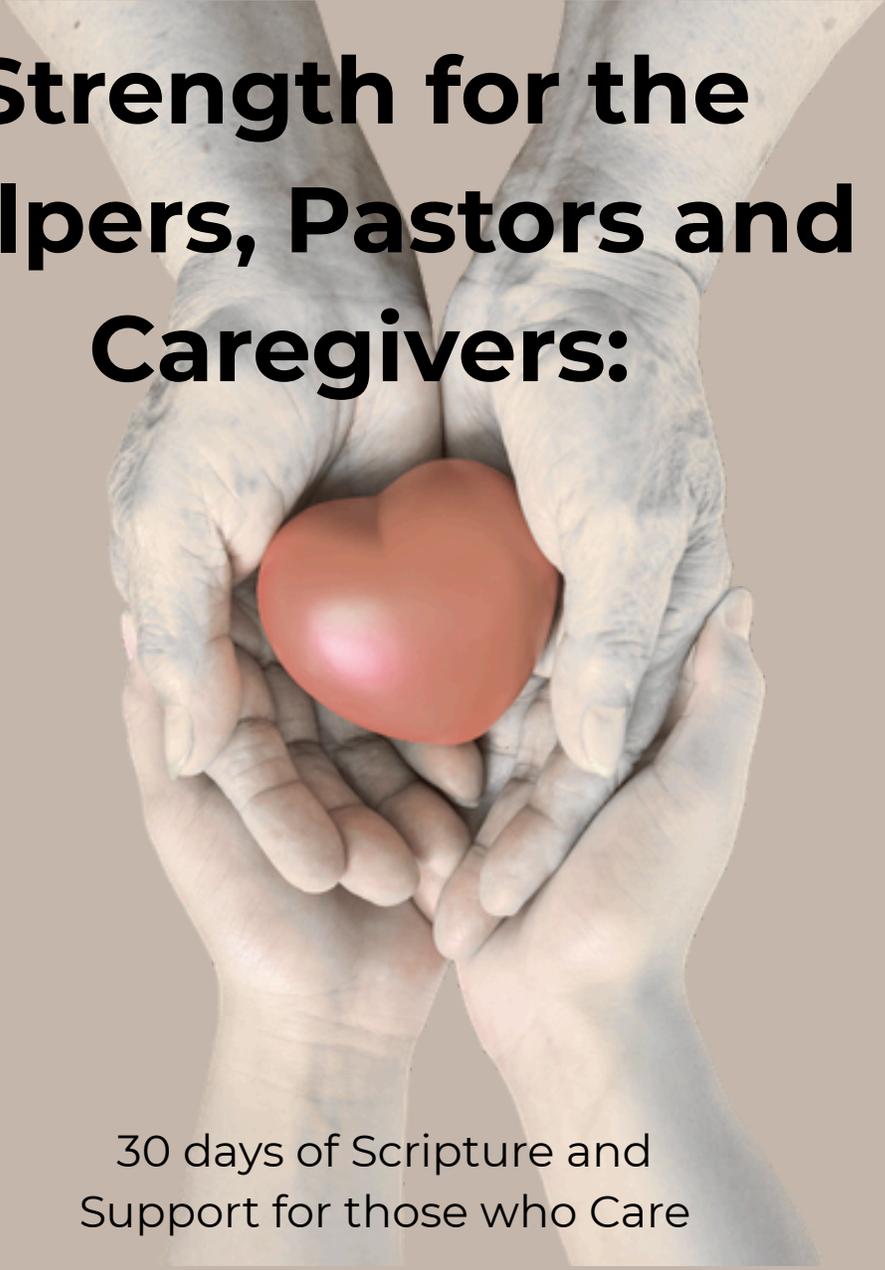


A Devotional from The Church Cares

30 days



Strength for the Helpers, Pastors and Caregivers:

30 days of Scripture and
Support for those who Care

JEN RIPLEY PH.D. PSYCHOLOGIST

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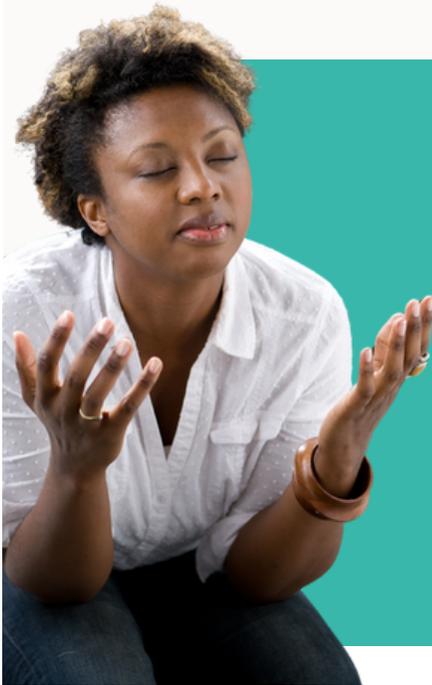
Hi there

WELCOME TO THE 30 DAY DEVOTIONAL

He cares for us.

This 30 day devotional plan is especially created for those who are in caregiver roles for others who are hurting such as pastors, church ministers, chaplains, mental health providers, medical providers, youth leaders, lay-helpers, teachers, family caregivers, and good neighbors. If you find that you tend to sit with people who are suffering, this plan is to encourage and lift you up with the truths of scripture and a chance to quietly reflect on your calling to be a Helper, Pastor or Caregiver.

For more information about church care ministries please visit www.thechurchcares.com



Let's Begin with A Prayer for your Care Ministry

Lord, I take a moment to reflect on Rev 3:20. "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

As we begin this devotional, Jesus would you please give me opportunities to show true hospitality to others, and to do it generously, joyfully and without grumbling. Would you give me grace to embrace interruptions as gifts from You, and help me make space for others in my schedule, at my table, in my home and heart. Amen

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WHAT IS THE CHURCH CARES?

The Church Cares equips churches and ministries in helping skills to provide care. The Doctors are both licensed psychologists, Endowed Professors at Regent University, and co-directors of the Charis Institute. Dr. Jim Sells and Dr. Jen Ripley have multiple books and publications on church ministry and helping Christian families.



