your Body:

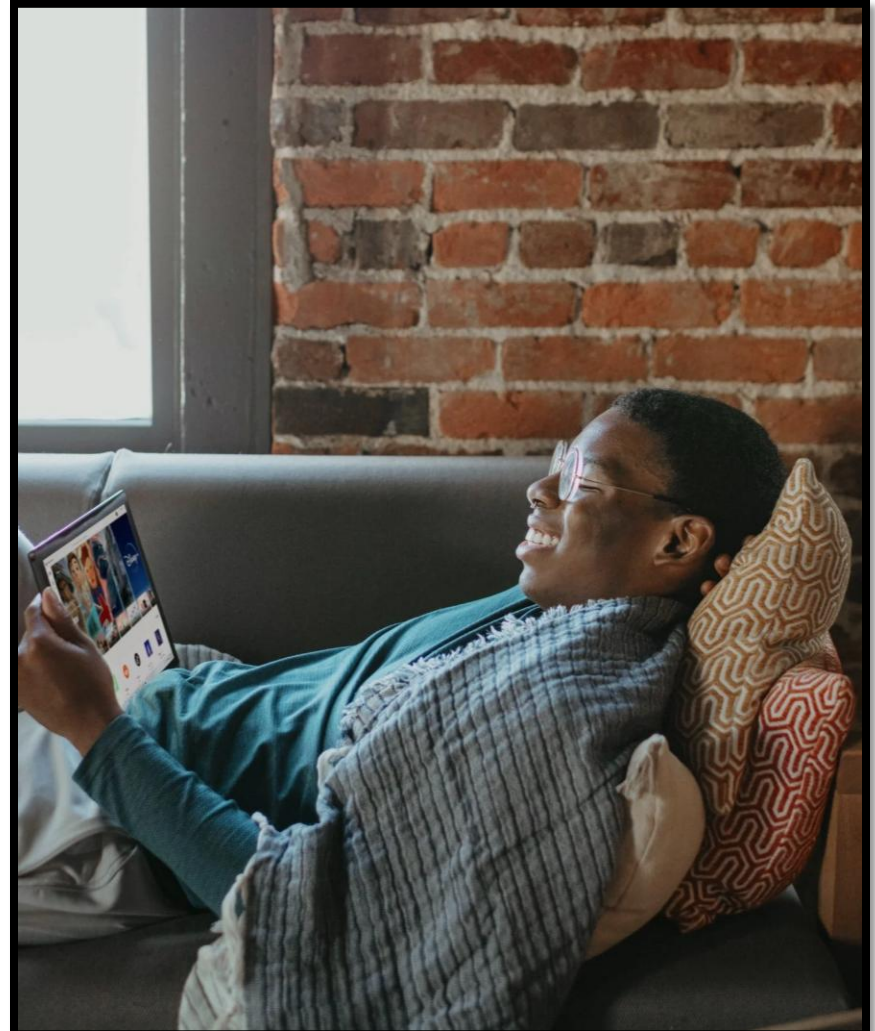
1. Dancing: moving to music with joy and serenity.
2. Playing a musical instrument – can lift one's mood.
4. Sleep: Getting plenty of rest to renew the body.
5. Personally, for me: "When I swim, I feel God's pleasure."
– My quote related to Eric Liddell's statement, "When I run, I feel God's pleasure."



Practicing Self Care (Slide 4)

Self-Care Practices Through Your Mind:

1. Reading
2. Pondering a devotion or spiritual reading
3. Self-Examination
4. Lamenting
5. Meditating upon a work of art
6. Praying
7. Journaling or writing



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Meditative Prayer

With each breath that I slowly inhale, I let Your strength devour my weariness. Your power lifts my spirits; Your peace floods my mind. With each breath that I slowly exhale, I release all stress generated by my infirmity, all negative thoughts and attitudes, all anxiety and fear. In this moment of oneness with You, I gather in energy, faith and serenity. In this moment of stillness, I am bathed in Your loving presence. Amen.



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WHAT IS NEEDED FOR A CARE GIVERS SUPPORT MINISTRY?

✓ **LEADERSHIP -**

A clear leadership structure with designated coordinators who possess both past oral hearts and organizational skills.

✓ **PROGRAMS-**

Structured programs that address physical, emotional, and spiritual needs comprehensive.

✓ **COMMUNICATION-**

Regular communication between care ministry leaders and pastoral staff to ensure coordinated efforts and maintain confidentiality.

✓ **VOLUNTEERS-**

Trained volunteers who coordinate meal trains, hospital visits, grief support, practical assistance, and spiritual encouragement.

✓ **RESOURCES-**

- ✓ Access to a variety of aging services, including caregiver programs, through Area Agencies on Aging.



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Relaxation Exercises

I encourage you to checkout the Relaxation Exercises on the Caregiver website:

<https://www.caregiver.va.gov/support-line/presentations.asp>



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