

# **Church of God by Faith, Inc.**

## **Fill My Cup Ministry**

### **Resource Guide**



**Lady Delois Turner McKnight**  
National First Lady

**Minister Carolyn Jacobs**  
National Coordinator

#### **FILL MY CUP MINISTRY**

**Lady D. Katrice Mackey**  
Emergency Response

**Sister Jacqueline Hudson**  
Medical Support Chairman

**Deaconess Lubertha Williams**  
Emotional Support Chairman

**Sister Telsa Jones-Linton**  
**Sister A. Kaye Irvin-Jones**  
Co-Chairmen

## Background

What follows is an impassioned letter and plan that was submitted by Sister A. Kaye Irvin-Jones to the Healthy Solutions Coordinator Lady Katrice Mackey. Lady Mackey agreed with the proposal, got it approved through leadership and wrote the following edited policy:

*"This is the guide we will use for the caregivers. Tips to be placed on the website monthly. The first part should explain the ministry in which we can use on the website. The coordinators are Sister Jacquelyn Hudson and Sister Lubertha Williams. We will seek to develop a contact person on each district that find themselves as caregivers and would like to head their support group on their district. Eventually, we would like to have a workshop at the national meetings under the medical team-with approval. I will be working with Sis. Hudson and Sis Lubertha but they will be the coordinators. I spoke with them last week and they are excited to take on this new endeavor. Looking forward to moving the health /medical ministry to higher heights."*

**Lady Mackey made those decisions based on the following appeal from Sister A. Kaye Irvin-Jones:**

"Hello Lady Mackey, I along with my siblings are the caregivers for our mother. My husband and his siblings are caregivers for their parents. There are many of my friends that have found themselves in the role of caregiver. About four years ago, a friend that is also a caregivers asked three of us for a Caregivers Sleepover. This was so refreshing because we could share experiences, laugh and cry together. The experience has connected us and we stay in contact. After that weekend, I thought it would be a good and well-needed ministry. I am almost sure you that some of the professional in your ministry could assist with it."

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Church of God by Faith Fill My Cup Ministry is to mirror God's love by providing practical and compassionate care support to persons caring for elderly parents or their own spouse, child, sibling or friend on a day to day basis. The purpose of this ministry is to offer members strength, hope and comfort from a power higher than their own.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Church of God by Faith Fill My Cup Ministry is to provide training to caregivers which will enable them to effectively fulfill their role through proper management of available resources.

### **Membership**

Membership is open to any person that doctrinal beliefs do not conflict with biblical truths.

### **Food for Thought**

- Workshops
- Conference Calls
- Area Leaders
- Phone Tree



## Drops of Ink

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Caregiver Burnout: Steps for Coping with Stress

Taking care of a loved one who has dementia, physical disabilities or other age-related conditions makes demands on your time, energy and emotions – demands that, as the Cleveland Clinic warns, “can easily seem overwhelming.”

Caregiving can tax your patience and foster fatigue, frustration and guilt, becoming a grueling grind that takes a heavy toll on the caregiver's body and mind. The physical effects are well documented.

Researchers have found that among people ages 55 to 75, those who are caregivers experience a 23 percent higher level of stress hormones, according to the American Psychological Association. That can lead to high blood pressure and elevated glucose levels, contributing factors to hypertension and diabetes.

Caregivers also show a 15 percent lower level of immune response than non-caregivers, making them more vulnerable to the flu and other infections.

The effects on mental health can be damaging, too. In a **2015 survey** from the AARP Public Policy Institute and the National Alliance for Caregiving, nearly 4 in 10 caregivers reported that they suffered from a high level of stress.

A **2018 study** from insurance firm Genworth found that 41 percent of caregivers experienced depression, mood swings and resentment as a result of their labors.

Over time, that physical and psychological wear and tear can lead to caregiver burnout – a condition of feeling exhausted, listless and unable to cope. It can cause caregivers to make mistakes that could endanger a loved one, such as mismanaging medication, or lead to unhealthy behaviors like smoking or alcohol abuse.

