



Director's Note

I have spent over one year of my life in summer camps. It began as a seven-year-old going to Easter Seals. The great thing about that camp was they designed it specifically for kids with disabilities. I got to try things like archery, a shooting range, and adaptive sports for the first time. It was also the first place I met others with disabilities. Campers came from all over the state. We were different in many ways, but our disabilities linked us together.

After my senior year in high school, I attended a local Christian camp. Although the camp wasn't designed for people with disabilities, I loved my experience. The leaders adapted wherever they could. My friend Bill went with me to care for my physical needs. At the end of the week, he and I received the "campers of the week" title.

When I was about to graduate Bible college, I felt the Lord challenging me to start a ministry to help the Church reach people with disabilities. A large part of that was developing Christian camping programs.

I wanted to meet both the spiritual and physical needs of people with disabilities. Over the years, our ministry birthed camps around the Midwest.

Christian camping forms a community of people affected by disabilities. Many families feel like they do not belong in a typical world. They feel ostracized, or the disability garners unwanted attention. In a Christian camp focused on families with disabilities, they feel normal and accepted; often describing the week as a "slice of Heaven." I agree. I find it ironic that the price of admission to experience a "slice of Heaven" is disability.

Joan and I will serve at two camps for families affected by disability this summer. The first is Breakaway June 26-July 2. The second is Camp Celebrate July 16-22. Both camps are looking for volunteers. Maybe we will see you there! For more information, visit:

<https://www.liftdisability.net/breakaway-registration/> or
<https://luke14ministries.net/camp-celebrate>



WAYS TO GIVE

Online:

www.luke14exchange.org/donate/

By Mail:

3616 Harden Blvd
#163
Lakeland FL 33803

Or call us:

863-940-3816

Caregiving When you Just Don't Care

Family caregivers love the person we care for, but some days the privilege of caring feels like a burden. We get burned out, depressed, or bone-weary-tired. Here are some ideas Joan recently shared at the Family Cafe' to help caregivers move forward:

1. Stay well stocked with things that bring you joy (for me, fresh-cut flowers, candles) and make the day a little easier (a frozen meal or two, cash for delivery services, etc.).
2. Build in margin where you can. It is okay to ask the person you care for to wait a few minutes, or even to say no to a request periodically if it does not harm them.
3. Try to avoid extremes of energy, tiredness, hunger, etc. Esau allowed his hunger to alter his ability to make a good decision (Genesis 25) and it forever changed his life and the course of history.
4. Think today. It's overwhelming to think of caregiving for another ten or thirty years. God promises strength for today. Take it a day at a time.
5. Invest in one person with whom you can be honest, who won't judge you. If you are that safe person for a caregiver, listen, pray, and encourage them.
6. Adjust your expectations. It's okay to wear the same clothes two days in a row, or sometimes have ice cream for dinner, or use paper plates.
7. Identify five-minute breaks that refresh you. It may include listening to a favorite piece of music, watching a funny video clip, savoring a cup of coffee on the patio, reading a chapter in a book, or other choices that refill your soul.
8. Remember the airline directives: put your own oxygen mask on first before helping others. While life isn't all about you, it is in part about you. Caregivers need to care for themselves so they can care for others.
9. Practice grace. Exercise forgiveness when needed, not just to others, but also to yourself. We may be are our own enemy in the unrealistic expectations we place on ourselves. Burn your superhero cape and engage in courteous goodwill, to others, and in your self-talk.

If you are a caregiver and have other tips to share, we'd love to hear them.
Email Joan@Luke14Exchange.org

Mission:

We coach Christian communities, mentor people affected by disability, and encourage families affected by disability until the table is full.

Vision:

- To exchange a life without God for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- To exchange a life of isolation for a life in community.
- To exchange a life of low expectation for an abundant life with purpose.



GETTING INVOLVED

Luke 14 Exchange needs you! No matter where you live, we are looking for volunteers in these areas.

- [Board Members](#) (we meet every other month via Zoom) to help set the course and promote the ministry.
- [Typists, or data entry](#) people who can meet with Jerry, virtually or in person, to type for him.

Ben Cooper: Genealogist

BY JOAN BORTON



Homeschool parents are creative in educating their children. They find what will capture their child's attention while teaching the information or skill. That was a dilemma Ben Cooper's mother, Jeannette, was up against when he needed to learn data entry. Neither of them was particularly computer savvy.

