

## Watch What You Say in the Hospital Room!

For a long time I have been visiting people in the hospital. I have read many books and articles through the years on how to make visits and what to say. I may not always know the appropriate thing to say, but I think I know what not to say. The following is a list of statements that should NOT be made to those in the hospital or on the sick bed:

- "Man, you sure have got a lot of flowers. It looks like you're getting ready for a funeral."
- "Who's your doctor? You had better check him out! I've heard a lot of negative stuff about him."
- "What kind of medicine are you taking? Are you sure it is what you really need? I had an uncle that was taking that very same medicine and he died."
- "I hope you appreciate all the trouble I went to, to make this visit. I cannot believe I had to pay to park just to see you!"
- "It sure is hot (cold) in here. I'll tell the nurse to adjust the thermostat."
- "I've never seen you with your hair not combed and your makeup not on."
- "I would have come sooner had I known you were this bad."
- "I'm sure you do not need anything from me, but call me if you do."

Obviously, the list could be much longer. But you get the point, do you not? It is important that we comfort, encourage, and make the person feel better. Sometimes just being there is the most important thing. We need to make others feel our care.

I once walked into the hospital, and the wife of the husband who was critically ill, was in almost uncontrollable tears. When she saw me she hugged me, and I asked what had made her so upset. (I knew that she knew that it did not look good for her husband, and she and I had talked about that, and although she was hurt deeply, she was dealing with that in a satisfactory Christian way.) She said a certain person had come in to visit, and had said, "well, you might as well get ready, he's going to die. I had an uncle who had this same thing, and he didn't last the week." She said through tears, "I did not need him to say that to me. It just tore me up." I simply talked to her in a low voice, as she clung on to my arm, and I encouraged and

comforted her, and in a little while she was her calm self again. I thought, why do not people watch what they say? It would have been so easy to say, "I'm praying for you." Or, "What can I do to help?" Or, "what do I need to do to help the other members of your family?"