

Are You Part of the Sandwich Generation?

These days, it's not uncommon for a person to find themselves in the role of caregiver for two different age groups. Does that describe you? Are you one of the millions of people taking care of another adult? But do you also have kids who are not yet independent?

Right now, about one in eight Americans is raising children *and* caring for an elderly person, usually their parent. If that describes you, then consider yourself "sandwiched."

Are you part of the "Sandwich Generation?"

"The Sandwich Generation" is not determined by birth year. You belong when you take care of children and older adults at the same time. There's also the "Club Sandwich." These are people who are helping three generations: aging parents, adult children and their own grandchildren.

We're living longer than ever before. But illness, disability and dementia are common with age. Consequently, the added years don't always mean independent living. Many seniors need assistance; some require 24-hour care. So who bears the burden? Usually it's family, most often their children.

And though it's a labor of love, the stress can be overwhelming, especially for those who are "sandwiched." It helps to keep these tips in mind:

- Don't neglect your own health. Just as you take care of others, make sure you take care of yourself.
- Tap into available resources. Take advantage of benefits from Medicare, Medicaid or other insurance plans. Call your local Department of Aging for advice. Join a community support group, or form one of your own.

- Insist that other family members pitch in. Responsibilities ought to be shared.

Caregiving is draining—emotionally, mentally and physically. If you are in that role, be encouraged!

In the verse from John 19, notice Jesus looked upon John, “the disciple whom He loved,” the one who would look after Mary. What a responsibility! To be the primary caregiver for the woman who gave birth to the Messiah!

The lesson for caregivers is this: Jesus gave this duty to His friend. Yes, He tenderly eyed Mary, but He also looked down on John, a man He loved dearly. If you are a caregiver, rest in the knowledge that Jesus is your Friend. He sees you, and He cares.

Helpful Caregiver Resources

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention –
- AARP Caregiving Resource Center –
- The Caregiver Action Network –
- Family Caregiver Alliance –

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