



How a Chaplain Can Help

LifeCare Memos® Messages of Compassion

Not so very long ago a “Chaplain” was part of a profession that was almost exclusively associated with the military. That is no longer the case as chaplaincy ministry has moved into other arenas of life. However, many people still do not know what a Chaplain is, nor do they understand what a Chaplain does. This is often true of residents who enter a healthcare or housing facility.

What is a Chaplain?

A Chaplain is a Pastor. In this responsibility the Chaplain preaches, teaches and shares the Word of God to help people come to know Christ personally and grow in spiritual maturity.

“We were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us” (I Thessalonians 2:7-8).

A Chaplain is a Shepherd and Leader. In this role the Chaplain oversees the spiritual wellbeing of individuals, offering counsel and guidance from a biblical perspective.

“Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care” (I Peter 5:2).

A Chaplain is a Servant of God. In this capacity the Chaplain does the work of God by serving in the spirit of Christ’s love.

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms” (I Peter 4:10).

A Chaplain functions and serves much like a minister in a local church. Thus, Chaplains are available to anyone who has a spiritual need or concern.

A Chaplain has been:

- Trained in theological education,
- Commissioned as a Chaplain by the organization under which the Chaplain ministers,
- Credentialed by the denomination—the Evangelical Free Church of America, and
- Experienced as a pastor in a local church.

What is Spirituality?

Since so much of what a Chaplain does relates to spirituality, it may be helpful to understand what is meant by the term “spirituality”.

When addressed from a biblical perspective, spirituality has to do with what God has done, or is doing, in the lives of people. One focus of spirituality is transformation.

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2).

The second focus of spirituality is expression to others. When God is at work in an individual’s life, that person should make an impact on other people.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22).

When to Call a Chaplain

Sometimes it is difficult to know when the help of a Chaplain is needed. Here are some occasions when you may want to call a Chaplain.

When you feel:

- Lonely, anxious, helpless
- Discouraged, angry, guilty
- Happy, loved, grateful, blessed
- Like you are far away from God

Or, when you:

- Need prayer
- Have questions about faith
- Have questions about life and death issues
- Sense you need a pastor-friend
- Want to share a personal concern

How a Chaplain Can Help

The Chaplain can help you in the following ways:

Friendship. Whether through a visit in a resident’s room or conversation over a cup of coffee, the Chaplain is someone who offers friendship in times of need.

Personal support. When you feel like you are alone and nobody cares, the Chaplain is ready to come along side with a listening ear or a helping hand.

Spiritual services. The Chaplain leads a variety of spiritual care services and ministries to help meet the needs for worship, fellowship, and instruction. The Chaplain will gladly coordinate the spiritual care of a resident with the resident, or family's clergy, or make appropriate referrals to other clergy.

Spiritual support. In times of need the Chaplain can provide spiritual support through prayer, scripture, meditation, or devotional thoughts for encouragement and faith-building.

Spiritual growth. The Chaplain can help identify areas of spiritual concern and suggest ways to grow through the experience.

Answer crucial questions. The Chaplain can help explore answers to questions relating to quality of living and end-of-life issues. What about purpose in life? What about spiritual beliefs?

Memorial services. The Chaplain can provide assistance in planning and conducting Funeral or Memorial services should a family member need that help.

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LifeCare Memos[®]

When experiencing the stresses of life, people need support. The Psalmist needed that support and found it when he turned to God. He said, *"Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one **cares for my life**. I cry to you, O LORD; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living'"* (Psalm 142:4-5).

LifeCare Memos are designed as messages of compassion that integrate biblical guidelines for emotional and spiritual well-being. Topics focus on various life-care issues and address them from the perspective of Scripture.