

(An Ecumenical Message by Dr. Tanya Herring, Bangor Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church Chaplain, 3:58 minutes)

Title - Caring: Caring for yourself, Caring for Others

Hello, my name is Dr. Tanya Herring, I am the Bangor Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church Chaplain, Safeguarding Officer, and a member of the Bangor Chaplaincy Team. Today, I would ask, for just a few moments, if I may share with you, the Bangor University audience, a message about caring. In these uncertain and challenging times, it is important that we think of our individual best welfare and that of our fellow man by promoting good physical, mental, and spiritual health.

I focus on three primary talking points throughout my message. The first point of the message asks you, what is caring and as a construct, what does it look like? Secondly, How do I know I am caring for myself and for others? If so, what are the benefits?

For ourselves, it is important that we consume a balanced meal for our well-being. A balanced meal includes an intake for our mental and spiritual health that are as equally important as our physical needs. Along with ensuring that we physically exercise within our individual respective limitations, and eat a balanced meal, I am encouraging each of you to also examine and sustain your mental and spiritual health. Seek assistance and support from your clergy and mental health professionals to guide that daily path. There is a metaphor that I am beginning to hear often among families and professionals, it is referred to as the 'airplane mask' plan. The plan says 'first apply your mask' and then, assist others. In essence, it is imperative that you do the things necessary to care for yourself before you are able to effectively help others. Faith-based and academic literature both support doing the things necessary to care for oneself. So, please allow me to encourage you to carve time, as often as possible, for reading materials and engaging in activities that support your faith-based well-being, as well as your mental and physical well-being.

To the next point, caring for others... faith-based teachings and academic research shows that people who care for others' well-being through acts of altruism, volunteering, or formation of communal relationships appear to be happier. Caring can involve volunteering as part of an organized group or caring can be as simple as reaching out to a workmate or classmate who looks lonely or is struggling with an issue. Throughout an array of faith-based and academic literature, there is a significant association between caring for other's well-being and an increased positive effect upon the carer. Caring for another person has no age or demographic boundaries. Whether it be a virtual connection, sharing of resources, or simply expressing a caring-thought or words.

Together, we represent one community. Largely caring is context-dependent, where social influences heavily influence how individuals care for each other's well-being. Some people, who perform acts of caring relate it to a moral responsibility and obligation, while others have other intrinsic motivations. Whatever the reasoning that applies to your individual situation, please allow me to close by saying it is important for our individual and community well-being that we engage in safe caring behaviors that express kindness, support, and positive well-being. Until next time, may I express that I care about each of you. If you would like to contact me, or any of the chaplaincy team, please feel free to refer to the contact information. I look forward to our next sharing time.

*Dr. Tanya Herring*

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