

# Hospital Visitation

Below are tips concerning right and wrong ways to make hospital visits:

- Ask God to bless your visit.
- Always call before you drive to the hospital. Otherwise you might show up and the person you came to visit has already been released.
- Never visit while you are sick, even if you don't think you're contagious.
- If you are unfamiliar with the hospital, ask for information or directions at the information table.
- Never enter a room without knocking. Many ministers have experienced extreme embarrassment just by opening the door and walking in. You have no idea what might be happening on the other side of that door.
- A sign that says "No visitors" applies to ministers too.
- If the person you are visiting is asleep, do not wake him. Just leave a note, pray for him quietly and be on your way. If you don't have a pen and paper, you can usually get this from the nurses' station.
- Introduce yourself if you're not sure the patient or his family knows who you are.
- Do not interrupt while the doctor is talking to his patient and do not offer medical advice.
- Keep your visit brief (about 5-15 minutes) unless the patient or a family member asks you to stay longer.
- Be positive in your conversation. Do more listening than talking.
- Let the family know that they can call you if they need anything, but only offer this if you are truly willing to follow-through on it.
- Ask for permission to pray for the patient—i.e., "Can I have a word of prayer with you before I go?"
- Smile and be cheerful. Try not to look somber, even if the situation is grim.
- Wash your hands before leaving the hospital.