

## Do you have a friend or loved one diagnosed with cancer?

### Here are some practical things you can do to help:

- Don't ask, "How are you?" Ask, "Do you feel like talking?"
- If the person is in pain, keep the visit short.
- Don't say, "Let me know if you need anything." (They probably won't and may not even know what they need.)
- Don't say, "I know how you feel." (You don't.)
- Don't try to comfort them by describing how badly you or someone else suffered during surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy.
- Be slow to offer advice, even if you're asked for it.
- Pray with them. If appropriate, hold their hand or touch a shoulder. The human touch is powerful, and it shows the human connection.
- Be willing to sit silently with the person.
- Allow the person to cry. Many people get nervous when someone around them becomes emotional, so be prepared to accept and to respect their actions. Crying is a great stress reliever. Think of crying as a step toward facing their disease.
- Offer to gather more information. Do research. Don't push the person to try alternative medicine or to find another doctor. If the patient asks for that kind of help, however, be willing to provide information or refer them to someone who can.
- Offer to drive the person for chemotherapy or radiation treatments (or arrange for others to do that).
- Depending on the seriousness of the cancer patient's condition, offer to do practical things, such as clean the house, assist in answering letters, cut the grass, or make phone calls.
- If the person with cancer knows it's terminal, help to plan a family reunion. Make it a time when people can lovingly say goodbye. Ask those who can't attend the event to write a letter to express their love.
- Help plan for a family picture with as many relatives and close friends as possible.