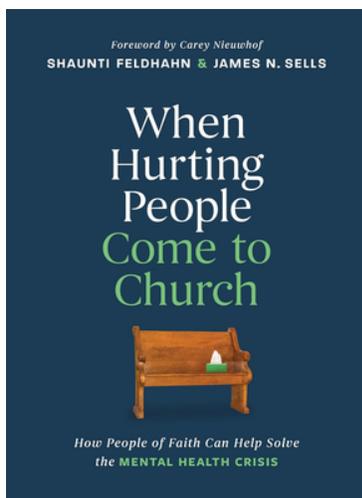
Get to know our ministry



Offer a 6 week basic training



Provide church care in person & online



When Hurting People Come to Church

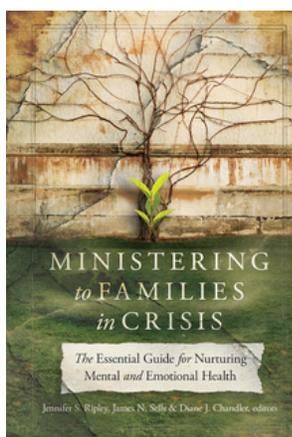
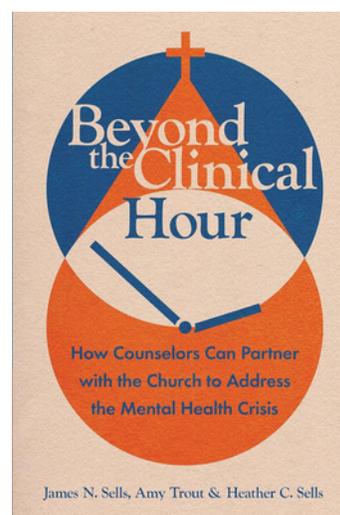
Shaunti Feldhahn & Jim Sells

People are hurting at a scale we've never seen. They're dealing with an onslaught of issues like anxiety, grief, mental illness, family troubles, and hopelessness. Pastors and counselors can't see everyone in need. This book can help.

Beyond the Clinical Hour

Jim Sells, Amy Trout & Heather Sells

Psychologists James Sells and Amy Trout and journalist Heather Sells know firsthand the urgency of the situation— In this book, they call clinicians, students, and educators to collaborate with churches and lay leaders to envision and then create innovative solutions in their own communities.



Ministering to Families in Crisis

Jen Ripley, Jim Sells & Diane Chandler
(Editors)

Ministering to Families in Crisis provides leaders with an essential shelf reference for supporting your community's mental and emotional health. With 39 expert authors on a wide array of topics your ministry will face.

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Called to Care

Anchor Thought: God invites us to share in His work of love by walking with others through their pain.

Day 1

Scripture: Galatians 6:2 — "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

There is a sacredness in the act of caring for another person. In Galatians 6:2, Paul calls believers to bear one another's burdens as a way of fulfilling Christ's law. What is that law? The law of love — the command that Jesus gave to His disciples in John 13:34: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." When you come alongside someone who is hurting, grieving, confused, or overwhelmed, you are living out the Gospel in a tangible way. You are being the hands and feet of Jesus.

But this calling isn't always easy. What I didn't know when I took on the role of psychologist and professor is how caring for others can be draining. I wonder if I'm doing enough or saying the right thing. You might feel invisible in your service, or overwhelmed by others' pain. That's why this passage is such a gift. It reminds us that we are not asked to solve or fix everything — we are invited to share the load. Jesus Himself carried the full weight of sin and sorrow. Our role is simply to be present, to love, and to offer what we can.

When you carry a burden with someone, you reflect Christ, who carried the ultimate burden for us. When you sit in silence with a grieving friend, pray for a hurting neighbor, or listen to someone's story without judgment, you are fulfilling the law of Christ.

You don't have to do this perfectly. You just need to show up with compassion and a willing heart. God works through your small, faithful acts. He is the one who brings healing and hope. You are the vessel. And that is enough.

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Day 1

Scripture: Galatians 6:2 — "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

Today, Who in my life is carrying a burden that I can help lighten, even just a little?

Today, What fears or insecurities do I have about caring for others?

Today, How can I invite God to work through me in my role as a helper today?

The Power of Presence

Anchor Thought: Your presence, not your perfection, is often the greatest gift you can offer.

Day 2

Scripture: Romans 12:15 — "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."

There is a profound simplicity in showing up. When Paul exhorts the church in Rome to rejoice and mourn alongside others, he invites believers to step into one of the most transformative ministries: the ministry of presence.

You don't need all the right words. You don't have to have answers. You just have to be there. When someone is in pain, silence shared with a friend can bring more healing than a thousand eloquent speeches. Presence says, "You matter. Your pain is seen. You are not alone."

This is the way of Jesus. Before He healed or taught, He saw. He noticed the woman at the well. He acknowledged the bleeding woman in the crowd. He stood outside Lazarus's tomb and wept. He was fully present.

In your caregiving, you may feel pressure to do more. But remember: showing up with compassion is Christlike. Sitting with someone in sorrow, laughing alongside someone in joy—these are deeply spiritual acts. They are acts that reflect God's closeness to the brokenhearted and His delight in our rejoicing.

So today, release the need to fix. Choose instead to be fully with. Your faithful presence is a powerful echo of God's love.

The Power of Presence

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Day 2

Scripture: Romans 12:15 — "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn."

Today, Who needs my presence more than my advice right now?

Today, How does my understanding of Christ's presence shape how I show up for others?

Today, Where do I feel pressure to "do" more, and how can I rest in simply being available?

You Have What It Takes

Day 3

Anchor Thought: God has already given you what you need to serve well — your heart, your willingness, and His Spirit.

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:10 — "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others."

One of the lies helpers often face is the feeling of inadequacy: "I'm not trained for this," or, "Someone else could do this better." But Scripture reminds us that every believer has been given a gift—and not just any gift, but one suited to serve others.

You can never get enough training or experience to handle every problem, but if you are willing to love well, to listen with compassion, and to walk alongside the broken, you are already equipped. Your kindness is a gift. Your time is a gift. Your empathy is a gift. And the Holy Spirit works powerfully through each one.

