



Beyond Casseroles

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

Lisa J. Copen

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Chronically Ill
Friend**

Conquering the Confusions
of Chronic Illness Series

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Beyond Casserole: 505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend
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HopeKeepers® Magazine.
P.O. Box 502928, San Diego, CA 92150
858-486-4685; Toll-free 888-751-REST (7378)
Web site: www.restministries.org
Email: rest@restministries.org



“When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.” ~Henri Nouwen



Many of us have a helpful heart. If you are reading this book it is likely that you have a sincere desire to reach out to people who are hurting. Perhaps you are concerned about a friend's situation and wish to learn how to encourage her better. You may be someone who encourages people daily through your field of work. Maybe you have an illness yourself and you understand how vital encouragement is to one's emotional well-being. Regardless, we are each commanded to "encourage one another daily" (Hebrews 3:13). So where do we begin?

Most of us want to express our concern when we see someone hurting; however, words seem so hollow. Rather than offering trite bits of encouragement that don't express our compassion, we have been known to procrastinate. Maybe we drop by her house with a casserole, but before we know it, weeks have passed and then months. We really do care but now we feel embarrassed that we didn't visit sooner or that we didn't call.

We rationalize, "Surely she has other friends who have offered her support during this trying time. I'm sure I wasn't even missed. I don't have the time to do much for her anyway." But in our hearts we know that we've missed an opportunity to simply let someone know that she matters to us.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

You no longer have to wonder how to show someone with a chronic illness that you care. Just flip to any page in this little book and start reading. You'll soon be inspired by simple yet meaningful ways to reach out to someone. Don't be overwhelmed—you aren't expected to fulfill all 505 ideas, but I hope that you will be optimistic about how easy it is to express your compassion.

Often we just say, "Let me know if you need anything," but if you have ever needed help you know just how difficult it can be to ask someone to run an errand for you, much less change your sheets! Get creative and give a "gift certificate" with a task that one can "redeem" anytime. It's a fun way to make sure one knows you really mean it when you say, "I'm glad to help," and it also makes your friend feel much more comfortable asking for assistance. See the back page for a certificate you can copy and fill in, or just make up your own.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "encourage" as "to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope; to spur on; to give help or patronage to." We all have the responsibility to inspire another, and we'll discover in the end that we're blessed beyond measure.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 1.** Ask, "What events in your life are changing and how are you coping with the changes?"
- 2.** Understand that she lives in a constant state of making decisions for which there is no guarantee that she is making the right choice.
- 3.** Put meals in disposable containers and attach a note saying "This doesn't need to be returned."
- 4.** Add stickers to envelopes for a cheerful touch.
- 5.** Arrange for your friend's kids to have a night with your children.
- 6.** Don't make a person into a project.
- 7.** Ask, "Would you be willing to talk to a friend of mine who has recently been diagnosed with a chronic illness and offer her some encouragement?" It makes one feel good to know that her experience can offer someone else hope and that God still has a purpose for her life.
- 8.** Wash his car and put a little note inside for him to find later.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 9.** Remember important anniversaries, both the good and the bad. No one else will.
- 10.** Ask, "Do you want company the day that you wait for the test results? I could come over for a couple of hours."



"No matter how little you have, you can always give some of it away." ~Catherine Marshall



- 11.** Just listen . . . until it hurts to not say anything. And then listen some more.
- 12.** Ask her, "How do you feel God is working through—or despite—this illness in your life? I'm interested."
- 13.** Ask, "What do you wish people understood about your illness?"
- 14.** Don't make her feel guilty about things that she cannot do.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 15.** Treat her to a gift of movie rentals via postal mail through a service (\$7-15 a month).
- 16.** Ask, "Would you be comfortable with having your name on a prayer list, so that others can pray for you?" Don't assume.
- 17.** Instead of saying, "I will pray for you," say, "I'd like to pray for you right now, if that's okay."
- 18.** Mop the floors.
- 19.** Ask if she would be interested in writing something for the church newsletter, maybe even about the subject of living with chronic illness.
- 20.** Buy a brightly colored umbrella as a gift.



