

Executive Summary, Duties of Christian Health Care Professionals in Pandemic Infection

Throughout the ages, Christians, in obedience to Jesus Christ, have cared for the sick, even at risk to themselves. Christians' refusal to abandon the sick in times of terrible pandemics was an inspiring witness to God's love that transformed the ancient world. Christians today inherit this high calling. For the Christian health care professional, placing the interests of patients above our own is a matter of conscience.

Biblical Guidance

1. Sacrificial Service

- a. The ultimate servant and model for Christian servanthood is Jesus Christ, who came into the world (Phil 2:5-8) to sacrificially take on himself the sin of the world and to give his life for us (Mark 10:45, 1 Pet 2:24).
- b. Jesus spoke to us clearly that we, too, are to serve others, even to the point of death (Matt 20:25-28). He gave his followers a command to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:29-31). He also said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).
- d. Numerous passages admonish us to unselfishly serve those in need (Is 58:6-8, Matt 25:37-40). We are commanded to value their well-being ahead of our own (Phil 2:3-4, Eph 6:6b-7).
- e. In Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), the Samaritan cared for a stranger, likely considered an enemy, at personal expense and potential risk to himself. Jesus concluded with the words: "You go, and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).
- f. We have been saved by Christ, not just for ourselves, but so that, like him, we may give of ourselves to a broken and suffering world (Rom 12:1).

2. Stewardship

God has sovereignly called each of us into a vocation of service to others, especially those who are vulnerable to, and afflicted with, disease. God has given us our abilities for his glory and for human good (Matt 25:14-30). Jesus told his disciples that, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required" (Luke 12:48). Before assuming personal risk on behalf of her people, Queen Esther was reminded that she had attained the position she had "for such a time as this" (Esth 4:14). God may have called us for such a time as this.

3. Wisdom

God may call us to take some personal risk in our service for him. He also wants us to use the minds and wisdom he has given us. We are not to be reckless (2 Sam 23:15-17). Wisdom should underlie all our actions (Is 10:13; Acts 6:3; Col 4:5). Jesus admonished us to "count the cost" before embarking on a course of action (Luke 14:28). If we ask for wisdom, God has promised to supply it generously (Jam 1:5).

4. Citizenship

Just as Paul was a Roman citizen, so we as Christian health care professionals (HCPs) are citizens of our countries. Unless we are ordered to do something contrary to the law and direction of God (Acts 4:19), we are to work with the governing authorities to be a constructive force for good in the community (Rom 13: 1-7).

5. Peace and Faith

Scripture also reminds us that, in times of great stress, we should not be mastered by anxiety or fear (Matt 6:27; Rom 8:35-39, Phil 4:5b-7).

Christian Health Care Professionals' Responsibilities

- View all human beings—whatever their circumstances—as created in the image of God
- Constantly prepare to address the challenges of novel and longstanding infectious diseases

- Provide guidelines for decision-making regarding allocation of limited resources
- Aid in the diagnosis and care of the ill, even at personal risk
- Assist in combating the spread of infection
- Promote development of treatments and vaccines
- Be good stewards of medical resources
- Appropriately protect themselves and their colleagues from contracting the infection
- Remember that we are part of a larger effort. While some may feel strongly that they must fulfill their duty to care, regardless of the degree of personal risk, the individual must also consider the consequence of contracting the illness, which may include risk of infection for co-workers, decreasing the strength of the health care workforce, or increasing consumption of limited medical resources in his or her own care once infected. Public health authorities may order an individual HCP to refrain from engaging in some aspect of patient treatment for the good of the overall health care effort, and such orders should be obeyed.
- Rejoice in God's love, be thankful for every good gift we receive, and be compassionate toward all others.

For the full analysis and recommendations, please see Duties of Christian Health Care Professionals in the Face of Pandemic Infection.