God does not ask you to become someone else to serve well. He simply asks you to be faithful with what you've been given. Sometimes that looks like offering prayer. Sometimes it's preparing a meal or making a phone call. Each act of service becomes holy when it's done with a surrendered heart.

Remember, the early church grew not because of eloquent teachers alone, but because believers cared for widows, welcomed strangers, and loved radically. That's what you're doing every time you serve.

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Day 3

Anchor Thought: God has already given you what you need to serve well — your heart, your willingness, and His Spirit.

Scripture: 1 Peter 4:10 — "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others."

Today, What gifts has God given me that I might be underestimating?

Today, How have I seen God use my simple acts of service in others' lives?

Today, What would it look like to trust God more fully with the way He's made me?

Wisdom for the Journey

Day 4

Anchor Thought: Wisdom is a treasure God invites us to seek—and share—in our care for others.

Scripture: Proverbs 4:7 — "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding."

In a world of quick fixes and surface answers, the pursuit of wisdom stands out as deeply spiritual. Proverbs tells us to value wisdom so highly that it's worth any cost. As a helper, you are often in situations that require more than empathy—they require insight, discernment, and understanding.

I can sometimes feel inadequate to the task. Even though I have a doctoral degree in psychology and decades of experience, there are situations that require wisdom beyond my own experience. There are always new situations to face, and asking God for wisdom is a daily need.

God promises that those who ask for wisdom will receive it (James 1:5). This is not just knowledge or cleverness, but a Spirit-filled ability to see people and situations through God's eyes. Wisdom guides when to speak and when to stay silent. It helps us ask the right questions. It anchors us in truth when emotions swirl.

Wisdom also keeps us humble. It reminds us that we are not the Savior. It teaches us to listen well, to pray often, and to walk in step with the Holy Spirit. In your caregiving, you may not always know what to do—but you can always ask for wisdom. And God, who gives generously, will meet you there.

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Day 4

Anchor Thought: Wisdom is a treasure God invites us to seek—and share—in our care for others.

Scripture: Proverbs 4:7 — "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding."

Today, In what areas of caregiving do I need fresh wisdom?

Today, When have I seen God provide insight beyond my own ability?

Today, How can I create space in my day to listen for God's wisdom?

Equipped by the Word

Anchor Thought: God's Word prepares you, strengthens you, and sustains you in the sacred work of caring for others.

Day 5

Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 — "All Scripture is God-breathed... so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

There's nothing quite like the fatigue of caring for someone in need—physically, emotionally, or spiritually. That's why Scripture matters so much. It's not just encouragement. It's equipping.

When Paul writes to Timothy, he reminds him that God's Word is alive with purpose. It teaches, corrects, and trains us—so that we are ready for the good work set before us. For helpers, this is not just helpful—it's essential.

Every time you open the Bible, you're being trained by the Spirit. You're being reminded of who God is, who you are, and what really matters. You're grounded again in the truth that God is the Healer, not you. That love is patient. That peace is possible. That hope is stronger than despair.

You do not serve alone. You serve with the sword of the Spirit in your hand. You serve in the strength of His promises. Let Scripture be your daily nourishment and your trusted guide.

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Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 — "All Scripture is God-breathed... so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Today, What passage of Scripture has recently encouraged me in my caregiving?

Today, How can I make time to regularly be equipped by God's Word?

Today, What verse could I carry in my heart today as I help others?

Walk like Jesus

Anchor Thought: As you walk with others in their pain, you walk in the footsteps of Christ, who always moved toward the hurting.

Day 6

Scripture: Mark 2:17 — "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus didn't avoid pain. He moved toward it. He dined with outcasts, spoke with the forgotten, and touched those everyone else avoided. Mark 2:17 reminds us that Jesus came for the sick, the broken, the lost. He came for those in need.

As a helper, you are walking this same path. When you sit with someone who is depressed, when you listen without judgment, when you offer a safe space for honesty and tears, you're living out Jesus' ministry. You are embodying His compassion.

This verse isn't just about who Jesus came to save. It's about how He did it—through proximity, attention, and grace. He wasn't afraid to be near suffering, and He doesn't ask us to be either. He calls us to step in with courage and humility.

When we walk with people in their darkest hours, we reflect the heart of the Gospel. You don't need to be perfect; you need to be present. As you care, remember: Jesus goes before you. You are not alone.

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Scripture: Mark 2:17 — "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Today, What does it mean for me to walk like Jesus in my caregiving?

Today, Where is God asking me to step toward someone in need?

Today, How can I rely on Christ's presence as I serve others today?

A Willing Heart

Day 7

Anchor Thought: God delights in a heart that says,
"Here I am. Send me."

Scripture: Isaiah 6:8 — "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

Isaiah didn't volunteer because he had it all figured out. He responded to a call. That's what God invites us into: a response. A willing heart. A posture of surrender.

Caring for others isn't always about having the right training or answers. It often begins with a quiet willingness to show up, to be used by God, and to learn as we go. God can do great things through a heart that says yes.

We may feel unworthy or underqualified, but God equips those He calls. And often, it is in our simple, faithful obedience that lives are changed. Not because of us, but because we said, "Yes. Send me."

There are definitely days when I do not feel the call. When discouragement, failures, or obstacles seem large or I feel the limitations of my humanity. Those are the days when a willing heart can carry me forward. It's not the results that I am faithful to, it is the Lord Jesus that I am faithful in my service.

Let today be a fresh reminder that your willingness matters. Your presence, your service, your "yes" is part of God's work in the world.

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Today, In what areas of my life have I said "yes" to God?

Today, Where is He inviting me to trust Him more deeply?

Today, What does obedience look like in my caregiving this week?

When You're Tired

Anchor Thought: Even Jesus needed time away to rest and pray. So do you.

Day 8

Scripture: Mark 1:35 — "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

Helping others is holy, but it is also hard. It costs energy, time, and emotional strength. Even Jesus, who had access to limitless power, regularly withdrew to rest and reconnect with His Father.