"A good friend is a connection to life -
a tie to the past, a road to the future, the key to sanity
in a totally insane world." ~Lois Wyse



505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 21.** Ask, "Do you have an errand I can run for you before coming over?"
- 22.** Ask her to do spontaneous things, like go to a concert in the park, or just for a picnic. She may be more likely to participate since she knows if it's a good day or a bad day.
- 23.** Don't say, "So, why aren't you healed yet?" or "I wonder what God is trying to teach you that you just aren't learning!"
- 24.** For a unique gift, provide brightly colored paper plates, napkins, and utensils in a gift bag with a note that says "For when you don't feel like doing dishes."
- 25.** Get her a pretty box to keep all of her notes of encouragement. Remind her to get it out and read things when she is feeling down.
- 26.** Be her advocate. If you are at an event and walking/seating is an issue because of her disability, ask her if she'd like you to take care of it. If she says you can, be firm but not rude. Don't embarrass her by making accusations of discrimination or by making a scene.

- 27.** Ask, "Would you be interested in a prayer partner from our church?"
- 28.** Purchase matching coffee mugs for you and your friend, and then commit to pray for one another each morning while using them.
- 29.** Say, "While you're in the hospital I'd be happy to take care of your pet."
- 30.** Don't tell her about your brother's niece's cousin's best friend who tried a cure for the same illness and. . . (you know the rest).
- 31.** Find out which charity is most important to her and then give a donation in her honor.
- 32.** Ask, "What are your top three indulgences?" and then spoil her soon.
- 33.** Hold the door open for her. They are heavy!
- 34.** Don't tease her and call her "hop along" or "slowpoke." Comments you mean in fun can cut to the quick and destroy her spirit. Proverbs 18:14 says, "A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear?"

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 35.** Say, "I know you must need someone to just vent to occasionally. I may not fully understand how you feel, but I'm here to listen anytime."
- 36.** Ask your church youth group to come over and clean up the yard during seasonal changes.
- 37.** Don't ask her, "How are you able to make it financially?" If she wants to share a burden she will.
- 38.** Ask, "What would you advise me to look for in a new doctor?"
- 39.** If your friend has a disabled parking placard and you are driving, allow her to tell you where she wants to park. If she's feeling particularly good that day, she may not want to park in the "blue space." Don't be disappointed that you'll have to walk farther.
- 40.** Don't gossip about others. She'll wonder what you say about her. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).



Proverbs 25:11 says,
"A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver." Be kind, gentle, and respectful.



- 41.** Accept that her chronic illness may not go away. If she's accepting it, don't tell her the illness is winning and she's giving in to it.
- 42.** Don't say, "Let me know if there is anything I can do." People rarely feel comfortable saying, "Yes, my laundry." Instead pick something you are willing to do and then ask her permission. Try the coupon in back!
- 43.** Ask her to share her testimony at an event.
- 44.** Buy a magazine subscription for her on her favorite topic.
- 45.** Plant a rosebush to view from a window.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 46.** Understand that you don't need to know all of the details about the illness in order to be helpful. He'll share with you what he's comfortable with you knowing.
- 47.** Don't ask, "Why can't the doctors help you?" or insinuate that it must be in her head. There are millions of people who are in pain with illnesses that do not have cures.
- 48.** Avoid having gifts be "pity gifts." Just say, "I saw these flowers and their cheerfulness reminded me of you."
- 49.** Send tapes of church services your friend misses to her with a copy of the bulletin and a note.
- 50.** If she doesn't have a cordless phone, get her one. Phone headsets are also nice.
- 51.** Don't tease her about how long she spends in the bathroom. She wouldn't be there if she didn't need to be.
- 52.** Ask, "Are your symptoms predictable or not? How does that affect your life?"

- 53.** Do not reassure her that God can heal all illnesses if one has enough faith. People with illness know God is capable of healing. Do remind her that God knows and cares.
- 54.** If she receives financial disability assistance don't say, "Well, aren't you lucky! Boy, would I like to just sit and back and collect a check."
- 55.** Before he comes home from the hospital, stock the refrigerator and freezer with meals that are labeled and have easy directions attached.
- 56.** Respect her prayer requests. Don't dismiss her concerns and pray for her healing in front of her if she's just requested specific prayer for new medications.
- 57.** Withhold from sharing every "cure" you've heard of for his illness. He's bombarded with cures and needs you to be his refuge from that.
- 58.** If your friend misses a special event in your life, call and say, "I wondered if I could bring some photos over and share it with you. You're very special to me, and you were part of this day whether you were there or not."



