

Start or revitalize a ministry in your church

QUICK START GUIDE



CAREGIVERS MINISTRY



Quick Start Guide for Caregivers Ministry

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Introduction

“There are only four kinds of people in this world—those who have been caregivers, those who **currently are** caregivers, those who **will be** caregivers, those who **will need** caregivers.” - Rosalind Carter

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the definition of caregiver is “a person who provides direct care for children, elderly people, or the chronically ill.” Caregivers can be formal paid care providers providing care in one’s home or in a care setting (daycare, residential, care facility, etc.) or an informal care provider (unpaid individual) such as a spouse, adult children, parent, other family members, friends, clergy, or neighbors who assist others with activities of daily living, spiritual support, and/or medical tasks.

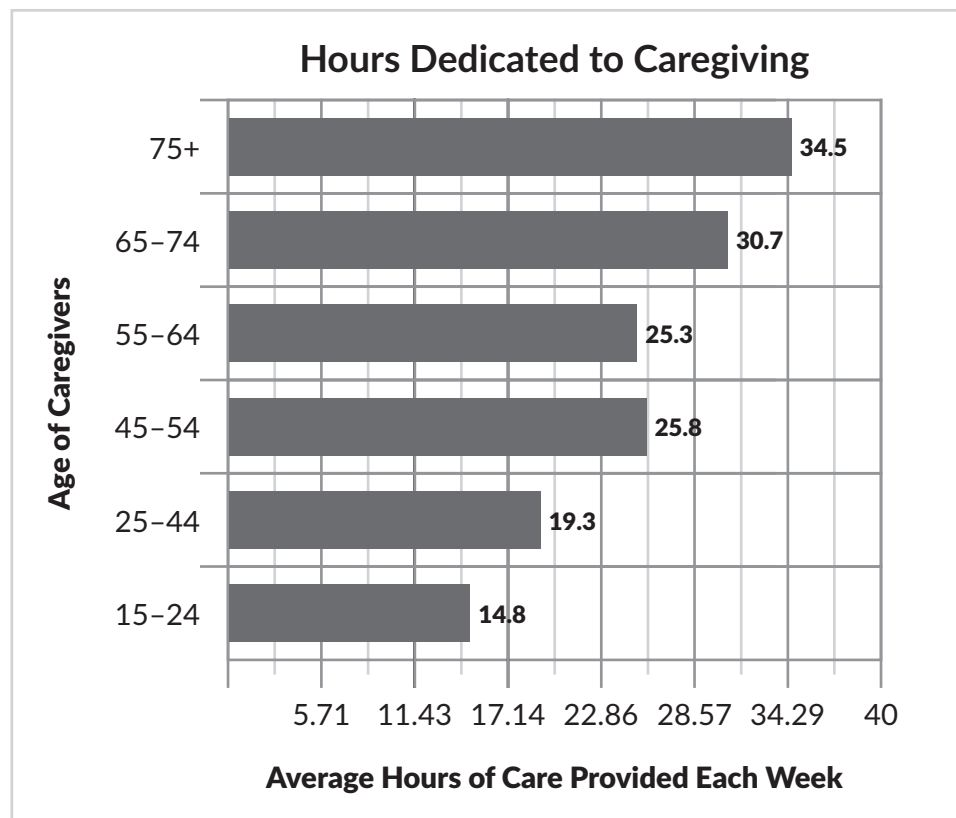
More than 65.7 million Americans or 28.5% of the population serve as informal caregivers to a child with special needs or an adult who lives in the community and requires help (National Caregiver Foundation). Most caregivers (86%) are related to the care recipient, 36% care for a parent. Nearly a third of American households report that at least one person has served as an unpaid caregiver in the past year. One in seven caregivers provides care, over and above regular parenting, to a child with special needs (14%). It is estimated that 1.3 to 1.4 million children aged 8-18 care for an adult relative, 72% of whom care for a parent or grandparent.

The majority of informal caregivers are women who are an average of 48 years old (66%), although men also serve as caregivers. A considerable number of American women find themselves employed full-time in addition to caregiving 20 hours a week—the equivalent of a second part-time job.

52 million caregivers provide care to adults (aged 18+) with a disability or illness. 43.5 million of adult family caregivers care for someone 50+ years of age and 14.9 million care for someone who has Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia. Caregiving lasts an average of 4.6 years.

Caregiver services were valued at \$450 billion in 2009—up from \$375 billion in 2007. The value of unpaid family caregivers will likely continue to be the largest source of long-term care services in the US, and the aging population (65+) will more than double between the years 2000 and 2030, increasing to 71.5 million from 35.1 million in 2000.





