

Walking with People through Palliative Care and Hospice Care

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Introduction

- What joy there is in serving the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:25-26)!
- We weep with those who weep (Rom 12:15).
- True religion rejoices in serving others (James 1:27; 2:14-18).
- We value taking care of our family (1 Tim 5:8).
- In light of the coming of Christ, we serve through Christ for the glory of God (1 Pet 4:7-11).

1. What is Palliative Care and Hospice Care?

- Hospice Care is compassionate care for one facing a terminal illness (with the prognosis of living six months or less without any curative treatment).
- Palliative Care is compassionate care that provides relief from the symptoms of a serious or life-limiting illness, as well as relief from physical and mental stress (which can be pursued at any stage of treatment, stage, or at the end of life). Palliative care is part of hospice care.
- Primary goals of both kinds of care include: pain relief, practical help, emotional well-being, spiritual needs, and care for caregivers.

2. Priorities for Care

- For the Patient:
 - Spiritual Care
 - Friendship and Companionship

- Mental and Emotional Care
- Physical Care
- For the Caregiver:
 - Spiritual Care
 - Friendship and Companionship
 - Mental and Emotional Care
 - Physical Care

3. Key Principles for Quality Spiritual Care

- Understanding the purpose of trials and suffering
 - Trials and suffering, like everything, are always for God's glory (Job 1 & 2; John 9:1-3; 1 Cor 1:26-31).
 - Trials and suffering are consistent with all God's plans and purposes for each individual; that is, to help you become like Jesus Christ (Rom 8:28-29).
 - Trials and suffering are meant to grow your endurance and maturity through wisdom (James 1:2-5).
 - Trials and suffering equip you to better minister to others (2 Cor 1:1-11).
 - Trials and suffering provide you opportunities to share the Gospel (1 Peter 3:13-17).
- Pray soberly and regularly (James 5:13-18; 1 Pet 4:8).
- Remind everyone of the never-ending presence of God (Psalm 121; Josh 1:9; Matt 28:20; 1 Cor 6:19-20).
- Help everyone understand God's provision for pain and suffering
 - Victory *in* trials and suffering (Rom 8:35-37; Phil 4:11, 12).
 - Victory *through* trials and suffering (Rom 8:28-29; 2 Cor 4:17, 18)
 - Victory *from* trials and suffering – this is key!

4. Practical Implications for General Care

- Pray for a heart for mutual care (1 Cor 12:25-26)
- Understand that love takes time, energy, creativity, and sacrifice (Eph 5:1-2)

- Be prepared and willing to help (James 1:27; 1 Pet 4:10-11)
- Walk *alongside* the patient, family, church, and healthcare providers (not in *front of*, *behind*, or *under the feet of*)

5. Guiding Principles Regarding Care

- You are an ambassador of Jesus Christ who gets to incarnate Christ to this family (2 Cor 5:20-21).
- The Holy Spirit provides you strength to serve as you seek to normalize the abnormal (Phil 4:13; 1 Cor 10:13).
- God provides wisdom; we must be on guard and carefully watch our statements (James 1:5).
- Compassion and grace are better shown than simply said (Rom 12:15; cf., Gal 6:2).
- Realize this is one of the most important times you can have with a family (1 Pet 4:7-11).
- The work God calls us to is both a privilege and a duty where we must not minimize the impact this has on our ministry and the ones to whom we are ministering (1 Thess 5:12-14).