

## Finger on the Pulse

by Dr. Faith Goldberg, Ebenezer Medical Doctor



### Held in the Memory of God

**“To be human is to be held in the memory of God. God watches over human beings, knows them intimately and remembers them.” John Swinton – Dementia, Living in the Memories of God.**

Something that I enjoy about my work as a medical doctor in Ebenezer Home, is the freedom to pray with the residents.

On Thursday mornings, our head nurse, Kristin, and I, make a “home visit” to each resident. We knock on their door and chat for a few minutes about their medical concerns, family, how to make good Arabic coffee or apple pies. A few of our residents are unable to make conversation, their memory of language has eroded with the years; they suffer from dementia or Alzheimer’s disease.

Tina (name has been changed), would have rarely missed a mid-week prayer meeting or a Saturday service during her many years of faithful participation in Bethesda congregation in Haifa. Now, she is unable to communicate either in English, her mother tongue, or in Hebrew, the language of her adopted country. Tina needs help to eat, to wash, and to dress; she has forgotten how to walk and most of the day she sits in a wheelchair. It is our privilege to pray for her on Thursday mornings.

Tina was born in 1924 into a Jewish family who lived in Berlin. Her family moved to England just after Hitler came to power but before World War 2. Her parents were not observant Jews and keen to hide their Jewish identity. Tina and her older brother were sent to a Christian school in London, where they were taught about Jesus. Her parents had no objection to her baptism into the Anglican church. Already as a teenager, the truth that she heard about her Messiah, became a personal and living faith.

After studying nursing, Tina dedicated three years to intensive bible training. She continued to work as a general nurse until God called her to Israel. She joined a medical mission based in Haifa; and was active in their clinic and in the community. Tina is one of the founding members of Ebenezer Home.

I have known Tina for over twenty years, we both come from England and in the past have enjoyed a proper cup of tea together, and scones with plenty of raspberry jam and whipped cream. For many years she faithfully prayed for our family.



Tina never got married and she has no family in Israel; the congregation and Ebenezer Home, we are her family. We have the privilege and the responsibility to care for her, as she cared for many others. A number of our residents simply don’t have families who care for them, some have been abandoned by their children because of their faith in Jesus the Messiah, others are survivors of the Holocaust or immigrants from low income families.

Tina’s life has been full of friendship, service and prayer. I believe that now in her weakness, for as long as her Maker chooses to give her life, she continues to serve His purposes as His child.

# Bread and Fish - Devotional

by **Johnny Khoury**, Ebenezer Managing Director

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The commandment “Honor thy Father and thy Mother” (Ex.20:12a) is the basis for our vision here at the Ebenezer Home. Paul reminds the believers in Ephesus of this commandment (Eph. 6:1-2). Honoring one’s parents begins from childhood and is demonstrated first by behavior that acknowledges their authority. Honoring one’s parents doesn’t only express itself by what we say, but most of all by what we do for them in practice. In many ways, honoring one’s parents is a demanding task and not a light matter at all. The depth of our love for our parents is expressed in the measure in which we are willing to sacrifice for them (effort, time, care and money).

Paul reminds Timothy (1 Tim. 5:3-4) that care for parents is first and foremost the duty of the children and grandchildren - not of society, not of the church and not of an Elderly Home. And because this duty is not any easy one Paul writes that they must “first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God”. The Pharisees had to learn this truth because they despised the sanctity of the commandment of honoring parents for the good of their own pockets (Matt. 15:4-6).

Even though we may love and honor our parents we are not always able to give them the very best care without help from others. Love and honor can’t replace professional care, and this is the place where the professional members of the body can come into the picture and provide devoted care; as if our parents were their own parents!

The Lord Jesus himself gave us the greatest example of care for one’s parents as he hung on the cross (John 19:25-27): “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home”. Even though the Lord Jesus had relatives that were his own flesh and blood, he committed his own mother into John’s hands. Why? Because he was the right person – able, and in the right place – available (at the foot of the cross) and with the right heart – love.

## What's New?

by **Christie Livingstone**, Ebenezer Home Secretary

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The lives of residents and workers in the Home are closely intertwined. Many residents have lived here for years and call it their Home, especially those without any family. Also, a number of workers have been here for years and have gotten to know the residents well. New staff members and volunteers quickly feel a part of the Ebenezer family. We are used to each other, and the relationship is much more than that of just care receivers and care providers. Because of this, former staff and volunteers love to come back and visit with the residents whenever they can. It’s a community that has many things in common; the Word of God, prayers, testimonies, love, care, going out of the way for each other and much more.

Every time a resident goes to be with the Lord, it’s like the loss of a family member. Last year we saw seven precious residents go to their eternal home. Funerals are only a small part in the grieving and adjustment process of those who remain here. The Home holds memorial services to remember them, with the residents sharing their stories and feelings about those who passed on. Being a relatively new member of the team, I learnt a lot from these services. Some residents knew each other for many years before they came to live in the Home, have close bonds and go to the same congregations. But there is a new level of togetherness in the Lord that everyone experiences here. The longer we live together, the harder it is to part with old friends; so much had been shared with them, and that part of our life will be missing until we all meet again in the Kingdom of God. Working with the elderly puts the reality of Heaven and life after physical death in a very sharp and clear perspective. Seeing how they praise the Lord, rely on Him and want to be with Him brings so much encouragement. Isaiah’s words (46:4), “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you” – are so true every day in Ebenezer Home!