



# Resident Beatitudes

LifeCare Memos® Messages of Compassion

Joni Eareckson Tada, founder and president of JAF Ministries, shares the following lessons she learned since a diving accident in 1967 left her a quadriplegic. The eight *Beatitudes* correspond to the beatitudes Jesus shared in the *Sermon on the Mount*. The application for ministry to residents in skilled nursing and senior housing facilities is obvious.

## Beatitudes #1 and #2

These beatitudes highlight the need to be patient with the residents entrusted to our care.

***Blessed are you who take the time to listen to difficult speech, for you help me to know that if I persevere I can be understood!***

***Blessed are you who never bid me to ‘hurry up’ and take my tasks from me and do them for me, for often I need time rather than help!***

Being patient is not always easy, but it is a character quality that we must seek to develop as we *serve in the spirit of Christ’s love*—the motto of Elim Care ministries.

*A man’s wisdom gives him patience.* (Proverbs 19:11) *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience...* (Galatians 5:22) *Love is patient, love is kind...* (I Corinthians 13:4) *...be patient, bearing with one another...* (Ephesians 4:2) *...help the weak, be patient with everyone* (I Thessalonians 5:24).

These words should be remembered the next time we are tempted to ask a resident to *hurry up*, when we do something for the resident to save us time, or when we do not take time to listen to a resident’s difficult speech.

## Beatitudes #3 and #4

These beatitudes focus on our responsibilities to encourage one another:

***Blessed are you who stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures, for my failures will be outweighed by the times I surprised myself and you.***

***Blessed are you who, with a smile, encourage me to try once more.***

*Encourage one another and build each other up* (I Thessalonians 5:10)...  
*Encourage the timid, help the weak* (I Thessalonians 5:14)...*let us encourage one another* (Hebrews 10:25).

The lack of encouragement in our society is almost an epidemic. William Barclay expressed the need this way:

*One of the highest of human duties is the duty of encouragement....It is easy to laugh at men's ideals; it is easy to pour cold water on their enthusiasm; it is easy to discourage others. The world is full of discouragers. We have a Christian duty to encourage one another. Many a time a word of praise or thanks or appreciation or cheer has kept a man on his feet. Blessed is the man or woman who speaks such a word!*

Encouragement is like peanut butter...the more you spread it around, the better things stick together. Our ministry with residents and with one another should increasingly become a ministry of encouragement.

### **Beatitudes # 5 and #6**

These beatitudes emphasize the need to understand and empathize with those to whom we give care.

***Blessed are you who asked for my help, for my greatest need is to be needed.***

***Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult for me to put my thoughts into words.***

Sympathy is a feeling of concern for someone without necessarily becoming involved with them. Empathy is feeling another's problems as if they were your own without actually taking them on yourself. Sympathy alone will lack intensity because we will feel for our care-receivers, not with them. Empathy involves *getting inside another person's skin* or *walking in his or her shoes* without letting their problems become our problems. Empathic helpers get personally involved while maintaining control of themselves in the helping relationship.

Romans 12:15 challenges us to *rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep*. As care-givers, we need to be empathic, not just sympathetic, to the numerous needs of our care-receivers.

### **Beatitudes #7 and #8**

These beatitudes underscore our need to love residents just as they are and to serve them *in the spirit of Christ's love*.

***Blessed are you who never remind me that today I asked the same question two times.***

***Blessed are you who respect me and love me as I am, just as I am, and not like you wish I were.***

When Jesus saw people in need he reached out with compassion and love.

*“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).*

To the mystery of Jesus being needy, the disciples asked,

*“Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you, or thirsty, and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick, or in prison and come to you? And the King will answer and say to them, “I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these by brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!” (Matthew 25:37-40).*

Christ will one day invite His own into His kingdom, because the authenticity of their faith was demonstrated by the way they treated *the least of these my brothers and sisters*. This fact alone should be sufficient motivation for us to relate to everyone with patience, with words of encouragement, with empathy and with love!

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### ***LifeCare Memos***<sup>®</sup>

When experiencing the stresses of life, people need support. The Psalmist needed that support and found it when he turned to God. He said, *“Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one **cares for my life**. I cry to you, O LORD; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living’” (Psalm 142:4-5).*

***LifeCare Memos*** are designed as messages of compassion that integrate biblical guidelines for emotional and spiritual well-being. Topics focus on various life-care issues and address them from the perspective of Scripture.