Mark 1:35 paints a quiet picture of sacred solitude. Jesus, surrounded by crowds and needs, prioritized time alone with God. This wasn't laziness or disengagement. It was preparation. Restoration. Intimacy.

As a caregiver, you need this rhythm too. The world will keep asking. But your soul needs replenishment. You need stillness and prayer. Time to remember that your worth is not in your output, but in your identity as God's beloved.

If Jesus needed this space, how much more do we?

Don't feel guilty for pulling away. Feel invited. God meets you in the quiet.

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Today, When was the last time I rested with God, not just worked for Him?

Today, What rhythms can I build into my week for prayer and restoration?

Today, What might God want to say to me when I slow down and listen?

Don't Lose Heart

Anchor Thought: When helping feels heavy,
remember: mercy fuels your ministry, not perfection.

Day 9

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:1 — "Therefore, since through
God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose
heart."

Some days, helping others can feel like too much. The problems are complex. The needs are deep. The progress is slow. Paul knew this kind of weariness—and yet he offers encouragement: we don't lose heart. Why? Because this ministry is not ours to sustain. It's rooted in mercy.

You don't keep going because you're strong. You keep going because God is merciful. You're not carrying others by your own power. You're partnering with a God who is faithful, patient, and endlessly kind.

Mercy reminds us that we're not alone in this work. That even on our worst days, God is at work. He's not grading your performance. He's guiding your steps. He's using your faithfulness, even when you can't see the fruit.

So if you feel discouraged today, take heart. Let God's mercy hold you. He hasn't asked you to be the solution—just to stay present, stay willing, and trust Him with the rest.

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God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose
heart."

Today, What situations or people are making me feel weary in ministry?
art?

Today, How does God's mercy give me permission to rest?

Today, What truth can I cling to when I start to lose heart?

He Renews You

Anchor Thought: God gives power to the weary and strength to the powerless—just when you need it most.

Day 10

Scripture: Isaiah 40:29–31 — "He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak... Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength."

Fatigue in helping others isn't a sign of failure. It's a human reality. When we pour ourselves out, we run low. And in those empty moments, God steps in to refill what we've spent.

Isaiah 40 reminds us that God isn't just mighty—He's merciful. He sees the weary. He notices the ones who feel like they have nothing left to give. And He offers strength that doesn't come from a nap or a new strategy, but from hope in Him.

Hope is not passive—it's powerful. Hope involves a motivation towards a goal, something good, beautiful and true, something you have longed for. Hope also involves a pathway towards that goal. God makes a way for you to move towards the hoped-for goal.

Hope can motivate, and misplaced hope can distract us from God's true path for us which is full of rest and a light burden. True hope is what turns our eyes from our own limits to God's abundance. When you hope in the Lord, you don't just get through—you rise up. You run again. You walk forward. You are renewed.

This isn't a call to ignore your tiredness, but to bring it to God. To trust that He can do more with your surrendered weakness than you could ever do with your own striving.

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Today, Where do I feel the most depleted in my caregiving?

Today, How have I experienced God's hope and renewal in the past?

Today, What would it look like to hope in the Lord today?

Bring the Lament

Anchor Thought: Honest lament is not a lack of faith—it is a deep expression of trust in God's presence.

Day 11

Scripture: Psalm 13:1, 5 — "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? ... But I trust in your unfailing love."

Lament is one of the most honest forms of prayer. In Psalm 13, David begins with sorrow and ends with trust. He holds nothing back. He names his pain, voices his doubt, and still declares his confidence in God's love.

As helpers, we often carry not only our own struggles but also the weight of others' suffering. It can be overwhelming. And yet, Scripture gives us permission to lament—to grieve, to ask hard questions, to weep. God is not threatened by our sadness. He meets us in it.

When you feel burdened by the depth of another's pain, or your own limitations, take it to God. He is not distant or disinterested. He is near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). Lament allows you to be fully present with others while also being fully honest with God.

You don't have to hold it together for everyone. Jesus Himself wept. Your tears are seen, and your cries are heard. Trust that lament can be a doorway to renewed hope.

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Day 11

Scripture: Psalm 13:1, 5 — "How long, Lord? Will you
forget me forever? How long will you hide your face
from me? ... But I trust in your unfailing love."

Today, What grief or sorrow do I need to bring honestly before God?

Today, How do I view lament—as weakness or worship?

Today, Where do I need God's comfort in my caregiving right now?

Restore My Soul

Anchor Thought: Your soul matters to God. He is always inviting you to restoration.

Day 12

Scripture: Psalm 23:3 — "He restores my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake."

Psalm 23 is often read in moments of loss, but it's just as powerful in everyday caregiving. "He restores my soul" is a promise, not a reward. God is in the business of renewal.

Helpers give so much of themselves. We show up. We listen. We love. And over time, we can run dry. Reflect on a time when you felt deeply tired, perhaps from caring for your family, and ministry work, and helping roles. They all require energy and renewal.

That's why restoration is not optional—it's essential. God doesn't just ask you to care for others. He also cares for you.

The Shepherd leads us beside quiet waters. He makes us lie down in green pastures. He knows what we need, even when we don't. Restoration happens when we return to Him, rest in Him, and receive from Him.

Don't wait for a breaking point to seek renewal. Let God restore you day by day. He is faithful to fill what is empty.

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Day 12

Scripture: Psalm 23:3 — "He restores my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake."

Today, What does restoration look like for my soul right now?

Today, How is God inviting me to rest with Him?

Today, What practices help me feel spiritually renewed? How can I renew my commitment to practices where God is leading me?

Come to Me

Day 13

Anchor Thought: Jesus invites the weary to Himself—not for more tasks, but for rest.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28 — "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

There is an open invitation at the heart of the Gospel: "Come to Me." It's not just a call to follow—it's a call to rest. For those who help and serve and carry the weight of others' burdens, this is good news.

There have been times in my life when I have felt soul-deep exhaustion. When my children were babies and toddlers, I felt exhausted from caregiving. When my father battled cancer and passed away, my soul felt tired in addition to my body. When friends and family have lost loved ones, seen prodigal children make scary choices, or faced mental health conditions, the body and soul can feel like gravity has suddenly increased. My first inclination was to try to keep going, not to stop and rest, until I stopped to reflect.

