If you are ministering to a person with cancer, you may have a hard time knowing what to do or finding a starting point. In addition, your ministry may intersect with the families and caregivers of a cancer patient, all of whom have varying needs.

This resource contains ideas that can help you show love and compassion in thoughtful and tangible ways.
Daily Life

The demands of daily life can be overwhelming for someone with cancer. You can ease the burden with a sincere offer to help. See if you can get a personalized list of ideas from the patient’s family or caregiver. Here is a list of ideas to help you get started.

• Take on simple errands, like grocery shopping, picking up the mail, or taking pets to vet appointments.
• Assist with housecleaning or yard work during treatment times.
• Offer to babysit once or twice a month so parents can enjoy time as a couple.
• Be “on call” for emergencies.
• Offer to drive to appointments and be present during treatments.
Healthy Self-Image

Cancer patients go through a whirlwind of physical and emotional changes. Be a mirror of positivity and hope.

- Offer to treat them to a manicure/pedicure, facial or makeup demo.
- Give a hat, wig or scarf as a gift if they experience hair loss with treatment.
- Encourage patients and families to get involved with a support team.
- Give a gift certificate to a spa or massage therapy session.
- Make physical contact. Begin and end your visits with a touch, a hug or a handshake.
Encouragement

Cancer can cause a person to feel isolated and without hope. Make the most of your time by being a source of faith and strength.

- Pray with them. Let them know God has not forgotten them.
- Send a quick text, email or message to say you’re thinking of them.
- Offer to visit or take them out for coffee or lunch. Make sure to check if they’re feeling up to it.
- Write a heart-felt letter of encouragement. Remind them they’re loved and how their life makes a difference to you and others.
- Laugh together! A light conversation or a humorous story can make a patient’s day.
- Talk about topics other than cancer. People going through treatment often need a break from talking about the disease. Invest time in learning about their interests and hobbies, or discuss future plans.
- Simply listen. Remember the most important thing is not always what you say—it’s your presence.
The stress of financial worries over cancer treatments can be debilitating. Being an advocate can alleviate some of the burden.

- Offer to help patients and their families research options and fully understand their insurance coverage.
- Coordinate a fundraising effort. Car washes, bake sales and benefits are great ways to involve others in helping to raise funds. Websites like GoFundMe.com or GiveForward.com are easy ways to engage and inspire others to help.
- Reach out to others. National cancer advocacy groups and social workers provide a broad range of services to those who need help and support. Many pharmaceutical companies have co-pay assistance available. Research independent organizations who can help find reduced-cost (or free) medications.

Dear friend, you are an integral part of helping others learn to trust God and find hope and peace in the midst of fear. Don’t be tempted to think you’re not doing enough—often, it’s the little things which can make the difference. Thank you for answering the call to minister to those with cancer!
About Reverend Percy McCray

Rev. Percy McCray Jr. has spent more than 20 years ministering to cancer patients and their caregivers at Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA).

He recognizes cancer care ministry as a special calling from God and considers faith a key, but often overlooked, component of cancer treatment. He now serves as the Director of Faith-Based Programs at CTCA® and provides leadership to the pastoral care staff at all five CTCA hospitals. In addition, Rev. McCray oversees Our Journey of Hope®, a nationwide cancer-care ministry training and support program.

An ordained minister, Rev. McCray is a member of the U.S. Chaplain Association. He has been recognized as one of the “most influential African Americans in Lake County (IL)” by the Chicago People’s Voice newspaper for his religious and leadership roles within the community.
Health, Hope & Inspiration is a weekly radio broadcast, sponsored by Cancer Treatment Centers of America® (CTCA), designed to help people find answers to questions about cancer, cancer prevention and overall healthy living. One of the greatest gifts a person can enjoy is good health. A well-rounded lifestyle is the product of physical, emotional and spiritual health. These three things are interdependent, and that is the message of Health, Hope & Inspiration, as well as the basis of the integrative approach at CTCA®.

For more information, visit our website at www.HealthHopeAndInspiration.com.

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