“Each of us may be sure that if God sends us on stony paths He will provide us with strong shoes, and He will not send us out on any journey for which He does not equip us well.”
~Alexander Maclaren



- 59.** Say, “I’d like to bring you dinner next week. Would Monday or Tuesday night be better?”
- 60.** Never invite her to go Christmas shopping with you just so you can use her disabled parking placard.
- 61.** Don’t tell her, “If you didn’t overdo it, then you wouldn’t be in so much pain!”
- 62.** Ask, “Are you up for a visit?” before you arrive.
- 63.** Don’t say, “Well, you’ve had a good life—more than a lot of people can hope for,” as if it’s all downhill from here.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 64.** If someone your friend loves passes away, offer to accompany and drive her to the memorial service. She's going to need your emotional and physical support, but grieving is important.
- 65.** Ask your church to add more disabled parking places. There are never enough.
- 66.** Never give a power squeeze when you shake his hand. Be gentle. You have nothing to prove.
- 67.** Bring her family meals when she is in the hospital, not just after she gets out. Include items for breakfasts, lunches, and snacks for the kids too.
- 68.** Never say, "I know just how you feel!" even if you are absolutely positive that you do.
- 69.** Recognize that medications can make people completely irrational at times; give her the benefit of the doubt that it could be the drugs speaking and not your friend.
- 70.** Don't tell her you "need to get some rest and I'm sure you will feel much better." Rest won't cure her illness.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 71.** Drop by her house with a fancy cup of hot tea or coffee on a dreary rainy day and tell her you were thinking of her.
- 72.** Don't tell her how hard children are to raise and she shouldn't consider it with her illness.
- 73.** When she says, "I'm fine," say, "No, I mean, how are you really? I know what fine means" and smile. . . .
- 74.** Be aware of his favorite books and pick them up when you see them.
- 75.** Don't say, "Well, it could be a lot worse" and then share a depressing story about someone else you know.
- 76.** Romans 1:12 says, "That you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith." Remember you will both encourage and be encouraged.
- 77.** If you attend an event together and she needs to use a wheelchair, push it without insisting that "you could just get the electric one and drive yourself around."

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 78.** Don't ever talk down to him as though he is a child.
- 79.** Reflect on what friends have done for you when you've not felt well, and then do these things for others.



When feeling like you can't make a difference, reflect on this: "If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito."

~Betty Reese



- 80.** Respect where he is with his faith. If you see him struggling, be sensitive; don't say, "Snap out of it! God is still good!" Pray for him silently and be patient with his walk.
- 81.** Ask her if she wants to house-sit when you are on vacation. New surroundings may feel like a mini-vacation.

- 82.** When she says she doesn't feel like she is being a good wife or mom, remind her that every woman feels this way at some point, and all God wants is for her to do the best she can and surrender the rest over to Him.
- 83.** Ask her opinion on what books she would recommend to people who are suffering.
- 84.** If she's hesitant to accept meals, just drop by with some "extra" and say, "I made a lot more than I should have and it's just too much for my family." (It's okay if you both know that's a stretch.)
- 85.** Be an advocate for the chronically ill in your church. Ask for comfortable seating, care groups, special prayer time, and awareness about disability/illness issues.
- 86.** Paint an "encouragement" bulletin board bright yellow for her and ask her where to hang it. She can add mail, photos— whatever will cheer her up when she is feeling down.
- 87.** Bring her a poster of something bright for a bedroom wall.

- 88.** Be aware that some people cope with illness by spending time alone and others by becoming very social. There is not a right way or a wrong way to cope—just different.



“The challenge of hospitality, both personally and professionally, comes when we are stressed out or tired and we offer it grudgingly. The gift of hospitality comes when we find in the welcoming face of hospitality the welcoming face of God.”
~Cornelius Plantinga Jr.