That's watching for the signs of caregiver burnout and taking proactive steps to deal with it before it spirals out of control is important.

**Causes of caregiver burnout** -Along with the heavy workload and emotional demands of family caregiving, these issues also can contribute to burnout.

- **Conflicting demands** as you try to balance the needs of the care recipient, coworkers and employers, family members, and yourself.
- **Lack of control** over money and resources and a lack of the skills needed to effectively manage a loved one's care.
- **Lack of privacy** because caregiving may leave you with little time to be alone.
- **Role confusion**, difficulty separating your roles as caregiver and as the parent, sibling or spouse of the care recipient.

- **Unreasonable demands** placed upon a caregiver by other family members or the person being cared for.
- **Unrealistic expectations** about the effect caregiving efforts will have on loved ones with progressive diseases such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's.

*Sources: Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins Medicine*

## Warning signs of caregiver burnout

The Alzheimer's Association cites these 10 indicators that a caregiver may be experiencing a high level of stress:

- **Anger or frustration** toward the person you're caring for
- **Anxiety**
- **Denial** about your loved one's condition
- **Depression**
- **Exhaustion** that makes it tough to complete your daily tasks
- **Health problems**, such as getting sick more often
- **Inability to concentrate** that makes it difficult to perform familiar tasks or causes you to forget appointments
- **Irritability** and moodiness
- **Sleeplessness**
- **Social withdrawal** from friends and activities that you used to enjoy

Another tool to evaluate whether tending to a loved one is taking a toll is an 18-question caregiver self-assessment called “**How Are You?**” that the American Medical Association developed and the American Psychological Association recommends.

## Tips to reduce caregiver stress

**Give yourself a break.** Ask a friend or relative to fill in for you for a few hours occasionally so you can take a walk, watch a movie or go out to dinner.

If you don't have that sort of informal support available or feel you need more structured respite care, look into other options through the Access to Respite Care and Help (ARCH) National Respite Network and Resource Center's National Respite Locator, which can help you find adult day care centers and home care services in your area.

**Simplify your communication.** Keeping extended family and friends up to date about your loved one's situation through phone calls or individual emails can be tiring, and you may not want to broadcast that information on social media.

Try using a website like CaringBridge, PostHope or MyLife Line that allows you to post updates for everyone simultaneously with controls to protect your loved one's privacy.

**Tap into online resources.** The U.S. government's Eldercare Locator can connect you with your local Area Agency on Aging, which can guide you to resources in your community to help you deal with the challenges you are facing.

You also can call the Eldercare Locator at 800-677-1116.

With the Community Resource Finder, an online database from AARP and the Alzheimer's Association, you can find a range of programs and services in your area, from elder law attorneys to transportation. The Family Caregiver Alliance's Family Care Navigator can help you locate local resources, too.

**Join a support group.** If you feel like you're alone in your struggle, talking with other family caregivers can lift your spirits and help you think through solutions to various problems.

You may be able to find a support group through a local church or hospital, or at the website of the Well Spouse Association, which coordinates a national network of groups for spousal caregivers.

If you're taking care of a loved one with Alzheimer's disease, the Alzheimer's Association offers a locator for support groups in your area. AARP has an online caregiving forum and a Facebook discussion group where caregivers can share information and advice, and the Family Caregiver Alliance operates an online support group that communicates via email.

**Nurture positive relationships.** You may be overwhelmed but take the time to talk with your closest friends and family members.

Spend an evening with someone who is a good listener. Limit your interactions with negative people who will drag down your mood and perspective.

**Take care of your own health.** Set a goal to establish a good sleep routine and to exercise a certain number of hours every week.

Be sure to eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water. See your doctor for recommended immunizations and screenings.

Tell your physician that you're a caregiver and bring up any concerns you may have. A daily relaxation and meditation practice can be beneficial as well.

# Care for the Caregiver

*Because caregiving can be so overwhelming, it's important to take steps to refresh yourself. At the very least, this will ensure that your loved one always gets the best you have to offer.*

1. Schedule time for yourself
2. Share your feelings
3. Use community resources
4. Ask for help
5. Cut yourself some slack
6. Eat smart and exercise
7. Attend to your spiritual health

## **1. Schedule time for yourself**

Whether you feel like you need a break or not, schedule some personal moments, organize them, and stick to your schedule. Carefully guard any time you do manage to set aside. Learn to say no to unnecessary or unfulfilling activities.

## **2. Share your feelings**

Talking about your caregiving problems isn't complaining. Sometimes, family members assume that you're doing just fine because they simply don't know any better.

If those you've approached so far don't seem inclined to listen, join a support group. There's one for just about every situation.

Make safety a primary concern. Find out if free or low-cost community escort services are available. Contact the local Area Agency on Aging for more information.

Try writing out exactly what you're feeling. Sometimes this will banish negative feelings all by itself.

The next time someone asks, "What's happening," use the opportunity to share your feelings. Tell it like it is.

If your feelings are really bottled up and you're overwhelmed, consider talking to a counselor, psychologist, or mental health professional.

In addition, you might want to consider hiring a Private Care Manager or Geriatric Case Manager. These trained professionals can perform a complete assessment of your loved one's needs and work to engage the appropriate services. Use our Resource Locator to find Care Managers in your area.

### **3. Use community resources**

Community resources like respite care and adult day care exist for your benefit. These services are invaluable for caregivers who need to recharge their batteries.

Respite Care provides temporary relief for caregivers. Workers take over caregiving responsibilities for a brief period of time, and care can be provided in the home. These services can often be arranged through the local Area Agency on Aging. Adult Day Care provides social activities, therapies, education, and supervision in a group setting. Find them in the Yellow Pages, under "Health Services," "Home Health Care," "Senior Citizen Services," or "Social Service Organizations."

### **4. Ask for help**

Unfortunately, most caregivers operate without regular help from family and friends, but there's no reason to isolate yourself when you don't have to. The most effective caregivers can make reasonable, impartial judgments about both their loved one's situation and their own abilities.

Make an honest assessment of your strengths and weaknesses. You may be able to keep your mother's spirits up, but do you have the strength to attend to her physical needs? Be realistic.

When enlisting help, be as specific as you can. Don't ask someone to come over "anytime" to "lend a hand." Set a time and place.

Try not to ask someone for help only to make him or her a spectator.

Put friends and relatives at ease by explaining the situation in clear terms. Talk to them beforehand, so they know what to expect.

### **5. Cut yourself some slack**

Enough said.



## **6. Eat smart and exercise**

You've heard these two before. But exercise and proper nutrition will make you a stronger person. And a stronger person makes for a stronger, happier, more effective caregiver.

Look at good diet and exercise as your responsibilities—your obligations—as a caregiver. This may seem unfair, but the rewards will far outweigh the effort.

Investigate classes at community centers and gyms. Unconventional activities like karate, yoga, and square dancing can eliminate the sense of drudgery often attached to traditional exercise programs.

Find a regular exercise partner, or even someone who will just join you for a daily walk.

## **7. Attend to your spiritual health**

Whatever your beliefs, make an effort to look after your spiritual reserves. They are your main source of strength.

Keep in mind that your spiritual health is just as important as your physical health.

Many caregivers place a high premium on faith and religious commitment. Religious leaders can offer spiritual guidance in addition to practical aid.

Take mental vacations. Picture yourself in the most remote, relaxing place you can imagine. What are the sounds, the sights, the smells? This simple relaxation technique can decrease anxieties about the future and help you focus.