Ben was born with cerebral palsy and developed a keen interest in dogs and clocks. Keen interest is really an understatement. I dare you to talk with Ben about a dog breed with which he is not familiar. Ask him about a dog you mentioned years ago, and he'll still remember their names. Regarding clocks, as of today, he has 180 in his bedroom alone, not including watches, nor the dozens of other clocks throughout the house.

But clocks and dogs were not what Jeannette used in this lesson. Instead, she gave Ben names and dates of relatives from their family tree and opened membership in an online genealogy service. It was Ben's job to enter the details into the program on the web. Not only did Ben learn to type and to find his way around computer programs, but it also taught him how to research. As part of his school project, he and his mom put a book together about their family history.

Now, 17 years later Ben spends hours every day working on genealogy. He has connected the branches of his mother's tree back 12-14 generations. That's one generation before they left England to come to America. He is still researching his dad's side; one of the interesting pieces he's found is Cooper was the last name for both of his paternal great grandparents, though not related prior to marriage.

For a family who lives a simple life in a rural part of the state, Ben has made connections around the world through his research. He has met new relatives who are part of his own family tree.

After posting information online about a relative who died at a young age in 1978, he received a message from a man asking for the details to be shared with him, because he believed it was his mother.

Ben picks up the story. "I was skeptical at first, but did the research and proceeded cautiously. It turned out the man was correct. Adopted at a very young age, the only thing he knew was his birth mother's maiden name. He hoped I had a photo of his birth mother, but I didn't. I shared photos of his maternal grandfather and several of his great-grandparents. Now he's met his biological sisters and has been to our house a dozen times to visit."

Ben's dogged pursuit of genealogical records accuracy has taken him into details of a murder, hidden relationships, cross-country moves, and many visits to cemeteries. In the photo above, Ben is sitting between the gravestones of paternal ancestors. One stone had fallen and laid on the ground for many years until Ben had it righted in 2016.

One of Ben's regrets is not asking his relatives more questions when they were alive. If you want to learn from Ben, he suggests you ask questions to find out the full name of your family members and predecessors, including maiden and middle names. Know the locations of births, marriages, and the number of marriages. It is also helpful to have relatives share the approximate dates of family members' passing and the location of burial records. This data gives one a launching point for research.

Congratulations Jeannette on a job well done with homeschooling. And thank you, Ben, for using your skills, talents, and passions to help others find answers and some peace with their past. If you'd like to connect with Ben about genealogy, or clocks, or dogs, send him an email in care of info@Luke14Exchange.org. We'll forward messages to Ben.

Where to find us

- **Wednesdays** at the Dream Center in Lakeland, FL.
- **May 27-29** Family Café in Orlando
- **June 27-July 2** Breakaway Camp in Leesburg, Florida
- **July 16-22** Camp Celebrate in Newport, TN
- **October 25** Save-the-date in Lakeland, FL - An Evening at the Table

Find us on Facebook and on the web!

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<https://a.co/cBhxoeE>



When you shop Amazon be sure to go to smile.amazon.com and choose Luke 14 Exchange, Inc as your charity of choice.

Gift Cards - used to purchase supplies and meals for volunteer workdays.

- Staples
- Walmart
- Publix
- Crispers (for volunteer appreciation)

Website Update: Prayer

We updated our website with a new page for prayer. We are excited about this addition and invite you to visit www.Luke14Exchange.org/prayer. You'll find three sections on the page. The first has a button you can click to download our prayer bookmark. This is a very abbreviated form of the prayer requests you'll see later on the page. We hope you will put the bookmark in your Bible or devotion book and pray, not just for us but for people with disabilities around the world.

The next section takes each of the broad categories listed on the bookmark and breaks them down into specific prayer points for each day. We don't expect you to pray through every point listed for each day. Rather, we hope you'll look at it from time to time as you grow friendships with people affected by disability and want to know how to pray for them. You might always want to use this section to develop and grow your own prayer life.

As you scroll down the page, you'll find our third section. We invite you to share a prayer request with us. It does not need to be disability-related. We feel privileged when we get to pray for our friends and those we meet through Luke 14 Exchange. Requests will be shared confidentially only with our team.

After you visit the page, would you share your thoughts with us? You can email joan@Luke14Exchange.org We want to make the page easy for you to use. Your feedback on what works, and ways you think we could improve it are welcome.