- 89.** Just hold her hand.
- 90.** For a splurge, buy her sheets with a high thread count. They'll feel heavenly, and she'll appreciate you every time she climbs into bed.
- 91.** Don't say, “What do you mean you're depressed? What's wrong now?”

- 92.** Remember, nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.
- 93.** If it seems like something dramatic is always going on in her life, it just may be. Drug shortages, injuries, insurance issues—each are life-changing, and people with illness feel out of control most of the time.
- 94.** Respect her need for privacy and personal space. Don't assume that she is lucky to have you as a friend and should always drop everything to accommodate your need to extend kindness.
- 95.** Never question if your friend is exaggerating her pain level. Regardless of what level it actually is, she is in pain and it's real to her so acknowledge it.
- 96.** Teach your children not to kick people's wheelchairs.
- 97.** "A friend loves at all times" (Proverbs 17:17a) . . . not just happy times.
- 98.** Don't look up the side effects to all of the drugs she is taking and then give her the bad news.

She already knows, but the consequences of not taking the drugs may be even worse.

- 99.** Recognize how God uses suffering to build character. See your friend as a source of wisdom God has placed into your path.
- 100.** Don't say, "If you are that sick, you should be in a nursing home."
- 101.** Never visit her if you think you may be getting a cold. If in doubt, just give her a call instead.
- 102.** Ask her, "If someone volunteered to come by and pick up your house and make the coffee, would you be interested in hosting a Bible study or book club or some other group at your house occasionally?"
- 103.** If you think, someone should do that, that may be God's way of calling you!
- 104.** Be aware of the fact that illness is not just a matter of attitude. Don't say, "When are you going to get rid of that cane?" or "Did you know that illness is caused by stress?" Positive thinking doesn't always make the pain go away.

- 105.** Take her driving around to see the Christmas lights.
- 106.** When she says she's tired, she doesn't mean she is sleepy. She means she could lie down and sleep for a week solid and still wake up feeling like she has the flu.



"Human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and can't really get rid of it." ~C. S. Lewis



- 107.** Respect his choice to decide what he can and cannot do. If he wants to play golf today and be bedridden tomorrow, he's made that decision because it may be best for his mental state of mind.
- 108.** A phone card is a nice gift to add to a card.

- 109.** Don't say, "You look great!" If she does, it invalidates the pain. If she doesn't, she knows you're lying. Either way you can't win.
- 110.** A dozen roses won't impress her, but a dandelion each month will help her feel special.
- 111.** Write in a card, "I will continue to pray for you and ask Him in His wisdom to watch over you and keep you safe. You don't need to respond; I just wanted to let you know that you are not alone."
- 112.** Pray for his family's finances and his job. He's worried about both and likely won't share these concerns with anyone.
- 113.** When the grocery store has two turkeys for the price of one, call her to see if she could use the extra. Better yet, offer to cook it.
- 114.** Get your hair done at the same time.
- 115.** Tell her you are happy to be listed as an emergency number for her.
- 116.** Take her kids for a movie and ice cream.



“Friendship improves happiness and abates misery, by the doubling of our joy and the dividing of our grief.”

~Marcus Tullius Cicero



- 117.** When she's in the hospital volunteer to stay with her a couple of hours so that her spouse/caregiver can go home and get a shower and have a bit of personal time knowing she's in your hands.
- 118.** Remember, pain makes people more grouchy than they ever thought possible.
- 119.** Buy her a gift subscription to HopeKeepers Magazine for people who live with chronic illness.
- 120.** Don't say, “I told you so”—even if you did.
- 121.** Ask, “What decisions do you have to make that I can pray about for you?”

- 122.** According to research, larger churches put a lower priority on congregational care ministries than smaller churches. Try to change this!
- 123.** Make plans with her in advance so she has something to look forward to, but understand if she still has to cancel.
- 124.** Make sure she has an answering machine so she can screen calls when she doesn't feel well.
- 125.** Search for a connection—a hobby, a style of music you both enjoy, or a past experience.
- 126.** Don't wear perfume around her, especially if you know it can cause a reaction.
- 127.** Never say, "You shouldn't feel that way!"
- 128.** Understand that Christians do get depressed, and it's not sinful to feel downcast or abandoned. It's human.
- 129.** Avoid being negative. "An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up" (Proverbs 12:25).