# **The Benefits of Caregiving Can Be Emotional, Physical and Cognitive**

## **Look On the Bright Side**

The typical American caregiver is a middle-aged woman taking care of an aging parent, but a 2017 AARP study found that 40 percent of men are involved in caregiving, too.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of who's doing the work, caregiving can take a toll, whether it's provided by a 40-something adult daughter or middle-aged son who is also juggling a full-time career and other family demands. Yet studies also indicate there's an upside to caregiving.

## **What Are the Gains?**

In a 2014 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, American caregivers said they found the experience to be far more rewarding (88 percent) than stressful (32 percent).<sup>2</sup> Likewise, a separate 2014 survey by the National Opinion Researcher Center (NOPC) indicated that 83 percent of caregivers found the experience to be rewarding.

According to the American Psychological Association's assessment of the NOPC findings: "Many family caregivers report positive experiences from caregiving, including a sense of giving back to someone who has cared for them, the satisfaction of knowing that their loved one is getting excellent care, personal growth and increased meaning and purpose in one's life. Some caregivers feel that they are passing on a tradition of care and that by modeling caregiving, their children will be more likely care for them if necessary."

And there is more. Since the average caregiver is on his or her feet most of the day—bending, lifting, walking—there are physical benefits to caregiving. The daily caregiving activities of bathing, dressing and moving a loved one and manipulating heavy or cumbersome medical equipment can build strength and stamina. Done consistently, these activities can improve the caregiver's physical health.

Juggling schedules, paying bills, keeping up with medication times and doses as well as talking to healthcare and insurance professionals are cognitive skills that can help sharpen the caregiver's mind and improve memory.

## **Accentuate the Positive**

It is not unusual for the strain of caregiving to cause simultaneous positive and negative effects. Numerous studies have found, however, that caregivers who dwell on the positive aspects of caregiving show lower levels of depression.

Caregiving is far from easy. Pablo Casals, the famous cellist and composer, once said, “The capacity to care is the thing that gives life its deepest significance and meaning.” Caregivers are doing plenty of caring. Whether they see it as a burden or a benefit can influence how well they fare.

<sup>1</sup>*Pew Social Trends: Caring for Aging Parents.* <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/05/21/4-caring-for-aging-parents/AARP>.

<sup>2</sup>*The Hidden Male Caregiver.* 2017. <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/life-balance/info-2017/hidden-male-caregiver.html>

## **Emotional and Spiritual Health**

*Caregiving is more than just monitoring medicines and driving to doctor’s appointments. Your loved one’s emotional health is as important as his or her physical condition.*

### **Self-Esteem**

Most people take great pride in their independence. When they lose that independence because of illness or disability, self-esteem often suffers. The person you care for may feel worthless or feel she’s a burden to you.

Your attitude can have a positive effect on the other person’s self-esteem.

- Encourage independence.
- Give praise for effort and for things she does herself.
- Allow her to make as many decisions as possible.
- Let her choose what to wear, when to have lunch, where to shop for groceries.
- Reminisce. Display childhood and family photos.
- Encourage her to talk about the past. Invite her to tell family stories, talk about former accomplishments and old friends.
- Provide ways for her to feel needed.

- If suitable, encourage her to care for a pet or a plant. Let her address envelopes or cut coupons to help with household chores.
- Treat her with dignity and respect.
- Don't forget that you're talking to an adult, even if the person needs a great deal of care from you. No adult wants to be treated like a child.

## **Spiritual Well Being**

If religion has been an important part of your lives, it is important to provide opportunities for spiritual experiences even if you can't attend religious services.

- Read passages from religious books.
- Arrange for a member of the clergy, lay minister, or parish nurse to visit.
- Play sacred music on the radio.
- Watch church services on television.
- Continue meaningful rituals like prayers before meals.
- Enjoy a sunrise or sunset out the window together.
- Pray together familiar prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer.
- Sing old hymns together.
- Use services and liturgies that the person remembers.

## **Intellectual Well Being for Both of You**

These are common sayings and most people agree they're true. Even if the body is failing, most people can retain a healthy, active mind throughout life.