Studies have shown that caregivers are all ages and from all walks of life. There are many in our church families who are caring for another person—an adult family member, a child with special needs, or a friend. Even the pastor might be serving as a caregiver in addition to their responsibilities to the congregation. Albeit an overwhelming and daunting job, the role of caregiver is often assumed without complaint. Family caregivers are responsible for the physical, emotional, and sometimes financial support of another person. Research shows that the burdens of being an unpaid family caregiver increase the risk for physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion, and can lead to depression and burnout.

Burnout can occur when caregivers don't get the help they need, or if they try to do more than they are able—either physically or financially. Many caregivers also feel guilty if they spend time on themselves rather than on their ill or elderly loved ones.

Caregivers need support! It is our responsibility, moreover our duty, as a church family and community members to provide it. We can do so individually, or on a greater scale, by establishing a caregiver support ministry in our churches.

In the book *Sermons and Talks Vol. 1*, Ellen G. White wrote: “Here is a work for every individual. Christ’s followers are to relieve the necessities of humanity wherever they see suffering or oppression. They are ever to be ready to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” {1SAT 350.2} “We have a work to do for others. We cannot afford to live merely for ourselves. We are to represent the great Medical Missionary, who came to our world to seek and save that which was lost. When we do the work to which God calls us, we are assured of His blessing.” {1SAT 350.3} In Gethsemane, Christ longed for the same care He had given to others.



Jesus taught the meaning of caregiving by example. He healed the sick, blind, lame, and demon possessed. He showed willingness to be involved in their lives and relieve their hurts and difficulties, even to the most lowly in society. Even when on the cross, he made sure a caregiver was provided for his mother. We are counseled and encouraged throughout the Bible to care for others. “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8, NIV). “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:9-10).

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE CAREGIVERS MINISTRY

The mission of the caregivers ministry is to provide a place where the love of Christ is demonstrated and felt; a safe and supportive environment for caregivers to meet to share their experiences and feelings, exchange information, and be given resources to assist them.

Organizing Caregivers Ministry

First, think and pray about the mission and purpose of the church and how caregivers would help to accomplish this mission. In most congregations, the aspects of a balanced program will include:

- Spiritual enrichment
- Socialization (fellowship)
- Learning opportunities
- Service opportunities
- Providing needed services to caregivers

Steps for Starting a Caregivers Ministries Program

1. Gather a small team of willing individuals who are interested in caregivers and their needs.
2. With this group, research church and community demographics. Conduct interviews, record observations, and distribute surveys.
3. Assess your congregation for possible resources, including potential volunteers.
4. Begin to network with community partners.



5. After studying the results of your research, start outlining programs to meet the most urgent needs and dominant interests.
6. Determine the structure of your ministry by establishing policies and guidelines in consultation with your pastor. Get your caregivers ministry and budget approved.
7. Gather information from potential training agencies, such as NAD Adventist Community Services and the National Alliance for Caregivers.
8. Host “Caregivers’ Sabbath.”

The Caregivers Ministries leader serves in conjunction with church ministries such as Health, Community, 50+ or Family Life Ministries depending on how your church is structured. They also function as a liaison between the team and the supporting ministries and community agencies. The Caregivers Ministries leader is responsible for coordinating all programs serving caregivers and reporting to the church leadership and membership about their ministry.

Qualities of a Caregivers Ministry Leader

It is not necessary to have a professional degree in theology. They do need a solid and practical attitude and basic competencies. The following qualities may enhance one’s ability to be an effective local church leader of a Caregiver Ministry.

- **Articulate**—a person who can communicate well with others. Show genuine courtesy to all under all circumstances.
- **Faithful**—a person who is involved in the life of a local church congregation and growing in their Christian faith.
- **Knowledgeable**—a person who is knowledgeable about caregiver issues and is knowledgeable about the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Take training offered by the North American Division Adventist Community Services for Caregiver Ministry.
- **Care** about and strive to understand the challenges and needs of caregivers.
- **Resourceful**—a person who is capable of enlisting others to participate in events and programs and is capable of acquiring resources and information available to the faith community.
- **Possess** a spiritual desire for whole-health ministry. Have sound judgment, honesty, enthusiasm, and a good sense of humor. Model Christ’s methods of relating.

Purpose statement: Using the common statement of faith developed by your planning group, write a statement of purpose that defines what you are attempting to accomplish with regard to caregivers in your congregation. Be as clear and concise as possible.

Defining a common vision will strengthen and clarify the mission of the congregation and will move it toward a greater sense of inclusiveness and wholeness. A vision of what a congregation can do to encourage caregivers begins with the efforts of a planning group.



An important step for members of this group is for them to identify their commonly held beliefs and values about caregivers. This does not mean that each person must agree on all points, but rather that there are bridges that can bring together persons of faith to move them to serve one another.

