

## **Weekly Devotions: LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 10**

### **Do not Distance Yourself from Those in Pain**

When I was diagnosed with cancer, I noticed that some church friends were uncomfortable when they ran into me in church. They would either look away when they passed me or avoid having conversation with me. Never once did they ask; “How are you?” or “Are you okay?” Their distancing made me feel like I have caught an infectious disease or have committed a terrible sin and should be ostracized. But praise God, other members in the church, some of whom I did not know, came alongside to encourage, to pray for me and to offer practical help. Their love expressed in practical acts of kindness and being with me in the difficult time lifted up my spirit and assured me of God’s love.

To love one another requires us to come alongside those who are facing life’s crisis to encourage & pray for them and to offer practical help. We should not distance ourselves or avoid the person and making him / her feel rejected and even judged.

### **Read Luke 10: 25-37**

Jesus used the parable of the Good Samaritan to answer the question posed to Him as to who deserves to go to heaven. In the parable, Jesus highlighted there are two responses to those in distress; we respond either with concern or with indifference, which is the opposite of love. Indifference or lack of concern for the sufferings of others indicates there is no love in our heart.

Three people walked past the wounded man, presumably a Jew. The first two, a priest and a Levite, both educated in the Law & seen as spiritually mature, avoided the wounded man. Why? Too busy, too troublesome? The Samaritan, traditionally hated by the Jews, was the one who showed concern and stopped to help the man.

Someone said religion without mercy & compassion is meaningless. God is pleased with the person who cares, not the person who is religious. Even unbelievers know how to be kind to those in need, so can we, who are recipients of God’s love, be indifferent to fellow believers who are in pain?

#### *Questions to ponder*

1. Share a time when someone had gone out of his way to help you. Suggest some ways we can show fellow believers in distress that we care.
2. How did the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan respond to the man who was robbed and beaten (31-35)? Why are we sometimes like the priest and the Levite in our response to people in trouble? How can you be the Samaritan to someone in church who is struggling with life’s problem?

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