- 130.** Understand that there is no “good time” to become chronically ill. Not “while you’re young and there is such great research,” nor “when you’re older and have had a lot of good years anyway.”
- 131.** Tell her, “I don’t know how you do it all.” It’s hard work to manage a chronic illness, the paperwork, the side effects, etc., all while feeling miserable and dealing with a declining income.
- 132.** Tell her to feel free to keep a list of things you can help with when you come. Little things like changing a light bulb, hanging a photo, or opening a jar can be impossible for a single person with limited mobility.



“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” ~Leo Buscaglia



- 133.** Give her a special Christmas ornament each year, and write your name and the year on the back.
- 134.** Don't tell her she should avoid medicines that are addictive. Options for pain management are very limited. Let her work out her medical details with a doctor.
- 135.** Ask him to teach your children something: whether it is about a war he fought in, a hobby he enjoys, or how to play checkers. He'll feel like he's participating in life and not just accepting gifts.
- 136.** Try your best to learn to read your friend's body language.
- 137.** When you see him at church, go over and say, "Just seeing you here inspires me. It's hard for me to get here, but when I see you here, I know I can make it through anything."
- 138.** Hire her to do something that you've not been able to accomplish, like putting photos in albums.

- 139.** Bring her a catalog of things she may be interested in, either to order from or just to browse.



Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. "Pooh!" he whispered. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet, taking Pooh's paw. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

~A. A. Milne



- 140.** Remember not to ask too many questions. Friends don't want to be science projects.
- 141.** Not every piece of correspondence requires a long letter. Include a sticky note with a newspaper clipping, a recipe, an interesting magazine article, or a cartoon; and just write, "Thought you would enjoy this! Thinking of you!"
- 142.** Don't talk with his caregiver as if your friend isn't there.

505 Ways to Encourage a Chronically Ill Friend

- 143.** If she likes children bring yours over after they are done with holiday photos to show her the outfits and share a dessert.
- 144.** When you say, "How are you doing?" say it with meaning so he knows that you really do want to know.
- 145.** When she is grieving, bring her a pretty hankie and tell her that it's okay to cry and you thought she should do it in style.
- 146.** Remind her that her heart won't be changed by this illness. "A friend knows the song in my heart and sings it to me when my memory fails." ~Donna Roberts
- 147.** Before holidays, ask her how you can assist. Does she need wrapping paper, supplies for making gifts, boxes? You could take things to the post office and stand in the long lines for her at the same time you send your own packages.
- 148.** Bring her "seasons" inside to experience. Pinecones and nuts, daffodils, or a big snowball for her freezer are all fun.

- 149.** Give her a wind chime for her patio.
- 150.** Teach her how to use a chat room on the Internet or an e-mail group so she can correspond with others who have the same illness and gain supportive friendships.
- 151.** When someone is in the hospital she is often touched only as an "object," not as a person. Ask her, "Can I give you a little hug?"
- 152.** Watch your friend's children so she and her spouse can have a night out.
- 153.** Plant flower bulbs in her yard that will come up in the spring.
- 154.** Books about chronic illness may help you understand a little bit about the life your friend leads, but don't ever use what you've read to prove to her that she is "doing this wrong" or that you are now the expert.
- 155.** If she wants to get or finish an education, encourage her to seek out options. There are many correspondence courses, scholarships, and also disabled student services.



“A true friendship is like sound health, the value of it is seldom known until lost.” ~Chinese Proverb



- 156.** Ask, “What could I bring you the next time I come?”
- 157.** Don’t share any horror stories: about illness, surgeries, hospitals—nothing.
- 158.** If your pastor’s wife has an illness, do not judge your pastor’s ministry by her inability to be at every church meeting.
- 159.** Woman to woman, a non-underwire bra can make all the difference when you are bed bound. Try www.wearease.com or www.dreamproductscatalog.com. Dream products also have bra strap adjusters to keep straps up.

