

## *Attention to Birds*

My wife, Lola, has placed two bird feeders in our back yard. One hangs from the limb of a dogwood tree, now in the Tennessee spring graced with brilliant pink blooms. The other is an ornate wooden handiwork, with a roof over it, resting on a post sunk into the ground. They attract beautiful birds. My favorites are cardinals and finches in their colorful coats.

Many of our nursing facilities have aviaries, and residents love to gather to watch the antics of the inhabitants. They naturally draw the attention of passersby as well.

In Japan, officials designate one week each May as Bird Week to encourage people to appreciate and protect birds in their country. Activities for the week include bird-watching, exhibitions and lectures focusing on the habitat of wild birds and how they coexist with the natural environment. An estimated 700 species of wild birds inhabit Japan, including 90 species considered endangered.

In 1946, a number of ministries, academic societies and other organizations jointly formed what is now the Japanese Society for Preservation of Birds. The action reflected the people's concern about damage done to birds' natural habitat during World War II as huge numbers of trees were cut down for fuel. The Japanese first observed Bird Day in 1947, and a few years later, officials expanded the observance to Bird Week.

Think about this: God is a bird-watcher. In biblical times, sparrows were the least expensive bird and regarded as being of little value. Yet Jesus said that God is aware of what happens to every single sparrow on the earth – and that is a lot of birds! Nothing in creation is too trivial to escape His attention. Nothing happens without His knowledge and permission.

What does that mean for you and me? If God pays such close attention to sparrows, then we can be assured He is watching over the lives of His children. That would be us. Jesus told His disciples that they were much more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows. God is so involved in the details of our lives that He even knows the exact number of hairs on our head.

We don't ever have to worry about any circumstance in our lives taking Him by surprise. He loves us, and He's on our side. What an encouragement as we go through the day! Keep this in mind, too: Our residents can feel that we are God's instruments to promote their wellbeing.

--Beecher Hunter