

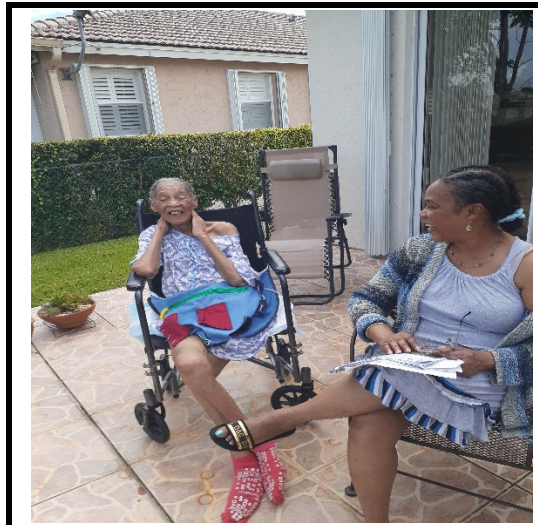
Shut in" but not "Shut out"

***Perhaps my reality is what I see;
but faith is what I have to live.
"Faith is the substance of things
hope for and the evidence of
things not see (Hebrews 11:1)."
What we had to stand on was
our faith in God.***



"Shut in" but not "Shut out"

Mom and I had been shut in for a year before the global pandemic (COVID-19). At the beginning, it was frustrating because I had difficulty understanding her personality changes.



God sent us a beautiful woman of God to help; a faith-believer in our situation.

At church, people found it difficult to respond to her and she found it uncomfortable in new surroundings and new people. Even before we would leave the church grounds, she would ask, "Where are we?" She had moved to another with dementia. Even though I found it difficult, it was even more difficult for her.

With the help of another pastor friend (Florence), I was able to find the *reasonableness* that I required in my adjustment – "Let us reason together."

Florence had experienced a similar situation to mine. After a series of strokes, her strong, independent husband was a retired police officer; now he relied totally on her for his daily care. Years earlier, she had made the decision to step down as Lead Pastor, a demanding obligation at that time. In that season of her life, she stated that she was needed by her husband. "It was ministry," she said, "and at that time, her calling was to shepherd in the home in an extraordinary way.

Florence was a "homegirl." She knew of my mother's dedication to our home church and in the

community where we had grown up. She reminded me that we are the church. "Church is in us; and finding ways to have worship at home was both a blessing and an assurance that God had prepared me for this journey." "We, she said, can stand by His Word that He is faithful to help us. "

Walking in the Word means living what we preach; that is example of faith in God.

In homecare, I had some very humbling experiences; they were both wonderful and tiring. I learned to appreciate some help. The trauma of the superwoman, instilled in me, relaxed a little. I am still learning how to accept help from others. Walking as a servant leader, **means balance**.

During that season, I also grew so close to Mom that I could sense what she was feeling physically. I discovered her triggering points and how to help her. Music was both worship and therapy for her anxiety.

During the pandemic, we virtually connected to other ministries.

God provided virtual ministry at its best from parking lot praise to zoom! Mom and I were able to travel without leaving home. NO GAS NEEDED for the journey.

From Florida to North Carolina; from North Carolina to New York; and we were able to travel internationally to England!!!

During short hospital stays, we were still able to participate in

virtual ministry. Healthcare workers sang with her when she would burst into "This Little Light of Mine." Our worship times were special as Florence had said.!

Today, I am one who continues to encourage churches to consider both virtual and in-person ministry as we return to the sanctuary. We must move forward with a ministry that also focuses on those who cannot physically be in the building, for whatever reason.

I am grateful that shut in meant we were not shut out!