

CARING NETWORK BULLETIN



JANUARY 2003



PRAYER FOR OTHERS

The Apostle Paul writes, "Brethren, pray for us". (1 Thess. 5:25) If Paul needed the prayers of others, surely we do! Someone once wrote, "Some things are accomplished with prayer which would not otherwise have been accomplished without prayer."

Often, people in trouble find it difficult to pray. They feel that heaven is closed. They may feel unworthy. They may feel that God has not answered their prayers. Those in trouble are glad of our prayers, even though they may not be able to pray themselves. Those sick or in distress find great comfort in knowing that others are praying for them.

Some of our ecclesias make prayer for others a regular part of the service. Others request prayers in announcements. Some have group prayers with the sick. (James 5:14) Some, comforting another by telephone, pray with them on the phone. When a public prayer is answered, God is glorified because the prayer is known to more than the one in trouble.

Apart from the benefit to the one prayed for, there is a blessing to the one who prays. Who can hate his enemy if he prays for him? Who does not feel a commitment to another when he prays for him? Who does not learn love through prayer? Prayer for oneself has benefits; prayer for another has double benefits.

THE BATTLE WITH DEPRESSION

Clinical depression is more than feeling discouraged with difficult circumstances or events, or just feeling a bit low. Clinical depression is something that takes over your thought processes to the extent that you are unable to carry out your usual functions like your job, taking care of your children, participating in ecclesial events, reading your Bible or praying. A feeling of despair takes over your thinking and you may make bad decisions. Typically those who believe in God suffer even more because not only are they battling the feeling of despair, they are also battling guilt for feeling depressed when they have been so wonderfully blessed and have the hope of life eternal.



TO HELP US UNDERSTAND

To help us understand depression and its impact, the following description comes from Sis. Anita Lausch, from Hamilton, ON, who battles depression:

I liken my episodes with depression to a deep pit, one that you keep pulling yourself out of. You may move away from the edge at times, thinking you are safe, only to have the walls collapse and you find yourself back where you started. However, the walls of the pit seem deeper and steeper every time. I have struggled with depression for the past five years and I regularly turn to medications to pull myself out of the "the pit". Many people are not comfortable with this and many feel I should just "turn to God" and open my Bible...if only it was that easy.

In my search for support I have found that even within the Christadelphian community, I am not alone in my struggle. I have talked to others who feel so low at times that even picking up their Bible is an impossible task. When others insist I just open my Bible I feel guilty and question my faith. How real can my faith be when I can't even ask God for help when I need it most.

For anyone dealing with true depression the symptoms seem to come on quietly, slowly, until one day life is just too much to bear. It is important to remember, you are not alone, there is help if you only ask.

If you think someone close to you may be having problems with depression, there are a few helpful things to remember:

- someone who is depressed may not be capable of asking for help. Just offering to talk when they are ready and reminding them you are there, even if only to listen, or just be there.
- Praying and doing the readings, and having faith in general can lose their meaning and importance to those in a depressive episode. Don't only offer to do readings with them, offer to listen, it can mean far more at that particular stage.
- As people experience more depressive episodes, they learn to "fake it"; to avoid stares and funny looks or being avoided by others out of fear of "saying something wrong". Offering your support or a shoulder to cry on is all you need to do or say.
- Don't assume that just because someone who was once depressed is now out to meeting again and speaking to friends, that they are fully recovered. True recovery can take years in some cases, and in others, those struggling may require to stay on medication to stabilize their moods.

The Caring Network is here for you. If you need someone to talk to, please Contact Us:

Christadelphian Care Line: 1-866-823-1039 Toll Free
Caring Network Web Site: <http://www.caringnetwork.ca>

Clinical depression is defined as a "mood disorder" by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. It refers to a person whose emotional state is abnormally low or sad, someone who cannot independently raise his or her mood. The incidence of depression is 10–15% in the male population and 15-25% amongst females. Symptoms may include:

- depressed mood, most of the day, every day
- loss of interest in work, hobbies, family, friends
- difficulty falling asleep, or sleeping too much
- agitation or loss of energy
- slowed thinking, forgetfulness, trouble concentrating and making decisions
- feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.

There is some evidence to suggest that some depression runs in families and may have a genetic basis. It is also linked to brain chemistry and can be altered by anti-depressants. Research is now documenting more of the intimate connection between the mind and the body. "An unhealthy body can lead to an unhealthy mind, and an illness of the mind can trigger or worsen diseases in the body. Fixing a problem in one place, moreover, can often help the other". (TIME, January 20, 2003)

There are many things that can trigger depression: the death of a loved one, a serious or chronic illness, the loss of a job or long term unemployment, post partum, a troubling ecclesial environment, such events that can bring on a high level of stress.

Remember however, no matter what is happening, "God's loving kindness is from everlasting to everlasting." 2 Chron. 7:3,6 NAS

Just as we may have a predisposition for heart disease or high blood pressure, we can have a predisposition for depression. However, as there things we can do to bring on depression, there are things we can do to help. God willing we hope to look at these things in our next bulletin

Remember, too, our Heavenly Father knows our needs and uses our various trials and temptations to build our character and our faith. Suffering can increase our confidence in God and chip away at those rough edges that keep us from being more useful vessels to our God and to our brothers and sisters.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.(NIV) 2 Cor 12:9

RESOURCES FOR DEPRESSION

Some useful resources dealing with the subject of depression include:

- "Coping with Depression", available from The Caring Network. A practical pamphlet for both those suffering from depression and those supporting them. (see quote below)
- The Canadian Addiction and Mental Health website:
www.camh.net
- Our Care-Line toll-free phone 1-866-823-1039
- The Victoria Australia Care Group website:
www.caregroup.org.au/vic/home.htm

A QUOTE FROM "COPING WITH DEPRESSION"

"God sees. God knows. God will not let go of you, as long as you don't turn away from Him in unbelief. Gradually you will feel reassured and be able again to read and pray. Then express your true feelings, praise Him for His righteousness and mercy, confess your faults, voice all your grievance, worries and needs, and slowly you will find your questioning becoming acceptance, your resentment changing to praise, and your doubts becoming conviction that God is at work even in you. Remember Job.

"Remember also Hannah who poured out her distress and frustration in tearful prayer. When she left the tabernacle, it is recorded that 'Her face was no longer downcast'. There is no indication that she knew at that point that she would have a child. The relief of her distress of mind came about because she had taken her burden to the Lord and left it there with Him."

UPCOMING EVENTS



A Network of Caring/The Challenge of Caring A Caring Network Mini Seminar/Annual Meeting

A mini-seminar about what we should be doing to care for brothers and sisters who need help, and a report on the Caring Network's activities and opportunity for questions and comment

When: Saturday March 22, 2003, 10:30 to 2:00, Lord Willing

Where: Centennial Recreation Centre, Brampton, (where the Brampton ecclesia meets)

Action: Register with Bro. Don or Sis. Joan Elliott at 17 Trillium Court, Guelph, ON, N1G 4P8
519-767-6071, delliott@sympatico.ca

REQUEST – YOUR INPUT!

We would be most pleased to hear from you, whether you have suggestions for topics to be covered, useful resources you have come across, or comments about what we have written. Sis. Jennifer Daniel, jenniferdaniel@telus.net, or 4 Foxwood Court, Port Moody, BC V3H 4W7, or 604 469-2392