Caregiver SUPPORT

DISCUSSION GUIDE #03

How Can I Persevere in Advocating for My Loved One?

Remember Jesus is our advocate.

WELCOME

» Welcome attendees, look for newcomers and acknowledge them specifically

» Share the group's mission statement:

This is a safe and judgment-free environment where caregivers can find support, encouragement, and help to lift their eyes to Christ.

» Review guidelines for the meeting:

  » Begin and end at set times

  » Respect time allotted for sharing, set by facilitator

  » What is shared in the meetings is confidential, unless it involves abuse of a minor

  » Offer an empathetic and respectful ear to others

WHAT THIS GROUP IS

  » A place to biblically care for the caregivers

  » A place to bring the hope of the gospel to their situations

  » A place to pray for God to meet and bless them with the hope of the gospel

  » A place to listen, to hear struggles, and give help from the bible

  » A place to encourage

WHAT THIS GROUP IS NOT

  » A place to deal with 'patient care' solutions and diagnosis for your loved one

  » A place to give direction for patient care for your loved one

  » A place to hear answers to 'fix' your loved one and the situation you have

  » A place to share political opinions

» Open in prayer

» Encourage group to share current situations (3 minutes). Be sensitive to new attendees.

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QUESTION

Tonight's question for discussion is centered on our day-to-day lives. How can I persevere in advocating for my loved one? ***Leader: give an example of a recent struggle where you were tempted to throw in the towel.**

DISCUSSION

1 John 2:1 (ESV) says,

> *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

How does knowing that Jesus is our advocate help us to persevere? ***Allow for discussion.**

OBSERVATIONS

Not only do we have an advocate in Jesus who stands before the Father on our behalf ready to forgive our sins, which is our greatest need, but everyone here who advocates reflects the glory of God on behalf of your loved one.

You don't have to stand in front of Congress to advocate, though that's one way for sure, but every time you spend hours on the phone with your loved one's doctor, case manager, or pharmacist, you are advocating. Every time you wash sheets, run an errand, pay bills, cook meals, or buy groceries, you are advocating. Every tear, prayer, or time you hold your tongue when you really want to lash out in frustration, you are reflecting the love that Jesus shows to us.

HOPE

Philippians 1:6 (ESV) tells us,

> *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

As Christians, we can persevere when we remember that Jesus is the perfect advocate. It helps us to remember that not only is he the perfect advocate, but he is completing the work he started in us. He will see it through to the end.

GO DEEPER

» List three unseen things you did for your loved one this week. Read Philippians 1:6 and ask: what good work might God be completing in me through these things?

» If you aren't a Christian and want to know more about the gospel and what Jesus has done, talk with another Christian you may know.

» We encourage you to be a part of a local church that preaches from the Bible. If you need help thinking through that, feel free to reach out to us.

PRAYER OF LAMENT AND HOPE

Dear Jesus,

The weight of our loved one's disability is overwhelming most of the time. We can't even think about the future because it makes us afraid. Would you help us to persevere in advocating for our loved ones? Especially when it's hard and we are so worn out.

Thank you that we can come to you with our burdens. Burdens that we are not designed to carry. The only way we can persevere is to rely on your strength and trust that you are working all things for our good. There is not one thing that happens outside of your knowledge or control. Your greatness is beyond our understanding, yet you care for us especially when we are weary.

Help us to rest tonight in the truth of this and your great love. Help us to wake up tomorrow refreshed and strengthened for the battles ahead of us. We give you thanks as we entrust our loved ones to you, God.

In Jesus' name,

Amen