

## **Mercy – Even When I Forget Who I Am**

‘Are you my brother?’ She asked for the fourth time in five minutes. Not remembering people – even loved ones is a mark of one who lives with Alzheimer’s. Each day she becomes a little less of who she is: wife, mother, grandmother, teacher, artist, cake designer. Each day she becomes a little less in what she can do: care for herself, dress and eat. Each day a little less remembering and many more ‘I don’t know’s’ are the marks of our conversation.

Caring for a family member with Alzheimer’s or dementia is not easy. It is estimated that 26 million people worldwide suffer with this progressive irreversible disease that robs one of their personhood. Every 71 seconds someone develops Alzheimer’s disease. Caregivers face unique challenges – especially when they are family. The role reversal and growing pain of watching this change take place is difficult for the family caregiver.

Yet, in the midst of it all, is the comforting thought that Jesus neither forgets nor forsakes, he knows us and calls us by name. Comforting in our lives as we care for one with Alzheimer’s is that while they may not know who they are, they often remember the words of faith, the Lord’s Prayer and the hymns of their youth. They may not remember that they just ate but we can pray together and sing hymns and in that, there is comfort and the reassurance that in Christ we are family forever.

### **If you are living with one who is suffering with dementia or Alzheimer’s you will find help at:**

Local Lutheran Social Services Agency  
LCMS Human Care and World Relief  
Alzheimer’s Association

### **What can we do?**

Pray for those who are challenged with this disease.  
Listen to their stories and help them write it.  
Scrapbook pictures and family memories to be read again and again.  
Pray for the caregivers.  
If care-giving is happening in the home, offer to come and sit for an evening.

**Southeastern District  
Extending Mercy – Human Care  
[www.se.lcms.org](http://www.se.lcms.org)**

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