

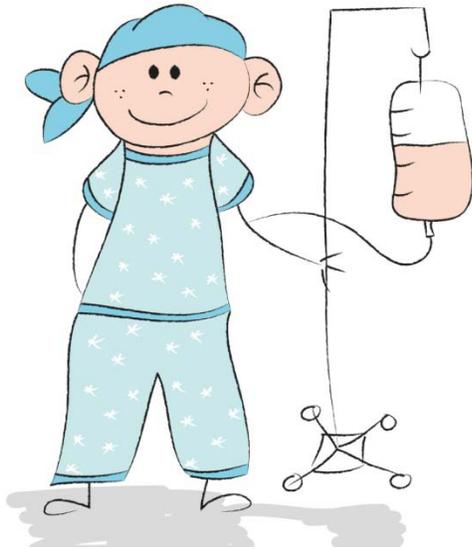


## HOW DOES A SICK PARENT SURVIVE WHEN THEY ARE PARENTING ALONE?

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By Linda Ranson Jacobs

03/03/2014



Parenting alone can be a tough journey when one doesn't feel well. Most single parents will continue to go to work when they don't feel well. They do this so they can save their sick days for when their child is sick so they can stay home with that child. But, what happens when the single mom or dad is really sick and they need help?

I know there were a few times in my single parent life when I got sick, but I never had to be hospitalized or face a life-threatening situation. I would like to think had that happened my church family would have stepped up and helped. But do churches do that for single parents?

I know of one single mom that faced cancer. She had a four-year old child. During her cancer she came to know Christ as her Savior through our church reaching out to her. When she found out the cancer was terminal she reached out to our church and to me more than she called on her non-Christian family. Here are some things she liked for us to do:

- Come to the house and visit with her or sometimes just sit with her.
- Bring fun things to the house for her daughter such as ice cream to eat. My friend couldn't eat ice cream, but she enjoyed watching her daughter get excited that she had ice cream to eat and she had someone to eat it with her.
- Come and read the Bible to her.
- At one point, she asked me to help her plan her own funeral. She wanted a Christian funeral, and her family couldn't comprehend what that would look like.
- When she went into the hospital toward the end of her life, she liked for me to come and sing her favorite praise songs to her.

Another friend who has cancer told me about the good things Christian friends have done for her.

- They have brought in meals.
- One older lady, not a member of her church, has come and picked her up and taken her to her chemo treatments.





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- It was comforting to get close to one lady who had survived breast cancer and encouraged her to keep moving forward with treatments.

However, she also said some things that concerned me. Here is her story.

*I was ok with everything until the cancer and the cancer treatments got bad. One Sunday I forgot to wear my rap or hat to church. After that the hugs I used to get turned into handshakes. I did not live close to where my church was, so I felt like when I really needed help I lived too far away for anyone to come and help me. They would ask my kids how I was doing when I was not at church but no one would call to make sure I was ok. I was told that my oldest daughter should not be taking care of me when I was sick but when both of us tried to call for help to take me to the hospital no one could help. My daughter had to call her big sister from big brothers big sister program to come and help get me to the hospital. I also asked for people to come and just visit me so I could just get my mind off the pain I was going through. I also asked them to come and visit me when I was in the hospital and to bring my kids to see me while I was there.*

She went on to say that she knew it was not up to the church family to do all of these things but it sure would help if they could just encourage her.

I'm not writing this blog to make anyone feel guilty, but I'm writing it to hopefully make you think. How does a single parent survive when they have a life threatening illness? They can't do it alone and what an opportunity to offer assistance in the name of Christ and through His family the church.

What has your church done to assist a sick single parent?

*Linda Ranson Jacobs is one of the forefront leaders in the area of children and divorce. She developed and created the DivorceCare for Kids programs. DC4K is an international program for churches to use to help children of divorced parents find healing within the arms of a loving church family. As a speaker, author, trainer, program developer and child care center owner, Linda has assisted countless families by modeling and acting on the healing love she has found in Jesus Christ. Linda offers support, encouragement and suggestions to help those working with the child of divorce. She serves as DC4K Ambassador (<http://www.dc4k.org>) and can be reached via email at [ljacobs@dc4k.org](mailto:ljacobs@dc4k.org). You can find additional articles from Linda on her blog at <http://blog.dc4k.org/>.*

*Free articles and devotions for single parent families in your church can be found at Linda's website Healthy Loving Partnerships for Our Kids (<http://www.hlp4.com>).*