Jesus doesn't tell the weary to do more. He doesn't give a checklist. He gives Himself. He offers rest—not just physical, but soul-deep rest. The kind that lets you breathe again. The kind that reminds you you're not alone.

As a caregiver, you may feel the pressure to keep going. But Jesus invites you to come. To pause. To receive. This isn't weakness. It's worship.

Rest is not the enemy of ministry. It's part of it. When you come to Jesus, you're reminded that He is the true Shepherd—and you are His beloved.

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Day 13

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Today, What burdens am I carrying that I need to lay at Jesus' feet?

Today, How does Jesus' invitation to rest speak to me today?

Today, What does real rest look like in my current season?

He Knows You

Anchor Thought: Jesus understands your exhaustion, your compassion, and your limitations. He's been there.

Day 14

Scripture: Hebrews 4:15 — "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses..."

Sometimes what we need most is not advice, but understanding. There was a moment when facing my father's terminal cancer that I felt the Spirit speak to my soul and say that Jesus lost a parent too and knew all about loss and mourning. This was so freeing! He understood and hadn't created some miracle to avoid loss and mourning in His life.

Hebrews 4 tells us that Jesus isn't distant or detached—He is deeply empathetic. He knows what it means to be tired, rejected, burdened, and misunderstood.

That's what makes Him the perfect Helper to those who help. He doesn't just see your work—He understands the weight of it. He's felt the ache of compassion. He's wept over brokenness. He's experienced the limits of a human body and soul.

You can come to Jesus not just as your Savior, but as your empathetic friend. Your High Priest. Your source of mercy and grace.

When you feel unseen, remember: Jesus sees. When you feel unheard, remember: Jesus understands. And when you feel like you're at your limit, remember: Jesus has walked that road—and He walks with you now.

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Anchor Thought: Jesus understands your exhaustion, your compassion, and your limitations. He's been there.

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Scripture: Hebrews 4:15 — "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses..."

Today, Where do I most need Jesus' empathy right now?

Today, How does knowing He understands change how I pray? Did Jesus face similar experiences in his time on earth? Even if he didn't face specifically what you are facing when he was a man, does Jesus know what it feels like?

Today, In what ways do I try to carry more than Jesus asks of me?

Listening is Ministry

Anchor Thought: Listening is not passive—it is one of the most powerful, Christlike ways to love.

Day 15

Scripture: James 1:19 — "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak..."

In a noisy world, true listening is radical. James reminds us that quick listening and slow speaking are marks of wisdom and maturity.

As helpers, it can be tempting to jump in with answers or advice. But often, what people need most is to be heard. To know that someone is present. Attentive. Safe.

When you listen well, you mirror the heart of Jesus—who listened to stories, noticed needs, and made space for people to be honest. Listening is more than a skill; it's a ministry. It's a way to affirm someone's worth and hold their pain with gentleness.

You don't have to solve the problem. Your faithful, quiet presence might be the very thing God uses to begin healing.

If you would like to increase your skill in listening, The Church Cares offers a video-based course in good listening located through our website and designed for individuals or groups. Just like the Proverbs discuss wisdom as a type of skill, we believe that listening well to others is a wise skill that every church leader and member needs to learn to fulfill the Great Commission.

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Scripture: James 1:19 — "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak..."

Today, Who in my life needs me to listen more deeply?

Today, What distractions get in the way of my listening?

Today, How has God used someone else's listening to minister to me? Can I send that person a gratitude message today?

Love is the Measure

Anchor Thought: No matter how gifted or busy we are, if we don't have love, we've missed the heart of ministry.

Day 16

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 — "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

In a world that celebrates outcomes, productivity, and accolades, it's easy to measure success by what we accomplish. But in 1 Corinthians 13, Paul makes it crystal clear: without love, even the most impressive actions are empty.

As a caregiver or ministry leader, you may be tempted to evaluate your impact based on how much you've done or how many people you've helped. But God looks at something deeper: your heart. Are you moving in love? Are your words and actions soaked in compassion? Even if the people you help aren't having miraculous recovery and progress, this is NOT the measure of your worth or work. The measure of us is our ability to love, even in situations that will not change.

Love is patient. Love is kind. Love doesn't push people to meet your expectations—it meets them where they are. And it's that kind of love that reflects Christ best.

You don't need to be the most articulate, experienced, or efficient. You need to love well. That's what turns small acts into sacred ones. That's what changes lives.

Love is the Measure

Anchor Thought: No matter how gifted or busy we are, if we don't have love, we've missed the heart of ministry.

Day 16

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 — "If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

Today, In what ways do I struggle with prioritizing love over results?

Today, What does it look like for me to lead with love today?

Today, How do I sense God's love for me, even in my imperfections?

Refresh and be Refreshed

Anchor Thought: As you refresh others, God promises to refresh you in return.

Day 17

Scripture: Proverbs 11:25 — "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

There's a beautiful promise in Proverbs: those who pour out will be filled again. In the Kingdom of God, giving is never just loss. It's part of a holy exchange.

You give time, energy, listening, and prayer. You may wonder, "Will anyone ever pour back into me?" God says, yes. As you refresh others, He will refresh you. That refreshment might not come instantly. But it will come.

The challenge is whether you can accept refreshing from others. The Holy Spirit is designed to refresh us, are we stopping to receive Him? Our fellow believers, friends and family are supposed to offer encouragement, love and times of refreshing. Do we stop long enough to receive it or do we say things like "That's ok, I'll be ok, thanks anyway," which shuts down their caregiving of us?

Your role as a helper is valuable. But your soul matters too. When you feel depleted, trust that God sees, honors, and restores. He is the ultimate well that never runs dry. Let this promise strengthen you. You don't give in vain. Your care is not unnoticed. And in due time, if you will receive it, you will be refreshed.

Refresh and be Refreshed

Anchor Thought: As you refresh others, God promises to refresh you in return.

Day 17

Scripture: Proverbs 11:25 — "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed."

