

## SUPPLEMENTAL DIGITAL CONTENT

For

How Christian Nurses Respond to Patient Requests for Prayer: A New Formula

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by

Iris Mamier, Carla Gober Park, and Elizabeth Johnston Taylor

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**ABSTRACT:** Nurse-provided spiritual care includes support of patient spiritual practices such as prayer. However, limited evidence exists about how nurses respond when a patient requests prayer. A subsample of nurses ( $n = 381$ ) from a larger study responded to two open-ended questions in an online survey in response to a prayer scenario. Among these mostly Christian nurses, 97% indicated willingness to pray. Content analysis revealed a five-component structure for praying: *Open, Set the Stage, Request, Wrap-up, Close*. The structure provides a template for future research and nurse prayer in clinical contexts.

**KEY WORDS:** nursing; nursing students; prayer; spiritual care; spirituality

**Table 1.** Demographics of Study Sample ( $n = 381$ )

	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Male	29	7.6
Female	351	92.1
Other	1	.3
Racial/Ethnic Identity		
African-American	21	5.5
Asian/ Pacific Islander	19	5.0
Caucasian (non-Hispanic)	311	81.6
Latino or Hispanic	18	4.7
Native American/Alaskan Native		
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6	1.6
Other	6	1.6
Discipline		
Registered Nurse (RN)	366	96.1
LVN/LPN/Nurse Aid/	15	3.9
Nurse age groups		
18-24 years old	16	4.2
25-34 years old	47	12.3
35-44 years old	53	13.9
45-54 years old	88	23.1
55-64 years old	145	38.1
65-74 years old	29	7.6
> 75 years old	1	.3
Missing:	2	.5
Nurse identifying as:		
Spiritual and religious	318	83.5
Spiritual but not religious	51	13.4
Religious but not spiritual	4	1.0
Neither spiritual nor religious	8	2.1

**Table 2.** Emergent Structure of Nurse Prayers

<b>Phases of prayer</b>	<b>Open (<i>always present</i>)</b>	<b>Set the stage (<i>optional</i>)</b>	<b>Requests (<i>always present</i>)</b>	<b>Wrap-up (<i>optional</i>)</b>	<b>Close (<i>always present</i>)</b>
<b>Description of phase</b>	Identify divine listener by name	Connect the Divine with the here & now	Link perceived needs with how God can help	Leave requests move to expressions of faith, praise, thanksgiving.	End the prayer
<b>Function of phase</b>	Connecting with the Divine	Arrival in God's presence – " <i>We are ready now...</i> "	Shifting patient's needs/burdens to God	Prepare for closing and recite hopeful elements	Signals the prayer request is with God
<b>Variations found in each phase</b>	1) "Dear ..."	1) Focus on the immediate situation (e.g., how the pt. feels, how pt. perceives God)	1) Requests for God's qualities (e.g., presence, peace, love, comfort, strength, faith, calmness, knowledge, etc.)	1) Thanking and praising God (e.g., "Thank you for hearing our prayer!")	1) use a variation of: "In the name of Jesus", "in your name" etc.
	2) Directly addressing the Divine (e.g., "God", "Father", "Jesus", "Lord")	2a) Focus on God through (i) his attributes, (ii) his actions, (iii) praise and thanksgiving	2) Requests for God's action (e.g., through the health-care team, safe procedure, good outcome, etc.)	2) Making a statement of faith (e.g., "We trust in You!"; "You always hear our prayers")	2) sometimes accompanied by a statement about the will of God (e.g., according to your will")
	3) Combine with use of descriptive adjective (e.g., "Gracious", "Heavenly", or "Our Creator...")	2b) Focus on the patient: stating pt's name (e.g., "I am here with P.J.") or pt's feelings (e.g. express thankfulness for pt. or identify pt's			3) end with "Amen"

		state of emotions)			
		2c) Reference to the activity of praying (e.g. “we lift up P.J. to you...” ) and what it means to the nurse to care for the patient			
<b>Assessment</b>	How does the patient refer to the Divine?	What prompted the prayer?	What can God do in response to the lament of the soul?	What experience with God or faith statements does the patient reference?	How does the patient leave the prayer experience?
<b>Decisions/ Guidelines</b>	Determine if appropriate to pray or to refer. Determine how to provide privacy and if touch is in order (hand, shoulder).	Before prayer, listen actively; in prayer, paraphrase patient situation, experience with God, or feelings. Refer to the patient by name and express genuine gratitude for the encounter	Listen actively for what the patient desires most and express this content as a petition in prayer	What does the patient believe to be true about God/faith/the Divine? How has the patient experienced God in the past? Who or what provides the patient with hope and thankfulness?	Determine what ending is appropriate for the payer