



## THIS WE BELIEVE ABOUT NURSING

*Christian nursing is  
a ministry of compassionate care  
for the whole person,  
in response to God's grace toward a sinful world,  
which aims to foster optimum health (shalom)  
and bring comfort in suffering and death  
for anyone in need.*

## A Ministry

Ministry in the New Testament and the early church was understood to be the work of every Christian. The Greek term translated as ministry, *diakonia*, essentially means service. The ministry of nursing is servant work. But the key to servanthood comes in whom we are serving. Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). We are servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Compassionate Care

Jesus gave the most comprehensive portrayal of compassionate care when he told the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30-35. Christian caring is hands-on, patient-centered, physical, psychosocial and spiritual intervention to meet the needs of others. Our skill in caring develops as we receive care from others and, ultimately, as we grow in our understanding and acceptance of God’s care for us.

## For the Whole Person

Christian nursing is holistic, caring for the person physically, emotionally, psychosocially and spiritually. We know that ultimate healing cannot occur unless our patients are placed in the hands of Jesus, the Great Physician (Is 53:5). We recognize that all people are created by God in his image (Gen 1:26) to live in loving relationship with God, self and others (Deut 6:4-6; Mt 22:37-39), but that every person is separated from God by sin. That relationship is restored by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22-28; 1 Cor 6:11). Each person is a physically, psychosocially and spiritually integrated being with intrinsic value and significance (Ps 8:4-8; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 2:11-17).

## A Response to God’s Grace toward a Sinful World

The motivation for Christian nursing comes primarily from a sense of gratitude to God, not merely a reaction to human need or a sense of duty (although they too flow naturally from a grateful heart). We can say with the apostle John, “We love, because he [God] first loved us” (1 Jn 4:19). Even as we care out of a sense of gratitude, there is always a sense that God is still working on us, making us more like Christ (2 Cor 3:18). We don’t always care in the way we would like to care. We humbly struggle with our own sinfulness, our inability to truly care and to draw our strength from God (Phil 4:13).

## Aims to Foster Optimum Health

Health is being able to live as God created us to be – as an integrated whole, living in loving relationship with God, self and others (Ps 16). Nursing works toward the healing of the whole person in the context of communities. This broad understanding of health – *shalom* – is the goal of nursing. Within that broader view of health, nursing finds a unique place in keeping people healthy, holistically intervening to restore health, and enabling the body of Christ and the health care system to work together toward healing.

## And Bring Comfort in Suffering and Death

Optimal health means enabling people to live as fully as possible while they are alive. However, we live in a world that has been corrupted by the effects of sin. Not all of our patients will get well. Some may live with severe physical and mental limitations due to brain damage, loss of limbs, suppressed immune systems or other conditions. All of us will eventually die. Christian nursing also means providing comfort, hope and compassionate presence for those who are suffering and will not recover.

## The Character of the Nurse

Based on the hope given in Christ Jesus and on the presence of the Holy Spirit, Christian nursing should be characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22). This “fruit of the Spirit” results from a dynamic, personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The common theme in all these aspects of Christian nursing is the glory of God. Nurses, committed to Jesus Christ, holistically caring for the sick, the poor and the needy, demonstrate the character of God to the world. They bring the light of Christ into dark situations with humility, love, passion and power.



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