Today, How has God refreshed me after seasons of serving others?

Today, Where am I feeling especially dry or weary?

Today, What would it look like to intentionally receive from God today? How could I intentionally receive from others today?

You Are Not Alone

Anchor Thought: God never intended for you to care in isolation. You are part of a body—and you're not alone.

Day 18

Scripture: Ephesians 4:16 — "From him the whole body... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

Caregiving can sometimes feel isolating. You might feel like you're the only one who notices the needs, the only one showing up. But Ephesians reminds us that the Church is a body. We were never meant to serve alone.

Each part of the body has a role. Each gift matters. Your care is one thread in a much larger tapestry of love and healing that God is weaving in your community.

Here in our ministry at The Church Cares we are built on relationships. Dr. Jim Sells and I built this ministry out of our friendship and mutual respect for each others' giftings and calling from God. We brought in new and old friends to work with us like Sylvia, who is an excellent coach and woman of God, and Shaunti who loves the Lord and communicates well. Take a moment to reflect on those in your community that serve alongside you and bless them in your prayer today.

Don't carry it all. Let others step in. Ask for support. Celebrate others' contributions. And trust that when we each do our part, God builds something beautiful.

You're not alone. You're not supposed to be. You are seen, supported, and surrounded.

You Are Not Alone

Anchor Thought: God never intended for you to care in isolation. You are part of a body—and you're not alone.

Day 18

Scripture: Ephesians 4:16 — "From him the whole body... grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

Today, In what ways have I tried to carry ministry alone?

Today, Who can I invite into the caregiving journey with me?

Today, How does it feel to be reminded that I'm part of a bigger body?

Stay in Your Lane

Day 19

Anchor Thought: You're not called to do everything.
You're called to be faithful in your assignment.

Scripture: Romans 12:6 — "We have different gifts,
according to the grace given to each of us."

Comparison can be a silent thief. It makes us question our value, measure our worth against others, and forget our unique calling. I have faced times of comparison whether with my three brothers growing up, or with other students when I was in school, with fellow church members, or with other professors that I teach with now in my role as a psychology professor. Social comparison can be a good thing to learn from others, but it can also spark a competition that is unhealthy. Isn't it funny how the enemy of our souls can take something meant for good and try and warp it to something that harms us?

Romans 12 reminds us that God gives different gifts to different people—for His glory and for the good of the Church.

You may not be the most outgoing, the most experienced, or the most recognized. That's okay. What matters is that you're faithful with what God gave you. He has given us everything we need for everything he has asked us to do.

You don't need to do it all. You need to do your part. Stay in your lane. Serve from your grace. And celebrate the gifts of others without feeling threatened.

There's freedom in embracing your assignment. There's joy in releasing the rest.

Stay in Your Lane

Anchor Thought: You're not called to do everything.
You're called to be faithful in your assignment.

Day 19

Scripture: Romans 12:6 — "We have different gifts,
according to the grace given to each of us."

Today, What unique gifts has God given me for ministry?

Today, Where do I feel pressure to do more than I'm called to?

Today, How can I celebrate others' roles without comparing them to mine?

An Audience of One

Anchor Thought: Your audience isn't the people around you—it's the Lord you serve.

Day 20

Scripture: Colossians 3:23–24 — "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

When your caregiving goes unnoticed or unappreciated, it can be discouraging. You may wonder, "Does this matter? Does anyone see this?" The work of caregiving is most often done in quiet spaces where no one is watching us, no one is liking us on social media for caregiving, or coming up after church to applaud us. I've noticed there are no Oscar Awards for caregiving.

Colossians reminds us that we don't ultimately serve for applause or recognition—we serve the Lord. He sees every moment. Every quiet act. Every prayer. Every tear. God is not just your source—He's your audience. And He's delighted in your faithfulness.

Some people have used the metaphor that we perform for an audience of One. If we are going to perform in our work, our life, or relationships, who are we performing for? Is it for friends? Colleagues? Parisoners/patients/clients? Who is this performance for? Is it for the One who is so deeply delighted in us, even if we are like a tree in the background set of the performance stage who is kind of standing in the wrong place. The Lord's delight in us is assured, regardless of our performance.

Let this truth lift your heart today: You're not serving for people's approval. You're serving from God's love. That's enough.

An Audience of One

Anchor Thought: Your audience isn't the people around you—it's the Lord you serve.

Day 20

Scripture: Colossians 3:23–24 — "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."

Today, How does knowing I work for the Lord shift my perspective today?

Today, What discouragement do I need to bring to Him?

Today, How can I anchor my identity more in His delight than others' opinions?

Even Moses Needed Help

Anchor Thought: You don't have to do this alone—God designed you for shared leadership and support.

Day 21

Scripture: Exodus 18:17–18 — "What you are doing is not good... You will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."

In Exodus 18, Moses was doing what many caregivers do—trying to carry too much alone. From morning until evening, he was meeting needs, solving problems, and answering questions. His father-in-law, Jethro, wisely stepped in to say: "This isn't good. You need help."

God never designed ministry to be a solo mission. Even the strongest leaders need support. Asking for help is not failure—it's faithfulness. It protects your soul, strengthens the community, and makes space for others to use their gifts.

One of the best things that happened in my life was creating a team at the Charis Institute at Regent University with Dr Jim Sells and graduate students. We have worked together in teams on practically every project, writing, teaching and presentation. The amount of natural support that can happen in a good healthy team is an amazing blessing from God.

Reflect on the teams you are part of in your life, how can you offer gratitude and blessing to the teams you enjoy?

If Moses needed a team, so do you. Let go of the lie that you must do it all. Invite others in. Delegate. Rest. Trust that God works through community—and that shared leadership is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Even Moses Needed Help

Anchor Thought: You don't have to do this alone—God designed you for shared leadership and support.

Day 21

Scripture: Exodus 18:17-18 — "What you are doing is not good... You will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone."

Today, Where am I carrying more than I'm meant to?

Today, Who could I ask for help or invite into this work?

Today, How does it feel to know that even Moses needed support?

God Will Finish It

Anchor Thought: You are not responsible for the end result—God is faithful to complete what He begins.

