Visiting The Hospitalized And Their Families

1. **Spiritual Preparation is the foundation of effective ministry**
   - Make sure you are spiritually prepared before going.
   - Pray for those you will be visiting (and their families)
   - We must be careful not to rely upon our personalities or skills, but instead allow God to minister through us.

2. **Imagine yourself in the other person’s situation**
   - Review all available information about the patient and his/her family. The daily emails of previous hospital reports are a great resource.
   - Ask the Lord (and yourself), “What do I need to do?” What the patient and family need is “accurate empathy.”

3. **We are guests of the hospital, patient, and the patient’s family.**
   - Your appearance and personal hygiene are important.
   - Adhere to all hospital rules (i.e. visiting hours, no visitors signs, etc.)
   - Do not interrupt medical personnel while they are with the patient and/or patient’s family.
   - Respect their privacy. If the door is closed, knock first, wait for a response, and enter only after invited in.
   - Do not wake someone who is sleeping. The patient needs rest more than a visit. Leave a card or note letting the patient and family know you were by to see them.
   - Watch for “visitor overload.”

4. **I am with the patient and/or the family. Now what do I do?**
   - Our objective is to offer comfort, encouragement, and support.
   - Introduce yourself. Be positive and upbeat. Remember, first impressions are important.
   - Be sensitive to feelings and needs. Keep the visit short if the patient is having a bad day.
   - Position yourself in the room so it is easy for the patient to see and hear you.
   - Listen more than you talk. Most patients want to tell somebody about the struggles they are facing.
   - Share a verse or promise from God’s Word when appropriate.
   - Prayer is a primary means of helping people focus on God’s love, care, and provision instead of their illness or fears. Always ask before praying. For those unable to communicate unless otherwise instructed, pray for them out loud. We simply do not know what the patient is hearing and your prayer may be a source of great comfort. Prayer is a great way to end your visit on a positive note.
5. Other issues

- Email a report of your visits to everyone on the hospital visitation email list.
- Pray for those on the hospital list each day.
- Emergency situations should always be reported to the church office (341-4639 - 8-5 Monday-Friday) or the pastor on call (after hours at 204-2135)
- If during a visit you become aware of important information that is too sensitive for email, please notify David Boliver and Wally Weaver directly.
- If you are unable to visit the hospital on your assigned day, please switch with another person on the list and email the schedule changes to David Boliver at dboliver2@cox.net and Wally Weaver at wally@hhbc.com.