

Dangerous Warning Signs of a Soulless 'Prayer Warrior'

Katie* was energetic and enthusiastic, encouraging countless people over the years. She had helped so many in her life of 43 years, serving as a nurse and Christian ministry director for a homeless and jail chaplaincy ministry. Her health took a turn for the worse, and she was hospitalized where I had the opportunity to pray with her friends and family and read Scripture to her. They thanked me for taking the time and ministering to their needs and to her. They appreciated that I was her friend and pastor in the six months I knew her.

Katie slipped into a coma and was given only days to live. I was later told that a small group of people met her mother outside the hospital, convincing her they were "special" Christians and making promises that God would hear their prayers for Katie. They entered the ICU and prayed over her. But then they started binding, rebuking and "casting out" demons. They called for Katie to "rise up," getting in her face, with one lady taking oil and trying to anoint parts of Katie's body that were covered up, but to no avail. The louder they prayed, the more they worked up a sweat and became more aggressive. When the mother asked them to calm down, they retorted, "We will not be silenced!"

Due to their behavior, which upset the friends and immediate family members as well as other patients in the ward, the ICU nurses forced this prayer group to leave. Katie's mother dismissed them as a "cult," as their actions proved something was amiss.

This sort of behavior gives us charismatic Christians a bad name and can ruin our witness. What may have taken years of seed-planting can be destroyed in an instant due to the careless and insensitive actions of a zealous few. Doctors and

nurses have bedside manners for patients, and so should we.

Does God heal? Yes. Do we want to see Him heal? Absolutely. But we need to think of how we come across to people in various circumstances. The ICU is a place for medical healing, not for aggressive warfare prayer that upsets the patient's peace and rest. Warfare prayer is for another time and place. But the hospital is a place where Christians can minister through prayer, actively listening to family members while reading Scripture over those admitted. If a demonic entity is truly discerned, screaming and yelling is not necessary. That may assuage your peace of mind, but it scares everyone else.

Did you know your prayers are just as powerful when done quietly and modestly because of Jesus' authority? His name alone has power. And He commanded demons and diseases to leave by a word (see Matt. 8:16). He forgave sins and healed the whole person (Mark 2:1-12). Jesus never hunted for demons, but instead, He cast demons out quickly when they revealed themselves. He didn't manipulate his way to go pray for the dying, and neither should we. He was invited into homes to pray for people and to the places where the sick lay.

If we are zealous for God and walk in the anointing, we don't dodge nurses and sneak into rooms. Doing this only frustrates the staff by breaking the rules, revealing our lack of submission to the authorities, which is sinful. If we strong-arm people to pray for the sick, we have honestly made it more difficult for doctors and nurses to do their jobs, and we can contaminate the work space.

If we are called to pray over the sick, then God will make a way, and that is usually through relationship and an invitation. It is not through claiming we are "special" or that our prayers are heard better than other people's. It is not through manipulating hurting people to go pray and sneaking our way in, which may make us feel like secret agents. That is pride and arrogance on display, and it maligns

the expansion of the kingdom of God. You are an ambassador of Christ who is to walk in integrity and obedience to God and the rules set in place.

Katie slipped into eternity with her closest friends and family by her side. Thankfully, her family were Christians who dismissed the actions of the zealous small group that had put on a show. I can only imagine the kind of damage done if her family didn't believe in Jesus. The only winners in this scenario would be the "prayer warriors," who walked off thinking they did something good when people's eternity weighed in the balance. Realistically, they hurt the kingdom of God for the family, patients and hospital staff as their behavior was arrogant and insensitive, lacking true compassion. In situations like this, Christians should abide by hospital etiquette but are also to:

1. Have compassion for people, as Jesus did.
2. Know that the hospital is never a place for aggressive prayer but for sensitive prayers that address the needs of those present. Pray for the doctors, nurses, friends and family and for everyone to have peace of mind. Pray for healing, which can come miraculously or through medicine.
3. Read the Scripture with those present and, if they have any questions, answer them to the best of your ability. But if you don't know the answer, be transparent and say you don't know but will try to discover it.
4. Be calm while showing courageous strength, directing people to the great Healer and Physician.

Let's show everyone we have faith but also the best hospital etiquette. Let's not be rogue prayer warriors who malign the kingdom. {eoa}

* *Not her real name*

Jared Laskey is starting Destiny Open Bible Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and is a contributing writer to Charisma's online magazine. He lives to see Jesus awaken this generation to the power of His Holy Spirit. Follow him on Twitter @jaredalaskey or visit .