

Following Doctor's Orders

It was a day like so many others. I had a long list of things to do before I was to leave on a trip. I shuffled my priorities, but still there were things left undone.

When I arrived at the airport terminal, I discovered my plane was a half-hour late, so I had time for a quick bite to eat. Sitting in the small airport restaurant alone, I became "people-conscious," as I took in what was going on around me.

A telephone rang behind the counter, and a waitress picked it up. Gradually, a look of relief spread over her worried face.

The message she'd received from the hospital was a slightly encouraging report. There would be no surgery, at least not now.

Later, I stood near a long line of telephones in the crowded terminal. Next to me, on one side, a woman was desperately trying to encourage someone who seemed close to the breaking point.

At the same time, on the other side, a young man talked and pleaded with someone. It was evident from his tone that there was a lapse in communication among those in his family.

A middle-aged lady also passed by. Her drooping face and staring eyes seemed to speak of troubled sadness.

I can recall having an encounter with a frightened young woman who was on her way to visit a severely handicapped child in an institution. I offered my help. Politely, she said, "No."

I offered a prayer. Eagerly, she said, "Please do."

As I observed this sampling of strangers, I noticed that many of them seemed sad. My anxiety over all the things I'd left

undone before my trip was replaced with concern for them.

I thanked God for interrupting my routine and sending me off alone. Forced quiet and a time of “unbusyness” let me hear with my heart again. I felt at one with Him as I took note of the people, and I was moved with the compassion of Christ.

Everywhere the world is hurting. I cannot heal it, but my presence, my touch, my smile, a word or a prayer can be a small application of the balm of Gilead.

I am not the Great Physician. But I can be a sensitive nurse and follow the Doctor’s orders. Jesus said: “‘Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’” (Matt. 25:40, NKJV).

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