

Caregiver Concerns

October 17, 2007

In making your decisions, consider these things:

1. Pray, pray, pray! Keep praying! God will give you the wisdom you need when you need it!
2. Don't try to find all the information that's out there, because there's too much. Try these resources first. Pray as you search. Have other people help you in this.
3. Ask for help. Let others have the privilege of helping you carry your burden.
4. Check out support groups at church, in the community, through the local Agency on Aging, or start your own.
5. At the bare minimum, get the paperwork straight. Check into becoming signatories on bank accounts and safety deposit boxes. Check on wills, advance directives, financial power of attorney, health care power of attorney. Have copies of important documents, including insurance information. Know where all documents are kept.
6. Create a phone and address list of important people—doctors, lawyer, pastor, friends, neighbors.
7. Make copies of the important cards they carry in their wallets—Social Security cards, drivers license, military ID, health insurance cards, etc.
8. List all prescription medications, over the counter medications, and supplements being taken. Include dose amounts and time of day they are taken. Take this with you to every doctor's visit, or to urgent care or the hospital. Be sure each doctor has a copy. Update as needed. Ask about drug or food interactions and side effects.
9. When considering having your loved one come and live with you, or come to recover for surgery, carefully consider their support systems first.
 - a. How long have they lived in their home?
 - b. Can you hire help in?
 - c. Do they have good neighbors?
 - d. Do they have close friends who can drive and help?
 - e. Can they hire local, trusted people to help?
 - f. Is their church supportive?
 - g. How close are they to their pastor?
 - h. Do they have doctors they trust?
10. Talk together. Get everyone in the family involved, even if they can't be there. Use technology to stay in touch.

11. Consider talents, abilities, and spiritual gifts in determining who will help and how they'll help. God often puts complementary abilities within a family.
12. Remember to have fun together, even if health is poor. Make good memories while you can.