

# Mercy Killing in Relation to the Calling of a Christian Nurse

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Mercy is that compassion which causes one to help the sick or the poor. Showing mercy is one of the cardinal virtues of a true Christian (James 2:1-13) and is one of the determinants of God's treatment to us. Christian Mercy is a part of the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22 and 23) made up in part of love, long suffering, gentleness and goodness.<sup>1</sup>

Killing is the depriving of life.

Premeditated killing is murder.

All that mercy is, is essential to the calling of a Christian nurse. But of all the attributes none is more important than that of long suffering or patience. In the care of the ill, the infirm, the aged and especially the dying patience, much patience, is required. Patience for the tasks that need to be done. Patience with families that are often impatient, and Patience to wait for death to come according to God's Plan. When one has cared for the aged or terminally ill over a long period of time, many aspects of that task may become unpleasant, difficult and even repugnant at times even to one trained for such a task. The suffering endured by the dying is often hard for the nurse to bear. Added to these things are the anxious questions of the family. How long can this go on? Can't you do something.... Is there no way to hurry the end? We rationalize. In our foolish finite minds we rebel against God by thinking how much better off this person would be if his earthly pilgrimage were over. But God is sovereign. He is the ruler of heaven and earth, in all our behavior we must recognize that Sovereignty, acknowledging that God determines the length of man's days. Now more than at any time mercy is demanded of the Christian nurse. The daily care of the dying must manifest love, gentleness, goodness, patience, and humility before the will of God.

In Mark 15:7 Jesus says to us, "Thou shalt do no murder." He gives us no exceptions. He does not say we may take the life of those who suffer and those who base no possibility of recovery. Jesus says to us, "Thou shalt do no murder." Thus it becomes blatant presumption to even consider that any mere creature, doctor, nurse, or loving family, should decide that the time has come for any person to die. This remains a part of God's council.

Any Christian nurse is called to that work by God. Such a calling demands obedience to God's commandments including, "Thou shalt do no murder." In this calling the Christian nurse must also minister in mercy till God in His sovereignty causes the curtain of death to descend. Such a calling demands all efforts to preserve one's own life and the life of one's neighbor.

Mercy killing or rather mercy murder? In administering mercy we may do no murder.  
1. Zondervan's Pictorial Bible Dictionary.

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