

DECISIONS

As we age, we are faced with many decisions. Decisions that we don't want to make. Decisions like "How long can we live alone, When should we stop driving, Are we taking care of ourselves (fixing meals, taking meds, doing laundry, remembering to shower, etc) Being a Nurse I know the signs plus I have been through it with my husband and my Father. My Father was independent but in his early 80's he began to do things that indicated he may need help. He had gone to renew his driver's license in a town that he had lived in since 1941 and could not find the Secretary of State's office. He stopped and asked a Police Officer who gave him directions and when he still couldn't find it, he blamed faulty directions for this, he again stopped and asked a stranger directions. He finally made it to the office and easily renewed his license. He didn't drive far on a daily basis, only going to church on Sunday and to a restaurant in the evenings. When my husband went to pick him up one evening, he had given up driving after dark, my husband noticed his car was gone. He asked my dad where his car was and he told him he had sold it. He had decided to stop driving on his own. He took a taxi every day to his favorite restaurant except those days when we brought him to our house to eat. I began to suggest to him that he consider a Senior Citizen Retirement Community. He was very resistant to that idea. Finally, one day he said he would like to go with me to see some. He was not enthusiastic about this but said yes he would like to see what that was like. We found one we both liked and before he could argue about it, I had made arrangements to move him in. He had a nice apartment, with a screened in porch with an area where he could have a small garden if he wanted to. He was not happy with me when he moved in, but the personnel had told me to leave him alone for two weeks and not visit him but call him on the phone to check on him. When I went to visit with him two weeks later (he was too busy to answer his phone) he was happier than he had been in a long time. He loved it there and was quite busy. He had made friends and was very active. He was the happiest over the next two years that he had been in a long time and stayed there until he became ill, and we had to deal with hospitalizations and then a nursing home until his death. My husband had Alzheimer's and it was difficult to get him to stop driving. Finally, after a lot of discussion and three doctors telling him he couldn't drive, I told him he could keep driving as long as he wanted but I wouldn't ride with him. He realized without me in the car he wouldn't know how to get places and he finally agreed to stop driving. I have quit driving after dark and don't drive unless I have to. I worry that I'll go to the grocery store and end up on the evening news as the elderly lady that tried to go from 27 mile to 26 mile and ended up in Toledo asking why they moved the Kroger Store. But I have told my son that I will stop driving soon and I will adjust. We can order almost anything online now other than dr. appointments and tests which I seem to have a lot of. I know when God blesses us with longevity, we have to use it wisely. He always will find a way for us to continue serving him through church and/or our neighborhoods. That is part of God's plan for our lives. No matter our age we can serve, I can still make a cake, write a devotional, order stuff online for Easter baskets (this week I learned what "fidgets" are) I discovered that if I can't drive I can have stuff delivered to the church for the needs of others, if we have the desire there is always a way.

"Oh Jesus I have promised to serve thee till the end; Be thou forever near me, my Master and my friend. I shall not fear the battle If thou are by my side, nor wander from the pathway If thou wilt be my guide."

By John E. Bode.

Dear Lord, Thank you for this day. Be with us and lead us to do your work here, in this place, no matter where we are, who we are, or how old we are, or how young we are. We ask for your blessings on our Pastor, be with him in all he does. Be with his family, bless them. Be with the sick, the lonely, the hungry, those who are in our midst who seek you. May they see you in our actions, our kindness, our love, our welcoming. Be with our staff and leaders, may we serve each other. May we be the hands and feet of Jesus here in this place, in this time, always in your precious name. Amen

Grace Epperson

