



Prayer & Scripture
pastoral care team training
october 3, 2010, 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Prayer

ALWAYS pray before entering a pastoral care situation.

Remember Mark 16:6-7?

“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

Pray

“Father, please open my eyes so that I might see what the risen Christ is doing or saying here that is making a Gospel story out of this life. Thank you. Amen.”

ALWAYS pray during the visit.

- *Lord, help me to hear what she is saying to me.*
- *Father, give him the words he needs to make sense of what is going on.*
- *Jesus, use me as a signpost that points to you right now.*
- *God, help me to not be distracted by what’s going on in my life right now.*

DON’T pray like the hypocrites or heathens (Matthew 6:5-13).

- to impress → *“O Great Jehovah, how wondrous are your sovereign ways throughout Israel’s history of exile (even to the diaspora), how humbling is our propitiation through your cross, and how glorious is your eschatological paradise to which you predestined us.”*

QUESTION: Why might such a prayer, although factually accurate, fall short in pastoral care?

- to manipulate → *“Father, I pray she would repent of her lack of trust in you.”*

QUESTION: Why might such a prayer, although may reflect a [good] desire you have for the care receiver, not actually be helpful?



DO...

- Ask permission
- Speak clearly: you are addressing God, but the care receiver needs to hear you
- Begin by addressing God: use the term the care receiver uses for God
- Pray simply, briefly, specifically
- Pray the Scriptures: *“Father, it feels as though _____ is walking through the valley of darkness. Please comfort him with your promised presence”* (from Ps 23).
- Pray blessings and promises
- Do not pray the answer
- Never use prayer to manipulate
- End with a time of silence: silence gives everybody (including God) space and can reduce anxiety.

“A man prayed, and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end he realized that prayer is listening” (Søren Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses*, 324).

“We begin praying for others by first quieting our fleshly activity and listening to the silent thunder of the Lord of hosts” (Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 39).

- Close in Christ’s name

YOUR PRAYER:

(write a simple 2-3 sentence prayer you could imagine praying for someone who just lost his job)



Scripture

Assumption: Cultivating your knowledge of Scripture by spending regular time reading and digesting it will equip you to share what you have learned with others.

Water the garden regularly so it will produce fruit.

Your Bible: bring it, but not your giant annotated study bible.

Encouragement and comfort, not Bible thumping.

Ask permission to read from Scripture. *“I’ve thought of a verse in Scripture that you might find comforting; would you like it if I read it?”*

VERSES THAT CAN HELP

- Psalm 116:5 (God cares about people who are suffering.)
- Psalm 116:15 (God considers each life precious and carefully notes the death of each of his people, who are called saints because of Christ.)
- Isaiah 42:16 (God promises that he will never forsake his people.)
- Isaiah 43:1-2 (Do not be afraid; God is personally taking care of you)
- Isaiah 61:1-3 (God will give joy and praise-filled hearts to those who grieve.)
- Jeremiah 29:11 (It is God's intention to bless his people in every circumstance.)
- Matthew 5:4 (Grieving is not a sin; God will bless and comfort those who mourn.)
- Romans 6:35-39 (There is no hardship or grief that can separate us from the love of Christ.)
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (God comforts us in all our troubles so that we are equipped to comfort others.)
- Philippians 4:13 (God gives Christians strength and contentment in any situation.)
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-13 (Grieving Christians have hope because Christ rose from the dead.)
- 2 Thessalonians 2:16 (Christ is the source of encouragement and hope.)
- 2 Timothy 2:13 (Even when we doubt and stray, God keeps his promises.)
- Hebrews 2:15 (One of Christ's purposes is to free those who are enslaved by their fear of death.)
- Hebrews 12:7-11 (During hard times God is not punishing us but training us.)
- Revelation 21:4 (In heaven, God will wipe every fear from our eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning.)