

# Providing Holistic Care: Praying with your Patients by Sierra Simpkins

*"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."* (James 5:16, KJV).

As Christian healthcare providers, we are tasked with dual responsibilities to 1) perform the duties of our profession in a manner that abides by the humane and legal framework in which we practice, and 2) practice pharmacy within the domain of our faith.<sup>1</sup> As pharmacy moves toward patient-centered care, healthcare providers are beginning to see the benefit in using a holistic approach that incorporates all facets of the patient's life. In order to best incorporate holistic care, all providers who have contact with the patient can benefit from being open to having broad conversations about spirituality to assess the patient's need or willingness to incorporate religion into their medical care. Spiritual Caregiving: Healthcare As a Ministry provides a few general tools for assessing a patient's spiritual needs:<sup>2</sup>

**1. Willingness to discuss spiritual and religious issues:** Actively listen and be empathetic to the patient's story. Meet the patient where they are in his or her understanding and acceptance of their situation.

**2. Provide verbal support and encouragement of spiritual beliefs:** An article titled, 'Religious Diversity: Practical Points for Health Care Providers' from the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, provides points for healthcare providers to keep in mind when caring for patients from various religious practices.

**3. Referral to the Chaplain:** It may be difficult to spiritually relate to patients who hold religious beliefs outside of Christianity. In that situation, it is wise to call upon a Chaplain who is trained to provide spiritual support to persons of various faiths.

**4. Incorporate scripture and prayer:** There are many ways to pray with a patient. Assess

the comfort level of the patient and choose to stand at the bedside or hold the patient's hand. Below are several scripture verses that may be useful to incorporate into prayer:

a. *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

b. *"For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."* (1 Timothy 4:8)

c. *"My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."* (Psalm 73:26)

d. *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."* (3 John 1:2)

e. *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."* (John 14:27)

f. *"He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increase strength."* (Isaiah 40:29)

Christian pharmacists have the ability and responsibility to provide spiritual support to patients in need. The aforementioned suggestions provide a starting point for techniques to incorporate spiritual practices into each willing patient's healthcare regimen. Providing holistic care to patients allows practitioners to be advocates who support the patient's role as a decision maker in his or her healthcare.<sup>3</sup> Simply put, the power of prayer may have the most benefit for those who have a testimony of faith in Christ and those who wholeheartedly trust in the power of that faith.<sup>4</sup> However, it can be proclaimed that no individual has the authority to judge the impact of faith within the context of another person's wellbeing. We

must not disregard the impact that faith may have on outcomes. "If you have faith and do not doubt...you can say to the mountain 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done" (Matthew 21:21).

## References:

1. Carson, V. B., & Koenig, H. G. (2004). *Spiritual caregiving: healthcare as a ministry*. Philadelphia, PA: Templeton Foundation Press.
2. Ehman, J., Chaplain. (2007, April 20). *Religious Diversity: Practical Points for Health Care Providers*. Retrieved January 15, 2018, from [http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/pastoral/resed/diversity\\_points.html](http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/pastoral/resed/diversity_points.html)
3. Cadge, W. (2010, January 05). *Different health care reform: doctors trained to deal with patients about faith*. Retrieved January 15, 2018, from <https://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2010/0105/Different-health-care-reform-doctors-trained-to-deal-with-patients-about-faith>
4. Duncan, C., Rev. (n.d.). *Prayer*. Retrieved January 15, 2018, from <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/prayer>

All Scripture is from New King James Version, unless otherwise noted.



Sierra Simpkins is in her third year at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy and will be graduating May 2019. She has been active in her schools local chapters of Christian Pharmacist Fellowship International and

Student National Pharmaceutical Association. Simpkins has a strong interest in geriatrics and palliative care, and in the future hopes to complete residency training.

## Beyond the Student Chapter: Connecting with CPFI After Graduation

by Daniel Wilson, CPFI Board Member

When I was a young kid, I believed that cats were girls and dogs were boys. This theory matched the pets in my family, so I had no reason to question it. Perhaps that is why I still get confused with our female dog and male cat.

I'm sure we all have a funny misconception from childhood, but even adults have them.

While working with student chapters, I have observed a common misconception that CPFI is only for students. I am delighted to see that this perception is beginning to change. In fact, nearly 1 in 4 of our professional members graduated in the past five years. Although there are still students who do not appreciate the value of CPFI after graduation, I am encouraged that there

are more and more individuals like Frederic and Sarah who value CPFI as an essential aspect of their professional career.

Please read their articles entitled: "The Blessings and Benefits of CPFI Membership," and "The Big Step: Becoming a Pharmacist."