

G.11 A Carer's Story #2: Karen Gurney



Photo taken 5.5.2018

Dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in May 2017. He was 76 years old. Mum was 69.

God's been with us on this journey all the way, even before the diagnosis. We had to get dad to the Doctors for an assessment, which was not going to be an easy task. God paved the way and gave me the words to say to dad to get him to the Doctors.

He was diagnosed the day before mum and I went to the Dementia Discussed workshop in Tamworth, our home town. Frank was talking about a person's spirit being secure and not affected by dementia. This provided great comfort for mum and I and I haven't worried about dad's spiritual state since. We've seen evidence that his faith is still there. He still loves going to church and being part of the men's choir at church and he still loves singing.

Throughout the last year we've seen God in lots of ways on this journey. He is there with friends and church family when they offer help, assistance, care and understanding. He has been there when mum has gotten to know people in different groups that have been able to provide support and care. God's been there in choosing the carer that provides respite in their home for 3 hours a week. It was a rough start in getting the right person and consistent care and had been filled with stress and anxiety. The carer that comes now is the right person for dad and is consistent from week to week.

There have been changes too in how mum and dad relate. They are doing different things together that have enriched them. Before dad's diagnosis mum and dad had collapsible bikes they took in the caravan with them to go for rides when they were away. Dad mentioned how much he enjoyed it and how much better he felt so my siblings and I, along with mum, bought them both full sized bikes. When dad then lost his license, bike riding had already been established in their lives. They are able to ride from their home on bike tracks, all the way into town which is about a 10 to 15 minute ride. This allows dad to still have some independence and they get to enjoy something together. The promise of an ice cream or cuppa is also appealing!

We've seen a different side of dad too. He's always had a sense of humour but it would get lost in the stress and busyness of work. Dad's sense of humour has surfaced more and more. I look at it as a blessing from God as it allows us to connect with him through humour and it also helps to break tension on occasion. He has also been more open with his verbal expression of love and affection towards mum. He expresses the gratitude he feels more readily.

God has also been with me as part of this journey. He has provided me with strength and ability to do more than I could ever imagine. He's given me insight as to what mum and dad have needed, how to deal with situations when mum isn't sure of what to do and just the ability to be there when needed. It's really hard to put into words and give it justice but all I can say is that I know God is equipping me for this journey and the support I can provide for my parents, for which I am extremely grateful. I couldn't do this in my own strength.

God never promised that our lives would be easy and free of hardship or heartache.

He DID promise that He would never leave us or forsake us.

He also promised that He would give us strength.

Even when things are hard and we don't understand why things are happening, God does. I've seen that evidenced in this journey with mum and dad and dementia.

He knows the plans he has for us. Trust in Him.

Karen Gurney
5th May 2018