

## **Care**

Judy Bauman to First Parish Church of Brunswick

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Introduction to Scriptures

Philippians 2: 1-5

John 15 12-13

In Paul's teaching, the personal union with Christ is the basic reality of salvation. To be in Christ is to be saved. It is to be in intimate personal relationship with Christ the Savior. From this relationship flow all the particular benefits and fruits of salvation, like encouragement. Christians are to have intense care and deep sympathy for each other. All these benefits- encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness and compassion- are viewed by Paul as present realities for the Philippians.

### Sermon

I have stood here before and I have been involved in discussions throughout our community, talking about the importance of support groups, such as our Caregivers' Support held here at First Parish on Monday afternoons. Today, a different twist, I will be talking about CARE, as Paul said "to have intense CARE for each other". I will not be talking about "on hands care", as I often gave during my nursing career.

Members of First Parish "help" to provide meals for guests staying at the homeless shelter, Tedford Housing.

Health care professionals volunteer to "help" at the OASIS Medical and Dental Clinic, the clinic for those who have no medical coverage.

Folks volunteer to "help" at The Gathering Place, the day drop-in shelter here in Brunswick.

This is to mention only a few of the organizations in our town and its surrounding area where our parishioners give of their time to "help". Truly, this is a church that has a strong commitment to community outreach!

I have been or now currently involved in these community outreach programs. I too, have wanted to "help". But- was I thinking of Paul's description of CARE, as he said, "Christians are to have intense "CARE" and deep sympathy for each other." ??????

Off I would go, centered on the word "helping", like I could change or fix things for folks that do not have food to eat, for those that do not have health care coverage, and for those that are forced to sleep

outdoors in the wintertime in below freezing temperatures. But, I was forgetting about our many community resources. There are many which are available to help resolve these challenges for folks. During each of my shifts at The Gathering Place, I learn more about these resources and the commitment of those managing these programs for members of our community. Thus, not my role, and time for me to listen to Paul! "Christians are to have intense CARE and deep sympathy for each other. The benefits of these are encouragement, comfort, fellowship, tenderness and compassion."

I would be remiss at this point, if I didn't share with you what I observe in our Parlor on Monday afternoons. I listen to the Caregivers, who give so much to one another as they sit together. They listen to one another, then encourage and comfort one another, all while supporting each other in a compassionate manner! I marvel at what I see, and this is a reminder that Caregiving is something one should not go alone!

A recent diagnosis, has brought the word CARE to the forefront for me. From the very beginning of my journey, I have received Paul's concept of CARE from my family. Over time, I have shared my story with others, especially if an appointment precluded a scheduled volunteer activity. I have been overwhelmed, and at the same time have felt very blessed by the CARE that has come to me through words of encouragement and compassion, from so many folks. As I stand here, I see so many of you before me, and I thank each of you. How blessed I am, and another example of a journey not to go alone. What a community within this sanctuary!

I begin to realize that CARE is readily passed from one person to another, a pathway is established to give CARE, one to another. Is this an example of what goes around comes around again? Is this the fellowship Paul talked about? I am far, far from understanding all the teachings in the Bible. However, when we reach out one to another with intense care and deep sympathy for each other, are we not fulfilling Christ's expectations of us as Christians?

Perhaps, better yet, if we show love to one to another, are we not being caring, comforting and compassionate? Thus, my reason for choosing today's second scripture reading, John 15: 12-13. Jesus' command given to John, "Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this."

Interestingly, depending on the version of the Bible, how many times the word Love is mentioned. In the King James Version, Love is mentioned 310 times, 131 times in the Old Testament, and 179 times in the New Testament. The word CARE, depending on the version of the Bible, appears in 12 to 18 verses, probably less than 310 times. Perhaps, my sermon title for this morning should have been "LOVE", especially for one another!

Amen.