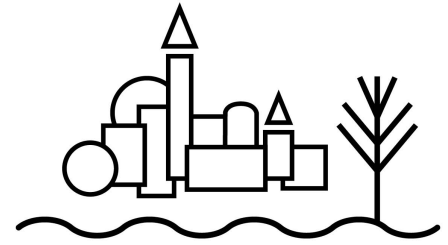


## Connecting with My TERMINALLY ILL Neighbor Luke 10:29-37



The husband of 50 years is tired! He has been right by the side of his terminally ill wife, helping her dress in the mornings, making sure the clothes are clean and food is on the table. He keeps the yard in proper shape and gets her to and from doctors' appointments. He is grateful he no longer has to hold down a job while being a full-time caregiver. He is relieved he can keep his wife at home, and shudders to think of her having to go to a nursing home, but realizes that may be necessary if he can no longer keep up this pace. He digs in deep to muster the energy to keep going. Whether gifted or trained, the caregiver must provide support 24/7 as he makes the necessary changes to their home to accommodate her needs.

The caregiver and his wife face her declining health together. She may deal with weight loss, weakness, inability to ambulate, social withdrawal, cognitive impairments, agitation, anxiety, irritability, just to name a few of the changes that come once the doctor has given the terminal prognosis.

Where are the neighbors? The ones who used to come to play cards, to drink sweet tea and catch up on the news in the community. The ones who used to talk over the fence about yard work or tell funny stories about grandchildren. Grief washes over the neighbors. No one wants a loved one to be faced with this reality. Yet, at this critical time, isolation from the faith community becomes a struggle.

### Reflections

1. Read Luke 7:37 -38. We may not know just what to do to help, but showing we care is the key. Discuss this story (Luke 7:36-50) concerning Jesus' response to Simon.
2. Read Luke 10:29-37. What are some simple ways to show surprising and extravagant kindness like the Samaritan did for his wounded neighbor?

### A Call to Action

1. Create a committee to mobilize neighbors to do chores such as
  - Add a ramp
  - Be a sitter
  - Yard work
  - Grocery shop
  - Take meals
  - Take out trash /recycle
  - Shampoo/style hair
  - Manicure/pedicure
  - **Take "church" to their home** – sing hymns, pray, read scripture, share a devotional, celebrate communion
  - Don't wait – Ask how you can help

2. Can you think of other ways that might bring joy and blessing to a neighbor who is terminally ill, as well as to the family?
3. Invite a hospice chaplain to meet with your group to help you understand the stages of dying, their needs, as well as needs of the caregivers.

## **Resources**

*Tuesdays with Morrie* – Read the book or watch the movie. Discuss what the author learned and how it changed him. How was he a neighbor to Morrie? Identify the ways that the author blessed Morrie.

## **Prayer**

*Holy God, Let us remember those for whom we are responsible. We lift up to you our terminally ill neighbor and their caregivers. May we show to them thoughtfulness, kindness, and love. And if we might be the means by which you answer their prayers, then may you find us neither deaf nor defiant, but eager to fulfill your will. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **ABOUT THE WRITER:**

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