
Conference Care

Facilities Newsletter

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“Distributing to the necessity of saints” Romans 12:13

“Be kindly affectioned one to another” Romans 12:10

Editorial

The Third Dimension of Care

Care dates back to the beginning of man. Adam was asked by God to dress (care for) and keep the Garden of Eden. Care first was expressed toward God’s creation, the Garden of Eden, and then was quickly expanded to the human family. Man has always known care, but in limited dimensions. The dimension of care we know today is different than the care the world knew before Jesus came.

From the beginning of time to Jesus, man exercised care in two dimension. To illustrate we will borrow from the drawing/drafting environment. For many, many years, man endeavored to portray his design in two dimensional drawing. A draftsman could only portray one view at a time, such as a front view or a side view. A draftsman was limited because he was only using the X-Y coordinates, which means X represents the left to right on a paper and Y represents up and down on a paper. What was missing was the Z coordinate, which is the depth. A draftsman drawing in 2D had to create many separate drawings to illustrate his work, such as a house drawing. While in general a draftsman could convey his design to the viewer in 2D, his work remained lacking the alive look. Today with the advent of 3D (three dimension) drafting, the possibilities are almost endless. Drawings come alive by the Z dimension (depth). Suddenly a drawing is a complete picture. In one view, the viewer can see a complete work. In a house drawing, the siding, shingles and even the landscaping can all be displayed in a single drawing, giving the viewer a completed view. The third dimension revolutionized the drawing field.

Now, let’s return back to care. 2D care is performed out of duty. Man has always performed acts of care. In the old dispensation, man was restricted, due to a condition residing deep inside his heart—a selfish heart. Man was powerless to overcome this restrictive element by himself. Man, in general, could not totally abandon himself and care unrestricted. Self always came in the way. The prophets foretold of a time when man would receive a new heart, a soft heart. They spoke of a time when men would relate differently as man to man. In essence, the prophets spoke of the coming of the third dimension. God required man to care as laid out in the Law but without the infilling of Holy Spirit, man could not really care in the third dimension.

In God’s perfect timing, Jesus entered the scene of life. Jesus began to live and teach a life that was uncommon to man—a life where Jesus was never restricted due to a selfish nature. Jesus expressed care and compassion in such rich beauty that man marveled over and over. They were stunned at His care. Never had man known care that was so beautiful, so colorful, and so attractive. Suddenly, the possibilities were endless. Jesus had a remedy for every need. Jesus’ range of care spanned the whole spectrum of life from the physical to the spiritual. Jesus spent three years introducing to the world the third dimension of care. The ultimate example of the third dimension of care was Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus owed none redemption. He accepted all the suffering and then laid down His life for mankind, expecting nothing in return for Himself. He totally gave of Himself to make the way of redemption for mankind.

The disciples underwent a transformation after Jesus ascended to heaven. During their three years as disciples of Jesus, they exhibited many of the fleshly natures we deal with, such as, honor seeking, pushing people off, brashness, cowardliness, and many more. They performed care for years only in two dimension. Over and over their heart condition limited them from moving into a deeper vein of care. Suddenly after Pentecost, they became transformed men. An internal transformation took place. The power and love of Jesus was poured into their hearts. They were empowered to care in the third dimension. The selfish and proud restrictive nature gave way to power and grace. They became willing to suffer with no compensation to themselves. They began to care with many of the characteristics of their master, Jesus. The Z dimension (coordinate) was added to their care, the depth of care.

Every born-again Christian today is the best qualified caregiver in the world. To care with completely abandoning self is the greatest dimension of care in the world. Jesus says in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Jesus not only has left us the textbook of how to care but exemplified it in perfection while living on earth. It may well be that God is asking us to renew our commitment to care. Jesus did not speak a lot about things specific, but He spoke extensively on human relationships. The need for care is at our doorstep. No one can say there is no work for me. Jesus left us with a simple evidence that defines His disciples, "If ye have love one for another." Love, which is "an intense feeling of deep affection," will move us to care. Care is "the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something." Everyone of us has a component which can contribute to the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone. May we allow our hearts to be filled with the infilling of the Holy Spirit so that our care is performed in the third dimension. It is in the third dimension that a picture is complete and attractive. The gospel flourished in the hands of the apostles who exhibited the third dimension of care.