Day 22

Scripture: Philippians 1:6 — "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Sometimes you start walking with someone through healing or discipleship, and then life gets messy. Progress slows. You wonder, "Is this even helping?" But Philippians 1:6 offers this peace: the outcome is not up to you.

God is the Author and Finisher. He began the good work. He carries it. He completes it.

Your job is to show up with faith and love. His job is the transformation, growth and healing. You may not see all the fruit of your efforts—but you can trust that nothing is wasted. God uses every conversation, every prayer, every act of care.

When discouragement whispers, remember: God finishes what He starts. Keep planting seeds. He'll bring the harvest.

God Will Finish It

Anchor Thought: You are not responsible for the end result—God is faithful to complete what He begins.

Day 22

Scripture: Philippians 1:6 — "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Today, What care situations feel incomplete or unresolved?

Today, How can I rest in God's promise to carry the work forward?

Today, What good work has God started in me that He's still finishing?

Keep Going

Anchor Thought: When you feel tired or discouraged, keep your eyes on Jesus—He went before you and walks beside you.

Day 23

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-2 — "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus..."

Helping others can sometimes feel like a marathon without a finish line. You get tired. You face obstacles. You wonder if you're making a difference. That's why Hebrews 12 calls us to look up—to fix our eyes on Jesus.

He knows what it means to pour Himself out. He endured rejection, sorrow, and exhaustion. But He kept going—because of the joy set before Him. That joy? Us. Relationship. Redemption.

Jesus ran the race ahead of us, and He runs it with us now. When you feel like giving up, look at Him. Remember who you're running for, and who runs beside you.

This is not a sprint. It's a faithful, steady journey. And with Christ, you have what you need to keep going.

Keep Going

Anchor Thought: When you feel tired or discouraged, keep your eyes on Jesus—He went before you and walks beside you.

Day 23

Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-2 — "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus..."

Today, Where do I feel weary in the race I'm running?

Today, How does fixing my eyes on Jesus help me endure?

Today, What does perseverance look like in my care for others this week?

A Safe Refuge

Day 24

Anchor Thought: God is your refuge—not just for others, but for you too.

Scripture: Psalm 46:1 — "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

You often point others toward safety and comfort in God. But do you know that refuge is for you too?

Psalm 46 doesn't just say God provides refuge—it says He is our refuge. He is your strength when you're exhausted. Your shelter when you feel exposed. Your help when the burden feels like too much.

I live in hurricane zone on the east coast of the United States and when the hurricanes and tropical storms come through the area, it is essential to find a refuge. In fact in our particular area it is impossible for everyone to evacuate and leave when a storm is coming. We have zones where people at highest risk are expected to evacuate first, and those on higher ground would ride out the storm in shelters. I am blessed to live in a good home in one of the high-ground zones, but I know those in the community who live in flood zones or are homeless and rely on ministries, churches and friends, to help them find a refuge from the storm to sometimes literally save their lives. You can see their fear as they come to the ministries to ask for help, and their deep relief when they are given an option to protect them from the storm.

Sometimes as helpers, we forget to receive what we offer others. We direct others to God but stay out in the storm ourselves. Today, let that change. Don't be afraid of the storm. Step into the refuge. Let God comfort you. Be still in His presence. You are not just a messenger of hope. You are a recipient of it.

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A Safe Refuge

Day 24

Anchor Thought: God is your refuge—not just for others, but for you too.

Scripture: Psalm 46:1 — "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Today, When was the last time I experienced God as my refuge?

Today, What's one area where I need His help right now?

Today, How can I make space to rest in His strength today?

Be Brave

Day 25

Anchor Thought: Courage isn't the absence of fear—it's moving forward knowing God is with you.

Scripture: Joshua 1:9 — "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Sometimes helping others takes courage. You face hard conversations, uncertain outcomes, and the emotional weight of walking with the wounded. Joshua 1:9 offers this encouragement: Be brave—not because of your strength, but because of God's presence.

God never asks you to face challenges alone. He promises to be with you. That means you can step into unknown spaces, sit with difficult stories, and offer love—even when you feel unqualified.

Courage is not about fearlessness. It's about faith. It's about trusting that the God who called you will also carry you.

So today, take the next brave step. You're not alone. You are deeply supported by the One who goes with you.

Be Brave

Day 25

Anchor Thought: Courage isn't the absence of fear—
it's moving forward knowing God is with you.

Scripture: Joshua 1:9 — "Be strong and courageous. Do
not be afraid... for the Lord your God will be with you
wherever you go."

Today, What caregiving situation is requiring courage from me right now?

Today, How have I experienced God's presence in hard moments?

Today, What would it look like to choose faith over fear today?

Grace in Weakness

Anchor Thought: God's grace meets you right where you are—especially when you feel weak or inadequate.

Day 26

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9 — "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Helpers often feel they need to be strong all the time. But Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians that it's in weakness—not strength—that God's power is most clearly revealed. What an upside-down truth: our need becomes the space where God shows up.

There was a good moment of grace in my own marriage when someone at my work had turned against me and been gossiping about me in deeply painful ways. I couldn't seem to get ahead of it, and I was tired. My husband was spending a Saturday trying to get our yard grass to grow- he was doing all the extra things with leveling, fertilizing, and he was hot, sweaty, and tired. I had said I would come out and help him, but I had gotten caught up in my feelings about the gossip situation and had crashed on the couch, abandoning him to the yardwork alone. At one moment, I saw a nasty email to me, and I went outside to him with all the feelings. He opened his sweaty arms and hugged me for at least 5 minutes. I didn't deserve that. I had left him alone with a dirty sweaty job that he didn't enjoy doing either. But he gave me grace in that moment and it was one of the best moments of our marriage.

God's grace is sufficient. That means it's enough—not just to cover your mistakes, but to carry you when you feel too tired, too discouraged, or too small for the task. When you feel your limits, let them lead you to dependence—not despair. Just like the long hug from my husband was deeply restorative and encouraging, the grace and love of God has even more power to restore and encourage us.

Today, embrace your weakness as a gateway to God's power. Let His grace hold you up and remind you: He's working through you, not because you're perfect, but because you're His.

