

The Baptist Pastor's & Minister's Conference

“HOSPITAL VISITATION”

In order to establish and preserve the spirit of unity and concord that is so essential among “workers together with God” the pastor should find time for calls, not only among those sick and in distress in his church, but on his brethren in the ministry. To manifest interest and a spirit of cooperation in and with his members and fellow-ministers yields fruit a thousand fold.

The first thing in “hospital visitation” is to go. A visit in the hospital is very much appreciated (especially by the Pastor) and helps a person's recovery and well being.

I Corinthians 12:26 says, “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”

II Corinthians 1:3-4 says, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

In Matthew 25:35-40 Jesus said, “I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and came unto me. Then the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, thirsty, and gave thee drink? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The words of the Bible have more effect and power to console the sick and afflicted than any human utterance. These Scripture selections are suitable for all needs:

Purpose of Afflictions: Deuteronomy 8:2,3; Job 36:8-10; Psalms 78:34; 94:12; 119:67-75; Proverbs 3:11; Zechariah 13:9; Hosea 5:15; Romans 5:3; Hebrews 12:6-11; I Peter 1:17.

Afflictions of Job: Job 1:1-22; 2:3-13; 3:24,25; 6:1-4; 7:3-15; 10:1-21; 42:1-12.

Afflictions of Hezekiah: 2 Chronicles 28:1-29; 30:1-26; 2Kings 20:1-6.

Afflictions of Manasseh: 2 Chronicles 33:12-16; 2 Kings 21:10-14.

God permits Affliction: 1 Samuel 2:3-9; Job 5:6-19; Job 14:1; Psalms 102:1; Psalms 39:1.

Sympathy for the Afflicted: Job 6:1-17; Proverbs 17:17; Psalms 35:11-28; Romans 11:14-21; Hebrews 13:3.

Comfort in Affliction: Job 5:18; 11-16; Psalms 18:2; 22:24; 23:24; 27:14; 30:5; 42:11; 46:12; 55:22; 71:20; 73:26; 145:14; Isaiah 25:4; 49:13; 51:10; 54:7; Jeremiah 16:19; Lamentations 3:1-34; Micah 7:9; Nahum 1:7; Habakkuk 3:17-1. (Taken from “The Baptist Standard Church Directory and Busy Pastor’s Guide”)

Ministering to the sick, making calls in the hospital:

1. Pray for the patient before you go to visit and offer to pray during the visit. Ask the patient “What specific things can you pray for, for them!”
2. Be careful about your appearance, cleanliness, and smell (avoid loud cologne).
3. Check at the volunteer’s information desk for the location of the patient room (unless you already have it) and carefully observe visiting hours and all rules of the hospital. You will be entering the patient (member(s)) as a guest, be sensitive to their privacy.
4. Always consult the nurses when a patient’s curtain is pulled, the door is closed, or there are isolation signs on the door about wearing gown, mask, and gloves, before entering.
5. If the patient is sleeping, do not wake him. Patients should not be visited right after surgery.
6. Enter the room quietly, seriously, but smiling. Be calm and settled.
7. Don’t sit on or shake the bed. Don’t touch the IV machine or tubes.
8. Limit the time of your visit, don’t fatigue the patient. But don’t keep looking at your watch.
9. Many patients will appreciate a gentle touch or holding the hand, especially during prayer.

10. Always express love, and genuine interest in the patient. You should listen, more than speak. Don't belittle their sickness.
11. You want to encourage the patients, so don't bring bad news.
12. If you don't know the patient's spiritual condition, ask! If the person is unsaved share the Gospel using Scriptures.
13. Accept any interruptions of your visit from doctors, staff, or family
14. Wash your hands after touching the patient.

Some suggestions for comfort and support with a terminal patient:

1. Be honest in sharing your feelings. Admit your helplessness and concern.
2. Don't be shocked by whatever the dying person may say.
3. Try to anticipate physical needs without being told.
4. Don't stop being a comforter when the patient accepts his/her impending death, or when others begin to avoid the patient.
5. If the person is saved, talk about Heaven and the Lord's presence.

Questions to ask the terminal patient:

1. Is your house in order? i.e. bills paid, apologies made, arrangements for the family.
2. Do you have any funeral arrangements?
3. Have you written a will?
4. Are you prepared to meet God? The person's relationship to Christ is the utmost priority.

Some suggested books on the subject

1. The Pastor and the Patient: A Practical Guidebook for Hospital Visitation—by Kent D. Richmond, David L. Middleton
2. Preaching to sufferers: God and the Problem of Pain by—Kent D. Richmond
3. A Time to Die: A Handbook for Funeral Sermons: Includes Sample Sermons for Difficult Funerals—by Kent D. Richmond