

# ENGAGING SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS

## Praying with the Dying

At the request of his family a nursing home called me to visit Jake, a man who is wanting and waiting to die. In my initial visit I explained to him who I was—a pastor. He pulled his arms from under the covers, put up his hand and waved me off. I said okay. “You’re uncomfortable and not up for a conversation.” His head nodded in agreement. “May I pray with you before I go?” He hesitantly agreed. Asking permission I grasp his hand as in a handshake. I asked God to be present and to bring peace.

I visited a second time. This time Jake partially smiled and motioned for me to move the floor pad protecting his fall. Scooting it aside I could reach the head of the bed. “Is there anything I can do for you?” He shook his head no. “May I pray for you today?” He indicated that was okay and he reached for my hand. This time I thanked God for His love and concern for Jake. “I thank you, Lord, that you are a forgiving God. Help us to be as forgiving to others as you are to us. For this difficult day add a measure of comfort. Amen.”

The third visit produced a smile on Jake’s face and he motioned me to come closer. I asked him if he wanted to talk and he whispered, “No.” This time I prayed, “God, love Jake by ministering to his heart and body. Thank you God for sending your Son who died for our sins and who opens heaven’s door for our entrance.”

Jake thanked me. My promise to return was met with a smile and a nod. Additional visits showed his accelerated decline. “Is today a rough day?” He nodded. “God,” I prayed, “We ask you to be a God of comfort and mercy. Add to Jake the inner strength to face the pain. We trust you today to care for him in ways reserved only for your loving heart and creative ability. Amen.”