

Giving to One Who Can't Give Back

Rebecca Manley Pippert, in her book *Stories from the Heart*, tells about an article that appeared in *Campus Life* magazine sometime back, written by a young nurse about a patient of hers.

The patient's name was Eileen, one of this young nurse's first patients. Eileen was totally helpless. "A cerebral aneurysm (broken blood vessels in the brain) had left her with no conscious control over her body," the nurse wrote. "As near as the doctors could tell, Eileen was unconscious, unable to feel pain and unaware of anything going on around her."

All the nurses could do for this poor woman was to turn her every hour to prevent bedsores and to feed her twice a day through a stomach tube. "When it's this bad," an older student nurse told her, "you have to detach yourself emotionally from the whole situation."

But the young student nurse found she couldn't treat this woman with detachment. She decided to talk to Eileen, sing to her, and even brought her little gifts.

On difficult days, she was particularly kind to Eileen. Thanksgiving Day was one of those. The young nurse said to Eileen, "I was in a cruddy mood this morning, Eileen, because it was supposed to be my day off. But now that I'm here, I'm glad. I wouldn't have wanted to miss seeing you on Thanksgiving. Do you know this is Thanksgiving?"


The telephone rang. The young nurse turned to answer it. She looked back at Eileen.

"Suddenly," she wrote, "Eileen was looking at me ... crying. Big damp circles stained her pillow, and she was shaking all over. That was the only human emotion that Eileen ever showed any of the hospital staff, but it was enough to change the whole attitude of the staff toward her."

Not long afterward, Eileen died. The young nurse closed her story, saying, "I keep thinking about her. It occurred to me that I owe her an awful lot. Except for Eileen, I might never have known what it's like to give myself to someone who can't give back."

Jesus knew what it was to give to people who couldn't give back. That's what He did for me, for us. When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. And there were so many of them. Just like today.

(more)



Like this young student nurse, Christ calls us to be compassionate. And that's our mission in Life Care, Century Park and beyond. He wants us to care enough about people to become involved in their lives. He wants us to be willing to take time to show love to young people as well as old people, to the victims of broken families, to the down-and-out as well as the up-and-in.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive (Colossians 3:12-13 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter