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CARE FOR THE CARE-GIVER

"But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." (1 Timothy 5:8) It is beyond beautiful to see the loving care and concern directed by one who is offering compassionate assistance to a loved one in need. The giving of one's self in order to be of service to another is indeed laudable. However, consideration needs to be taken that the care-giver needs to exercise care of self; in order to be able to offer care. Burn out on the part of the care giver is a stark reality.

Burnout in a caregiver is characterized by a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion.

Overwhelmed caregivers at times may experience fatigue, anxiety as well as depression. It is imperative for all concerned that the care-giver take care of self. Jethro, who was the father-in-law of Moses saw the strain and drain caring for the people and how greatly it impacted Moses; and offered him some wise counsel. Jethro said to Moses, *"You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you, you cannot do it alone."* (Exodus 18:18) Jethro went on to offer ways in which Moses could utilize the help of others to be of service.

It is imperative for care-givers to exercise the utmost of caution in order not to become burned-out. When burn-out comes to the forefront it brings about frustration, isolation, and despair. Jesus was well aware of the peril of such as evidence in the following passage. *"And He said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while.' (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.)"* (Mark 6:31) Notice the parenthetical thought of Mark, explaining the reasoning be-

hind the statement Jesus made.

It is somewhat of a paradox for the child of God to think of self; but self-care is essential IF one is to be of service to others. Remember what flight attendants instruct at the beginning of each flight, "in case of emergency, put your oxygen mask on, then assist others who may need help". Take some time and read over what Paul penned in Ephesians, chapter four and verses eleven through sixteen, then verses twenty through thirty-two. One looks upward to God, inward to make sure the that relationship is where it should be, then to reach out in fullness of strength to be of service to others. Also keep in

mind that prior to going to the cross, Jesus went off to be alone and strengthen Himself (see Luke 22:41-46)

Self-care calls for the realization that one needs support. Which means, more often than not, the one carrying the load, needs to speak up and ask for help. It is an honor to be able to help ease the burden of another. *"Bear one another's burdens; and thus fulfill the law of Christ."* (Galatians 6:2) Don't allow pride to get in the way, if you find you are in need of help, reach out. Accept the fact that there will be times when we need to step back and be rejuvenated by others; utilizing their help and encouragement.

As children of God, we have been brought into the body of Christ. Each one of us serving as a part of the body; each one being needed. Just like in our physical body, there are times when one part is "dragging" just a bit. The other parts work to help support that part; synchronicity. So it is within the framework of the body of Christ, let us look for ways to be of service to those that engage in service to another. Care for the care-giver. (wbc)

THE BULWARK

