

## **Congregational Care Team Training**

1. Thank you!
  - a. They'll be blessed!
  - b. You'll be blessed!
  - c. The church will be blessed!
  - d. Your pastor will be blessed!
  
2. Why Have Lay Visitors?
  
3. The most powerful prayer you can offer is, "God use me!"
  
4. There is great importance to, "Just showing up!"
  
5. Preparation for a visit
  - a. The communion visit schedule or the church staff contact
  - b. Call to schedule a visit with a shut-in or contact the medical center to confirm their residency and availability for a visit.
  - c. Pick up a communion kit, if appropriate.
  - d. Pray before going on the visit that God will use you.
  - e. Check at the front desk to find the room/location.
  - f. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer, usually available in care facilities.
  - g. Note if there any restrictions for the patient. If unsure, you can check with the nursing staff. It's always better to check than make a mistake.
  
6. Advice for a Visit
  - a. Announce and/or introduce yourself, noting you are visiting from church, and get permission for a visit
  - b. If possible, sit at eye level, with eye contact, but avoid sitting on a patient's bed
  - c. Balance informational questions with faith and feeling questions.
  - d. Practice active, empathetic listening.
  - e. Some personal sharing can be appropriate to show empathy, but avoid sharing too much about yourself to their exclusion.
  - f. There are some questions for which we have no answers, like "Why is this happening?" Trying to answer these questions can be difficult, whereas pointing to God's power and love is always appropriate.
  - g. Speak slowly and clearly. If they have hearing challenges, speaker louder.
  - h. Avoid questions which can only be answered with "yes" or "no."
  - i. Practice healthy boundaries, guidelines which are reasonable and safe for all involved.
  - j. It can be helpful to take a Bible and read scripture.
  - k. Communion may not be appropriate in hospital settings. Check with the patient and/or hospital personnel.

- l. Assess a person's comfort and energy level to know how long to visit.
- m. Pray with the patient before leaving.
  - i. Pray Comfortably and By Name
  - ii. Lift up elements of the conversation, for example, "Lord we thank you for the care of the nurses and doctors..." or "Lord, pour out your healing for this medical concern..."
  - iii. Name God and Jesus' power to heal and provide strength and comfort.
- n. Information you learn, including the fact that someone is hospitalized, is to be treated with confidentiality.
- o. Use hand sanitizer on your way out.

7. Follow up

- a. Communicate with the church staff by noting your visit online or by a phone call.
- b. On rare occasions a referral to the hospital staff or church staff might be appropriate.
- c. Support from Pastor or Team Leader