Grace in Weakness

Anchor Thought: God's grace meets you right where you are—especially when you feel weak or inadequate.

Day 26

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9 — "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Today, What weakness am I most aware of right now in my caregiving?

Today, How does it feel to know God's grace meets me there?

Today, What would it look like to trust His strength more than my own?

Trust the Path

Anchor Thought: You don't need to see the whole path
—just take the next faithful step with God.

Day 27

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5–6 — "Trust in the Lord with all
your heart and lean not on your own understanding...
and he will make your paths straight."

It's hard to help others when you don't know what's coming next. Will they get better? Will this situation resolve? Will my support be enough?

Proverbs gives us a different posture: trust, not control. You don't have to lean on your own understanding. You don't have to have all the answers. You're called to trust God with all your heart—and He promises to direct your path.

This applies to every step of caregiving. The conversations you don't know how to start. The outcomes you can't guarantee. The people you don't know how to help. God is already ahead of you.

How freeing it can be to let go of the outcomes and only focus on being faithful to the calling God has given you. Because He has given you everything you need, for everything He asks you to do. If you are feeling like the outcome is something you need to happen, maybe that's not something God has asked you to do?

You are not walking blind. You're walking guided. So today, release the pressure to figure it all out. Take the next faithful step. Trust that God is leading—even when the road feels unclear.

Trust the Path

Anchor Thought: You don't need to see the whole path
—just take the next faithful step with God.

Day 27

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6 — "Trust in the Lord with all
your heart and lean not on your own understanding...
and he will make your paths straight."

Today, Where am I struggling to trust God's direction in my ministry?

Today, How can I release control and lean into His guidance?

Today, What small, faithful step can I take today in trust?

Spur Others On

Day 28

Anchor Thought: Your encouragement is a ministry—
use your words to strengthen those around you.

Scripture: Hebrews 10:24–25 — "Let us consider how we
may spur one another on toward love and good
deeds... encouraging one another."

Everyone needs encouragement—even the encouragers. Hebrews calls us not just to love, but to stir it up in one another. To be intentional. To think creatively about how we can speak life into those we serve alongside.

Your voice matters. A timely text, a kind note, a simple "I see you" can be the difference between someone giving up and pressing on. Encouragement isn't fluffy—it's a fuel for the weary.

As a helper, you understand the power of presence and empathy. Let that understanding overflow into your relationships. Don't wait for others to seem discouraged—speak blessing now. Build up the Body. Create a culture of mutual strength.

Today, become a source of courage. The words you plant may bloom in someone's heart when they need it most.

Spur Others On

Anchor Thought: Your encouragement is a ministry—
use your words to strengthen those around you.

Day 28

Scripture: Hebrews 10:24–25 — "Let us consider how we
may spur one another on toward love and good
deeds... encouraging one another."

Today, Who in my life could use encouragement right now?

Today, How have others' encouragement impacted my journey?

Today, What can I say or do today to spur someone on in love?

Serve Like Jesus

Day 29

Anchor Thought: When you serve with humility, you reflect the very heart of Christ.

Scripture: John 13:14–15 — "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet... you also should wash one another's feet."

Jesus, the King of kings, took a towel, bent down, and washed His disciples' feet. He performed the task of a servant—not just to demonstrate humility, but to redefine greatness.

Caregiving often involves small, unseen acts. It's listening patiently. Showing up again. Doing what no one else sees. In these moments, you reflect Jesus. Not with a title, but with a towel.

When you feel invisible or unimportant, remember: your humble service is sacred. The Kingdom is built by those who choose to love in the hidden places. I am struck by how often the world prioritizes platforming. Everyone wants to build a platform, a following and be an influencer. But the helping professions and helping ministry are counter-cultural. The doctor or nurse doesn't create a following of their patients bragging about their health care. The counselor or pastor doesn't shoot selfies with those they help and post #bestcounselor or #bestpastor and tell the stories of their work.

Our helping is done in a quiet space that no one hears about. Similarly, Jesus washed feet in a quiet room without an audience. We happen to know about it because the disciples told the story so we can all be like Jesus, and quietly, humbly serve others too. We can be counter-cultural like Jesus was.

Following Jesus means choosing the towel over the spotlight. And in doing so, you become more like Him.

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Serve Like Jesus

Day 29

Anchor Thought: When you serve with humility, you reflect the very heart of Christ.

Scripture: John 13:14-15 — "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet... you also should wash one another's feet."

Today, What small acts of service have I done recently that reflect Jesus?

Today, Where do I struggle with wanting recognition?

Today, How can I adopt Jesus' servant heart in my care today?

Hope for You Too

Day 30

Anchor Thought: The hope you offer others is meant for you too—God fills you with joy, peace, and purpose.

Scripture: Romans 15:13 — "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him..."

You've walked with others through pain, offered words of comfort, prayed through tears. But don't forget—this hope is not just something you give away. It's for you too.

Romans 15:13 is a blessing over the weary heart. God doesn't just want to use you—He wants to fill you. With joy. With peace. With abounding hope. These aren't distant ideals; they are spiritual realities, available as you trust Him.

Helping others can feel draining. But God is the Source, not you. He fills. He renews. He sustains.

So let this final reminder settle into your soul: You are not just a vessel of hope. You are a recipient of it. Trust in the God who fills and overflows.

Hope for You Too

Day 30

Anchor Thought: The hope you offer others is meant for you too—God fills you with joy, peace, and purpose.

Scripture: Romans 15:13 — "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him..."

Today, In what areas do I need to receive hope today?

Today, How can I posture my heart to be filled, not just poured out?

Today, What promise from God am I clinging to as I continue to care?



WHAT'S NEXT?



Care Prayer Share Course

The Care, Prayer, and Share course is the heart of The Church Cares initiative
—it's where vision becomes action.

Here's a clear, practical breakdown of how it works:

Churches start by gathering a group of people—often volunteers, small
group leaders, or anyone with a heart to care.

Over six sessions, participants engage with:
Video teaching from trusted voices on care ministry
Real-life roleplays and examples
Guided discussion questions
Prayer and reflection exercises

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