

## MORNING DEVOTIONAL: ABIDING IN THE HOSPITAL

**Scripture:** John 15:4,9

*“ Abide in me and I in you. As the Father has loved me , so have I loved you. Abide in my love.”*

There is a subtle temptation that lives within our calling as hospital chaplains.

It is not usually the temptation to stop caring.

It is not the temptation to stop praying.

It is usually not the temptation to stop believing.

It is the temptation to leave the place of abiding.

Every day we walk into spaces carrying many stories of loss, fear, uncertainty, and grief. We sit with families whose worlds have been shattered after hearing of a new diagnosis. We accompany patients through loneliness and pain. We listen to exhausted nurses, overwhelmed physicians, and caregivers who feel like they have nothing left to give.

Over time, something can quietly happen within us.

That being strong depends on us.

That the right words depend on us.

That holding everything together depends on us.

And slowly, we begin to drift from being branches connected to the Vine into people who are trying to sustain ourselves.

The hospital rewards movement

The pager goes off,

A consult order appears,

The family meeting begins,

The crisis continues to unfold.

Theres always a story to hear,

Another burden to hold,

Another room to enter into.

Yet, in the midst of all of this movement, Jesus speaks a startling word

ABIDE.

REMAIN.

STAY.

DWELL.

Make your home here.

We are not called to first bear fruit but to remain in the love that we have already received.

Before we are servants, Christ reminds us that we are loved.

Before we minister, we are ministered to.

Before we accompany, we are accompanied.

Before we enters into a patient's suffering, we are held within the Father's embrace.

What if the deepest need as chaplains is not more resilience?

What if it's not more knowledge or technique or skill?

What if our deepest need is to remember our belovedness?

Truthfully, we spend much of our days reminding others they are not alone while forgetting it ourselves.

We speak hope in the lives of others while our own hearts grow weary.

We encourage patients to rest in Gods care while living as though everything depends on us.

Yet Jesus' invitation remains unchanged:

*"Abide in my love".*

Not visit my love or occasionally return to my love.

Abide in my love.

Live there.

Stay there.

Return there again and again.

Because there will be days when the death feels heavy.

Days when we leave a room carrying tears that no one else will see.

Days when we wonder whether anything we did mattered.

And on those days, Jesus does not offer us a strategy.

He offers us Himself.

The same presence that met Christ in Gethsemane meets us in hospital corridors.

The same Father who held Jesus now holds us.

Our calling is not to manufacture fruit.

Our calling is not to save anyone

Our calling is not to carry the weight of the world on our shoulders.

Our calling is to remain.

To remain loved.

To remain connected.

To remain perceptive.

To remain in the One who is already at work long before we arrive and long after we leave.

Because the most beautiful gift that we could offer patients and families is not our strength.

It is the presence of Christ flowing through a life that has learned to abide.

#### **PRAYER:**

Gracious and Loving God,

Today we confess how easily we leave the place of abiding.

We become busy and forget that we are beloved.

We become burdened and forget that you are carrying us.

We are consumed with caring for others and neglect to receive your care for ourselves.

Forgive us for the ways we have tried to bear fruit apart from the Vine.

Forgive us for carrying burdens you never asked us to carry.

Forgive us for believing that the weight of healing, hope, and transformation rests upon us.

Today, we return to Your love.

May we live and not merely speak of it.

May every conversation, prayer, silence, and patient encounter flow from the hearts that are resting in the Father's embrace.

Teach us to abide

Teach us to remain

Teach us to live as beloved sons and daughters before we live as chaplains.

And may the peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding, guard our hearts as we continue the sacred work to which you have called us to.

Amen.