

ICU



Sharing Christ's Love

“When did I See You sick or in prison and go to visit you?” Matthew 25:39

Sharing the Love of Jesus while at the **HOSPITAL**

Rev. Colin Munroe: Wayne Memorial Hospital Chaplain

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Things to Do

- Maintain a *non-anxious* presence. Be calm and purposeful.
- Remember, often the biggest issue for a patient is LOSS OF CONTROL. Give them some.
- If possible, have a visiting schedule that you share with the medical staff.
- Find out all you can about the patient's condition, sedation, energy level, and personal hygiene requirements PRIOR to the visit.
- Observe ALL rules concerning exposure to hospital acquired illnesses, community acquired illnesses, gloves, masks and gowns, infection control, etc.
- Adjust your position so that the patient does not have to strain to see you.
- Touch, WHEN APPROPRIATE.
- Speak clearly. Don't show agitation if the patient has difficulty understanding or hearing you, or you them.
- Offer to read scripture or sing hymns if it soothes the patient. Keep prayers short and to the point if the patient is tired.
- Share good news about your church community or family; leave the negative gossip outside.
- Relinquish the pastoral role to the clergy if the patient prefers it.
- Talk soothingly to those in a coma and to those whom, for whatever reason, cannot respond.

Things to Avoid

- Burst into the room with a great deal of fussing about. Avoid confusion and too much busyness.
- Talk too loudly or get in the patient's face, even if one of you is hard of hearing.
- Constantly wake up a patient just because you are there. Sleep is a medicine.
- Get in a doctor or nurses way while they are performing their duties.
- Second guess medical staff in front of the patient.
- Barrage the patient with your own problems, or their problems.
- Have too many people in the room. Rarely is it 'the more the merrier'.
- Bring in any food that is not approved by medical staff.
- Bring children into the room who are frightened, then just ignore them.

Things to Avoid

- Take anything personally. Patients are often cranky or on medication that makes them act differently than normal.
- Expect a patient with a breathing apparatus on to keep responding verbally to you.
- Speak for the patient if they can speak for themselves.
- Deliver a 'sermon' that is neither requested nor initiated by the patient. Allow the sick or dying to approach the subject at their own pace. You don't convert people; Jesus does, at His pleasure.
- Offer platitudes that have no basis in reality or Scripture.
- Visit if you hate hospitals or are just there to give the impression that you care. Patients can be very sensitive to people's motives.
- Don't be afraid to talk about EOL issues if it's the elephant in the room. Patients are often better at it than the families, and need resolution.
- Stay on the phone the whole time you're in the room. This happens more often than you think.