Determine Issues: State the particular issues that need to be addressed (taken from the data analysis). Pick a few specific issues that you believe are most important or that seem to be emerging concerns. If you are not sure where to focus your efforts, you might ask people about their needs and interests, both current and anticipated. Also, give consideration to how receptive people might be to sharing their concerns and accepting support.

As you work to establish caregiver ministry programs, you'll need to determine where to focus your resources. As you know, many people who look fine on the outside may be struggling on the inside. Consider if you want to focus on issues where there is likely to be broad appeal or if you are ready to help people tackle more personal and private issues. You may find there are ways to support people without creating church-wide programs to address every concern.

Choose Goals: Develop a concrete set of measurable goals. These goals should address the specific outcomes the planning group would anticipate coming from their efforts. Develop both short term and long term goals that are simple, attainable, and measurable.

Specific Duties of the Caregivers Ministry Leader Include:

1. Praying on a regular basis for the caregivers in your church. Pray specifically for your church to gain an understanding of the purposes of Caregivers Ministries.
2. Encouraging and facilitating meaningful spiritual, mental, and emotional growth among the caregivers of the church.
3. Working with a small team to establish goals and plans.
4. Developing and conducting on a consistent basis a wide variety of programs and activities that will meet the various needs of a diverse caregivers constituency.
5. Communicating with the church secretary and pastor when scheduling programs or activities.
6. Serving as the Caregivers Ministries representative from your church to community organizations and agencies.
7. Communicating information and news of interest to caregivers from community organizations and other sources.
8. Giving reports about Caregivers Ministries to church members and the church board.
9. Keeping up-to-date on issues relating to caregivers by participating in seminars and using your local public library, the internet, and other resources.
10. Mentoring another person to eventually become a Caregivers Ministries coordinator.



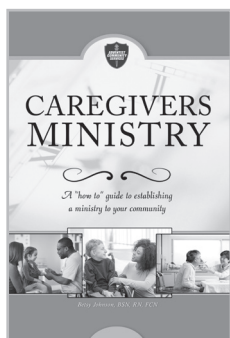
Working with Your Pastor

Your pastor can be one of your biggest allies. Because of that potential strength, be sure to keep the pastor informed and involved as an active member of your Caregivers Ministries team. Here are eight suggestions for working with your pastor (adapted from *The ABZs of Adventist Youth Ministry* by Stuart Tyner):

1. Create a regular appointment time, at least once a month.
2. Discuss your philosophies, goals, and overall approach.
3. Talk about specific plans for the coming month, including details of special events and programs.
4. Ask your pastor to preach a sermon on the value of caregiving.
5. Clear calendar items at least six months ahead of major events, projects, and programs.
6. Work together on budgets. Explain the financial support you are requesting from the church.
7. Extend personal invitations to attend events and give devotions or prayers even if your pastor can't stay for the entire program.
8. Evaluate the program together. Ask for your pastor's input and consider it carefully.

RESOURCE

Caregivers Ministry Manual



By Betsy Johnson (AdventSource)

This book is your complete guide to starting a caregivers ministry in your church. It will show you what you need to lead and develop a vital resource to support a valuable segment of the congregation and community. It provides assessments and additional resources to aid in your important ministry.

Product #113375

Available at AdventSource.org or 402.486.8800.

The following survey can be used to better address the needs of the caregiver. Once the assessment is reviewed, the Caregiver Ministry leader will share the results with the Bible worker, the Personal Ministry leader, elders, or the pastor to design a personalized plan of action for the caregiver.



Survey for Caregivers

Section One

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best you could imagine, rate your perceptions of your local church:

1. I feel loved and appreciated at church. _____
2. The church acknowledges the challenges of being a caregiver. _____
3. I feel accepted and respected by the church body as a valuable member. _____

Section Two

Please indicate your level of interest in each category below, with 10 being your highest interest:

1. I am aware that the Faith Community Nurse/Health Ministries leader is available to assist me. _____
2. I would like information on the community services available to me. _____
3. I would like information on respite care and/or adult care facilities. _____
4. I would like to attend a seminar about caregiving. _____
5. I would like training on caregiving. _____
6. I need counseling for spiritual or family relationship issues. _____
7. I would like to join a Bible study. _____
8. I would like to be part of a prayer group. _____
9. I'm looking for a service project to support. _____
10. I'd like to be more involved at church. _____
11. I'd like to join a walking club. _____
12. I would appreciate information on caregiver support groups. _____

Optional:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Conclusion

When we have sincere compassion for others and allow Jesus to lead us, we will have many opportunities to offer God's encouragement, support, comfort, and unconditional love. Start where you can and He will multiply your unselfish efforts.



Caregivers Ministry

This Quick Start Guide for Caregivers Ministry is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or an experienced volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other titles in the Quick Start Guide series:

- Health Ministries
- Adult Sabbath School
- Adventist Community Services

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