



Wisdom from the Word

Act Justly: Advocate!

Nurses are often put in a position of advocating on behalf of someone in need. This person or a group of people in need might be patients, family members of patients, members of the nurse's faith community or the community at large, or one's own family. The nurse as advocate serves as an intermediary between the patient and whatever barrier prevents the patient from getting needed healthcare. Observe from Scripture how Jesus functioned as an advocate.

HEARING THE WORD

Read Luke 13:10-17 (NIV):

10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." 13 Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God. 14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath." 15 The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it

water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?" 17 When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

- Why was the synagogue leader upset with Jesus for healing this woman?
- List in detail how you discern Jesus advocated for this woman.
- If this woman was a patient you encountered, how might you be able to advocate for her in our present-day healthcare system?
- In 1 John 2:1 (NIV), the apostle John writes to believers, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We could never, on our own, approach God, our Father, who is holy, because of our unholiness due to our sin. How does the reality of Jesus acting on your behalf before God, the Father, influence your understanding about serving as an advocate for someone else? Pray briefly about your response to Jesus acting as your advocate before God, the Father.

APPLICATION

The desire to advocate for another rises from the pain we feel when we recognize suffering, injustice, and hopelessness that people endure in our broken world. When we embrace God and his

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ways, we also embrace the suffering resulting from injustice and violence in our society. As "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14-16) in our part of darkened creation, we have a responsibility to speak up and/or intervene where God directs us to advocate for the hurting and powerless in our sphere.

- Compare the differing reactions to Jesus' advocating for this suffering woman. How could reactions to your advocacy for someone affect your decision to continue or to give your best effort?
- Opposition to Jesus' care for this woman was a barrier. What barriers or social norms might you have to confront as a nurse? What forms of advocacy would be appropriate to use?

Pray with humility and receptivity to God, the Father, through Jesus, our advocate. Express your desire or reluctance about acting as an advocate. Wait and listen for what God wants you to know or do.

Gain more advocacy skills and understanding via these JCN articles, available online at journalofchristian-nursing.com:

- "Advocating for Equitable Healthcare for the Undocumented Immigrant" by Natalie Knight
- "Bridging the Racial Divide: Nurses Leading by Christ's Example" by Tajuane Dockery
- "Identifying Mental Health Needs in the Faith Community" by Veronica Gallo 