The conference at large today is being called to care in some new dimensions. There are many mental and emotional needs among us. Many are the cries of our special needs families. There continues to be a thought advanced that "surely there are those within our ranks who can care for mental and emotional needs among us." Who is it? We all quickly disqualify ourselves, but

wait, do you have an interest, and does something tug at your heart for some of these conditions?

"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18

When the day dawns and the sun is out for hours, there is clarity of light. But in those early hours before sunrise, it is soft and dim to the eyes and not so easy to differentiate things, and again in the gloaming time of twilight, there is a need to focus to bring in all the remaining light there is and a knowledge that the time to see outside is nearly gone. So it seems is life.

I have only snatches and moments remembered from my early childhood. Sounds, impressions, and mind pictures. But down the road always, the voice of my father giving clarity to the moment: "Well, Juanita, do you think the Lord is calling you? "We love you," etc. Not real clear specifics are remembered but firm to the mind's ear. Down the road, some more with intermittent instructions that were early, timely, and directive. Lots of stories of the past and times that were meaningful to Dad and Mom. Like about going to CPS camp during World War II and the enjoyable trials of his faith. Yes, he enjoyed those times and memories: him going to the remote little mountain train depot at the edge of Glacier National Park to go home on furlough and hitchhiking in the last way. Then the comfort of finally home and opening the old familiar screen door at night and the creak of those floorboards! How often we heard life's lessons and stories, and how they comforted us with surety and stability.

But always the undertone teaching for such things, as "Be on time!" (Don't be late to that train station, because it won't wait on you!) A full and inspired life until it was time to quit logging at eighty and a last good bye to the faithful old Caterpillar.

After a long hard race, the end of life's day again becomes a bit clouded. In memory, in eyesight, in resilience, in strength. But the desire to help and be an asset and work remains intact. In tribute to my parents' last years at home, I remember coming to my own house next door at evening time especially. Framed in their modest-sized windows overlooking the drive I would see Dad's hoary head by the cupboard door-turned-medicine-cabinet. Trying to see his pill bottles and get some relief for his chronic pain that was

debilitating his days. As a nurse as well as his daughter, I always hoped he was getting right Help! We tried to keep him on course with it all, but undeclared doctor visits and new meds or changed ones kept him calling or painfully climbing my steps at times for advice (which was hard to give with his many problems.) Over and over come the scenes of poring over that cupboard's contents. The light of a Christian's faith was still shining for Dad and Mom; words of sound advice still came from them, but the shadows were advancing as the sun was sinking and heading them toward rest.

Then the labored arrival with the tapping of the old cane as he came to see me for brief stop-bys. He was trembly but trying to be brave and sniff back the tears. "You know, Juanita, I hate to bother you, but Mom isn't up to cooking much anymore. I'm not complaining, but..." We were trying to help wherever we could as daughters, but one was gone to the mission, and the other sister and I had jobs. What should we do?

"No, don't worry about us; you need to keep working!" he would say on another tough day. What should we do? The community restorium was an option, but it didn't quite feel right.

Well, where all this long story is going is down the train track of time. Dad always stressed about being on time and ready, if you could, for what might be coming down the pike of life. He had years before voiced his concern to some brethren locally about an upcoming need he saw for a "care home" for his generation. I believe he could feel old age coming, with its inabilities. You feel, under your feet, the train coming from a ways off when you're outside the depot, and you want to get out by the tracks with your bags ready. He was concerned about how we would all be ready for those end-stage changes.

"You know, I just can't keep doing this big yard and the upkeep of everything; I'm just failing!" (after trying to cope with the small yard and outbuilding of their retirement home).

So we all kept praying for each other and trying to keep it all together, but it was a timely thing when our assisted living with its mission statement, "Because life matters, we care," opened. With conviction to do so, they moved in. Dad was so glad that Mom really liked it here; I think he could hear the train, that we could not see yet, coming and that his time near Mother was waning. He always wanted things kept up and in an orderly, prepared manner.