- 160.** Help him make calls, and volunteer to sit and be on hold to get insurance questions answered.
- 161.** Don't bring up old grievances.
- 162.** Encourage her to do research on her illness and treatment. Let her know that you believe in her ability to be a great self-advocate.
- 163.** Don't let your fear of not knowing what to say prevent you from keeping in touch.
- 164.** Treat her as though she is still a whole person, despite her limitations.
- 165.** Pray for his medical team.
- 166.** Say, "I've missed seeing you in church. You are such an important part of our fellowship. When you're here I praise God, because I know you are well enough to come. But when you are not here, it prompts me to pray for you."
- 167.** Understand how hard it is to accept help.
- 168.** Don't say, "Oh, you're much too young to have that disease."

169. Offer to clean the shower stall or tub.



Questions to Ask Yourself:

- ☞ If I felt like I had the flu for months on end, what would cheer me up?
- ☞ What would my friend say about my presence (or lack of it) in her life?
- ☞ When is the last time I did something for someone for completely unselfish reasons and not out of obligation?



170. "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12-13).

171. Just accept her, faults and all.

172. Ask, "How is your pain level today?" No one ever asks this and yet his life revolves around it. He'll appreciate your concern!

- 173.** Don't try to figure out God for her. When you don't understand what God is doing in her life, say, "I just don't understand what God is doing in your life. I'm going to continue to pray for your comfort."
- 174.** Avoid sharing about a friend who had the same illness and never missed a day of work.
- 175.** Don't ask him, "Isn't that a woman's disease?"
- 176.** Learn a new craft together. If she has a favorite craft, bring her extra supplies.
- 177.** Never question whether your friend is doing the right thing by trusting "those money-hungry doctors."
- 178.** Pray before you visit, even if it's as you come up the front walkway.
- 179.** If she can't have children, or has decided not to, don't complain about your children or tell her, "You're so lucky to not have to deal with kids."
- 180.** Ask her if she'd like you to help rearrange her furniture for a fresh feeling in her house.

- 181.** Organize a “love shower” and have people send a note/visit/call each day for a month. It’s a great way to get one through a difficult time, such as the anniversary of a lost loved one.
- 182.** Give her a box of various greeting cards so she will have some to send to people for last-minute birthdays or events.
- 183.** Bring her the ingredients for a sherbet float and share a summer moment . . . even if it’s winter.
- 184.** Buy her a hammer and put a note with it that says, “For picture hanging or other hammer emergencies call (555-your number).”
- 185.** Don’t make assumptions. Henry Winkler says, “Assumptions are the termites of relationships.”
- 186.** Buy her some new pj’s. . . and don’t act surprised when she wears them all day.
- 187.** A good attitude doesn’t cure an illness, but Proverbs 17:22 says, “A cheerful heart is good medicine.” Share your cheerful heart.
- 188.** Bring her some cute refrigerator magnets for photos and cards you will send.

- 189.** Don't assume that just because your ill friend lives with relatives, her basic needs are being taken care of. Often she still fixes her own meals, does laundry, and even goes days without talking with anyone.



“Dare to love and to be a real friend. The love you give and receive is a reality that will lead you closer and closer to God as well as those whom God has given you to love.” ~Henri J.M. Nouwen



- 190.** Don't say, “I'd feel awful too if I was using all of those medications you take!”
- 191.** Be thankful that someone trusts you enough to share his most personal, intimate fears with you.
- 192.** Recognize that there are some very personal factors about living with a chronic illness. When she says, “I need to use the bathroom” don't think that she can just wait.

- 193.** Tell her what you've learned from her.
- 194.** "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone" (Colossians 4:6).
- 195.** Watch for local events that may bring a bit of joy to her life, and rent a wheelchair if necessary. For example, would she love a cat show, a harvest festival, or a local parade? Do something out of the ordinary.
- 196.** Don't just pray for her; pray with her.
- 197.** If a massage would feel good (it doesn't always), give her a gift certificate for one.
- 198.** Don't assume that he has plenty of meals delivered and plenty of daily cards. He likely has much less than you believe.
- 199.** Help her with her children's birthday parties—but don't take over; let her make all the decisions.
- 200.** Give her an engraved rock that says something that reminds you of her: courage, cherish, etc.