

IT IS A SAD DAY WHEN CHRISTIANS DON'T HAVE TIME FOR ONE ANOTHER.

A special guest article by Karen Steele. Thursday 8/7/02.

My heart is grieved today, as it often is, over the lack of care and concern in our churches today. Where has the compassion gone?

Compassion. (Mercy); the aspect of God's love that causes Him to help the miserable, (wretchedly unhappy, poor, uncomfortable; pitiable), just as grace is the aspect of His love that moves Him to forgive the guilty. Those who are miserable may be so either because of breaking God's law or because of circumstances beyond their control.

God also shows mercy by actively helping those who are miserable due to circumstances beyond their control. We see this aspect of mercy especially in the life of our Lord Jesus. He healed blind men (Matt. 9:27-31; 20:29-34) and lepers (Luke 17:11-19). These acts of healing grew out of his attitude of compassion and mercy.

Because God is merciful, He expects His children to be merciful (Matt. 5:7; James 1: 27).

The Parable of the Good Samaritan; Luke 10:25-37.

We all know the Sunday school story of the Good Samaritan. In verse 36: Jesus asked, "Which one of these three people do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

Verse 37: The experts in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Confronting the needs of others brings out various attitudes in us. Jesus used the story of the good but despised Samaritan to make clear what attitude was acceptable to him. If we are honest, we often will find ourselves in the place of the expert in the law, needing to learn again who our neighbour is.

Look at the different attitudes towards the wounded man.

1. To the expert in the law, the wounded man was a subject to discuss.
2. To the robbers, the wounded man was someone to use and exploit.
3. To the religious men, the wounded man was a problem to be avoided.
4. To the innkeeper, the wounded man was a customer to serve for a fee.
5. To the Samaritan, the wounded man was a human being worth being cared for and loved.

6. To Jesus, all of them and all of us were worth dying for. From the Parable we learn three principles about loving our neighbour:

1. Lack of love is often easy to justify, even though it is never right.
2. Our neighbour is anyone of any race, creed, or social background who is in need.
3. Love means acting to meet the person's need. Wherever you live, there are needy people close by. There is no good reason for refusing to help.

The Church should support those who have no families and should also help the elderly, young, disabled, ill or poverty stricken with their emotional and spiritual needs. Often families, who are caring for their own helpless members have heavy burdens. They may need extra money, a listening ear, a helping hand, or a word of encouragement. Interestingly, those who are helped often turn around and help others, turning the church into a more of a caring community.

Last Friday night I had to take my sick, special needs child to the hospital. He was so distressed by the strange seizure, (Neurological) episode that was going on that I needed to get him there in an ambulance. He was placed in a bed and no Doctor came near him. The nurse kept reassuring us that the Doctor would come soon.

All the people out in the waiting room were seen to: high temps, coughs and colds etc. The waiting room was empty and still we waited. Lachie's three big medical files were there for all to see.

Lachie's condition was still the same, I told the nurse and she kept telling us that someone would see us soon. After 4 hour wait, at 1.30.pm we left still not having seen a Doctor.

Lachie is such a complex case that only the top Neuro consultant knows what to do. The other Doctors seem to avoid us, Lachie is too complex a case to deal with. It is almost impossible to see the consultant. It would be easier to get an appointment with the Queen.

We are in the too hard basket. In my 9 years as a Christian, (4 1/2 years as a sole parent), I feel that the church has put us in the too hard basket also. "Avoid at all costs, too complex to deal with."

I believe that the Lord used Friday night as a comparison to why, when I've cried out for help, my church family are unable to help. This has been the case in a number of churches that we've attended.

The Lord told me 2 years ago; "all I ask is that you love one another, pray and encourage each other. Also lift up one another, (lend a hand, listen, care etc) I will do the rest".

Why then is it so hard for people to follow through with this?

Information taken from:

Nelson's New Illustrated.. Bible dictionary.

Life Application Bible; NIV.