From my personal experience with my dear parents

and from having worked in the delivery of health care as an RN, I do not feel that assisted living or nursing home placement for loved ones is the only way to go for everyone, Some families may find other options, and certainly I believe we should try to care for them in their homes if at all possible. We tried, but we all agreed that in my parents' situation, more nurturing support was needed, and we found that we could continue to give that after they moved into assisted living. Their care was enhanced by some necessities being provided for them there, particularly the needs I described of cooking, medication distribution and oversight, and other tasks that they could no longer do. It seems to be healthiest for the mind and body to find the balance of exercise and work as much as long as possible. And they had valiantly succeeded and kept on doing these things as long as they could. (At Sunset Home Assisted Living Dad still kept trying to get out to set gopher traps and fell and crawled back around the fence and was one sore person for a while.) At a certain point in time in many cases, assisted living in our facilities will enhance the ability of a family to continue to care and give supportive measures, because some of the other needs are being met by the providers there instead of trying to do it and not quite managing. Therefore, it is a valid option for some individuals to continue to be in a village-like atmosphere. The restrictions of frailty in advanced years can bring a loneliness that is treated by being with others and the younger set of workers.

Then the natural course of time brings a final voyage, and we left Dad at the train depot awaiting the Conductor whom he'd known so long. The advantages of a person being in our assisted living during this time go sort of like this: Getting ready for the long journey home takes focus and energy for individuals and their loved ones. Thank you, staff at Sunset Home, for understanding that we were tired with the whole long process but cared deeply; so we whizzed in and up and down those aisles many times without long greetings to you or many words. Dad was getting ready for a journey, and although the loving things and deeds had already largely been said and done, we found that we needed to keep doing some of them as we heard and saw the train approaching that would take Dad. You understood and gave us space. Thank you. Mercifully the RN there could tell me, "Your dad is doing what they often do, disengaging here," when he no longer asked me much about anything I discussed that he used to be interested in. And the hospice nurse could say, "Remember, the body really can't use food and drink

anymore; it knows what it is undergoing,” when I wanted to do something for Dad as he quit wanting to eat, yet would still take pop or ice cream from me when I offered it, although he looked wearily at me with his blue eyes.

Thank you to you as a facility that you watched enough that Dad never fractured anything, with the complications that such as a hip fracture would have brought. Even though he fell quite a bit, you couldn't help that. None of his bones were broken, and he looked so regal to the end, we thought.

Thankfully we did not have to deal with such things as the following, which hospitals would be required to do for the terminally ill setting:

“I'm sorry, Sir, but I need to check your name band again before I give you this medicine.” (Hospice contracts enable a facility to let the family give the meds themselves under certain circumstances.)

“Excuse me, but are you staying the night with the patient? If so, you'll need a name pass, and I can only offer two.” (We were all at home there together.)

“Now we need to give him...” (Orders were obtained for what the nurse or hospice or we thought was necessary and we did not have to process or refuse a lot of protocol offers.)

Hospitals and other institutions have their place when care is terminal, but because death matters, too, just like life does. Our assisted living has a plan to facilitate care within the home to the very end unless conditions prohibited by the state develop. The knowledge that a transfer to a hospital will be needed while the train into eternity is approaching is often vital to the family and spouse; it's so nice when the care can continue to be provided at the “home.” This takes some preparation on the part of the administrator and nurse, and we thank you for removing that stress from us.

Dad did not fear the crossing but welcomed it when he knew his work seemed done. And the dignity of having brethren volunteer to sit with Dad during the nights of confusion and sometimes during the day when we could not be there were immeasurably precious. We thank the facility for directing the way to this. To those of you friends who sat and visited with us or talked to Dad, who was unresponsive in the evenings or day while death hung near, that worth is truly unspeakable. And to the workers who connected with Dad enough to sit near awhile or shed a few tears along the way or just did the tough job to be done, incomprehensible thanks.

Sometimes, as in our case, there is no chariot of fire when the loved one departs, but a holy comfort and a

blessed togetherness—an awesome time when God is known to be near. Because our loved one was so dear to us, the morning when he died I thought a bit childishly that it seemed like the world should have caught just a bit in its orbiting when his soul departed. (That's how significant these moments are as a beloved one's life ebbs away. A dear one laying his armor down!) What a privilege to work there, live there, and see that our dear ones' needs are met.

Although you as workers and staff may do the best you can for our elders and needy on the job, you might feel inadequate. In the Christian realm and also in the workplace, we often do. But to close this piece of musing, here's the contents of a prayer my sister overheard Dad praying at the end of a particularly difficult day:

“Lord, please be merciful to me for all my failings and my impatience today. Please, help me with this pain.” (Which turned into a prayer of thanks in general for God's mercy and manifold blessings.)

Thankfully, God has provided that these ongoing human needs can be met in a way that gives dignity and blessings from a wide range of people who populate the circle of caregivers and boards and visitors that keep these “homes” shining.

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