

# Hospital Visitation

## Why We Visit

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- We visit the sick to minister to them mentally and spiritually.
- We visit to bring hope and encouragement to those who are unable to find courage within.
- We visit to communicate that they are important to God and others by sharing that God truly cares and by showing that we care as well.

## Spiritual Preparation

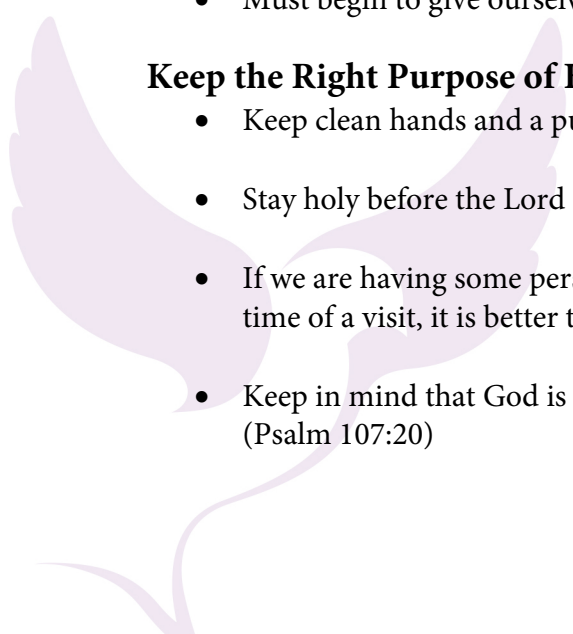
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Daily devotions, prayer and fasting are ways we can prepare our hearts to visit those who are hurting.

### **Right Attitude**

- Must have a heart to serve because we are servants (John 12:26)
- Must have a love for the people (John 3:16)
- Must begin to give ourselves to people

### **Keep the Right Purpose of Heart**

- Keep clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3-4)
  - Stay holy before the Lord
  - If we are having some personal problems that may interfere with our ministering at the time of a visit, it is better that we not go
  - Keep in mind that God is the healer; the doctors only treat, and we are the messengers (Psalm 107:20)
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**\*\* Never promise healing. We can only give the promises of God's Word concerning healing.**

### **Scripture Reading/Prayer**

- Always have a prepared scripture or two ready with a brief explanation
- Keep in mind that we are visiting the sick, and they are not up for your "three points and a close" presentation
- Never proclaim anything you are not striving to live

## **Natural Preparation**

### **Discovering Who Is Sick**

- Community grapevine
- Notification from the hospital
- Direct message from the patient
- Family and friends

**\*\* Notification of someone being ill or going to the hospital should be written down in your notebook calendar and forwarded to your ministry head.**

### **Responding to the Sick**

Responding will depend on:

- The nature of the patient's illness
- The distance to the hospital

### **Alternatives to a Personal Visit**

- Leave a message at a nurse's station
- Leave a brief note by the patient's phone
- A written sentence of a comforting scripture and a brief prayer
- A telephone call to the patient

## The Visit

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*Once in the hospital, we are under the authority of that hospital.* And we must remember that we must walk in humility and not think more highly of ourselves than we should.

**\*\* It is very important that you assess the situation. Do not interfere if the hospital staff is treating the patient at the time. Wait outside the room or offer to return at another time if it is not convenient to wait. If the patient is in ICU, and you are not admitted, minister to their family members if possible. If the person is unconscious, minister as usual by reading scripture and prayer.**

- *After arriving and before leaving the hospital*, you should go to the restroom and thoroughly wash your hands.
- *Before entering the patient's room*, ask at the nurse's station and knock on the patient's door and ask permission to enter.
- If special precautions are to be taken (wearing gloves, masks, shoe covers, etc.), please follow the nurse's instructions.
- Always identify yourself.

### When the Patient Is Asleep:

- Ask at the nurse's station whether you can wake the patient.
- If so, quietly call his/her name. If the patient easily awakens, you may visit.
- If the patient does not awaken, then leave a card or note.

### Clearing the Way for the Visit

- If the patient is watching TV or listening to the radio, ask for permission to turn it off.
- The length of the visit will be determined by the condition of the patient. The average length of time is five (5) to fifteen (15) minutes.
- A quick look around the room will reveal the following:
  - Who else is present
  - The condition of the patient
  - The medical equipment being used

The patient's needs and condition will determine whether to stand or be seated.

## **Hospital Visitation Dos and Don'ts**

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- Do not lean or sit on the bed.
- Do not give the impression of prying into the patient's medical details, or ask sensitive or extremely personal questions.
- Do offer to leave the room if medical procedures are being conducted.
- Do not argue or try to convince a patient of some issue.
- Do not get trapped into playing "Is it not awful...?"
- Do not be a bearer of bad news.
- Do be natural.
- Do offer to read scripture and pray if the patient wishes.
- Do be cheerful.
- Do listen.
- Do recognize that the topic a patient is most concerned about may not be mentioned until you have announced that you are leaving.
- Do not assume that a comatose patient cannot hear. Share in the manner you would with any other patient.
- Do be respectful of all others that may be present.
- Do consider leaving CDs of songs or biblically based messages and encourage them to listen to them and also to read their Bible daily.