- Learn a new hobby or skill. Stamp collecting, painting, or computers are a few possibilities.
- Work crossword puzzles.
- Play cards.
- Write letters.
- Listen to books on tape. Borrow them from the library, rent them at video stores, or trade with friends.

For a person with dementia some of these activities may be frustrating. If they are too difficult or stressful, change activities or modify them to make them easier.

Find activities you enjoy, and invite the person you care for to participate in some way.

Enjoying life's pleasures doesn't have to end when illness or disability strikes. As you continue your work as a caregiver, stop and smell the roses along the way. And don't forget to share their wonderful aroma with the person who needs your care.

*Originally written and published by the Aging and Adult Services Administration Department of Social and Health Services, State of Washington. Reprinted with permission.*

© Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

## **Long-Distance Support Systems**

*Family, friends, neighbors, community agencies, and even employers can provide valuable support as you care for your long-distance loved one.*

As a long-distance caregiver, it is especially important for you to establish support systems for both your loved one and yourself. Other family members are an obvious resource, but some may be more willing than others to share in the caregiving burden. Others may be willing but lack the resources to carry a large chunk of the responsibility. Regardless, there are enough tasks related to long-distance caregiving that everyone who wants to be involved can help significantly.

Family members who live too far away to provide hands-on caregiving might be in a position to help with financial or legal matters than can be handled by phone or mail. Others can take charge of recognizing special occasions with cards, plants, or small remembrances, as well as sending your loved one family photos or news. If you have teen-aged children, don't hesitate to ask them to get involved as well. Consider this an opportunity to strengthen family bonds and teach your children about empathy and responsibility. And don't forget neighbors and friends in your loved one's community who may be willing to provide transportation or help with shopping, household chores, and other tasks.

Along with the help that you and others provide from afar, your loved one may need caregiving assistance from someone closer to home. Every community has various resources and services to help you care for your distant loved one. In addition, national organizations or foundations, like the Alzheimer's Association or the National Kidney Foundation, can offer advice for meeting disease-specific health needs. Also, if your loved one has or had a favorite church, consult the clergy there for referrals and resources.

### **Can Your Employer Help?**

Studies show that the average caregiver spends 18 hours a week on caregiving duties. Consequently, working caregivers often must sacrifice work hours to fulfill those duties. Some even give up work or retire early. Realizing that this situation will only worsen as our population ages, many companies have shored up employee retention and productivity by making life easier for their caregiving employees.

A 1996 survey of work and family benefits for salaried employees showed that nearly one-third of the businesses surveyed offered eldercare programs, such as resource and referral programs, support groups, and employee assistance programs. Other companies provide counseling services for caregivers, as well as long-term care insurance to fill gaps in Medicaid and Medicare coverage, or to cover part of the cost of family caregiving. Ask your employer's human resources representatives what services are currently offered and inform them of any eminent or future concerns. Companies frequently reassess their benefits to identify services that are most-needed by their employees.

Be sure to inquire about the availability of the following services:

- Visiting nurse services. Some companies can provide reimbursement or direct subsidies for visiting nurse costs.
- Emergency care. The purpose of emergency care is to assure that care will be available when regular arrangements are not, or when other circumstances dictate a short-term need.
- Flexible spending or dependent care accounts. In dependent care assistance programs (DCAPs), your employer deducts a specified amount from your income to be placed in a dependent care assistance fund. Through such an arrangement, you won't be taxed on the amount set aside for dependent care assistance.
- Flexible schedules and leaves of absence. Some companies make allowances for time off when caregiving duties take precedence.

## **Know Your Rights**

Under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), a covered employer must grant an eligible employee up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave in a 12 month period to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent—but not an “in-law”) with a serious health condition. The law permits you to use—or your employer to require you to use—accrued paid leave, such as vacation or sick leave, for some or all of the FMLA leave period. You may also be eligible for other family and medical leave through your employer's benefits package or labor contract.