

Chaplain's Corner



Giving Up or Letting Go?

There are many families that find themselves within the walls of our hospital, facing the most difficult times of their lives. The choice to stop aggressive treatment and let their loved one pass naturally is a daunting one. I deeply understand this; 14 years ago, my family and I made the decision to end the life-sustaining treatment for my father, allowing him to depart peacefully. This profound experience guided me towards healthcare chaplaincy.

Many, like myself back then, are paralyzed by the fear of ending aggressive treatment prematurely. I lacked medical training, wasn't familiar with what I know today, and had not engaged with medical subjects in years. Yet, I was thrust into making this pivotal decision. The questions and statements I hear from patients' families resonate with my past, reminding me of my own doubts: "What if she needs just a bit more time?" "I'm waiting for God to perform a miracle." "We've seen her recover from worse."

In the past 14 years, I've gained insights into this process and the tough decisions we face when our loved ones near life's end. I've realized that if God intends a miracle, it will manifest, regardless of whether the patient is on life support. Choosing to prioritize comfort over aggressive treatment can be a deep act of faith, entrusting our loved ones fully to God's plan. Looking back, I believe my family's apprehensions might have delayed the inevitable for my father. The best time to discuss these matters is when everyone is in good health, not during an emergency. I am eternally thankful my father had

conveyed his wishes beforehand, allowing us to respect his choice. It's a gift worth giving to our families.

For those wrestling with this profound decision, I'd like to offer a Chaplain's perspective on death and dying, reflecting on the wise words of Rev. Hank Dunn:

Giving Up and Letting Go

By Rev. Hank Dunn

- Giving up implies a struggle...
Letting go implies a partnership...
- Giving up says there is something to lose...
Letting go says there is something to gain...
- Giving up dreads the future...
Letting go looks forward to the future...
- Giving up lives out of fear...
Letting go lives out of grace and trust...
- Giving up is defeat at the hands of suffering...
Letting go is victory over suffering...
- Giving up is unwillingly yielding control to forces beyond myself...
Letting go is choosing to yield to forces beyond myself...
- Giving up believes that God is to be feared...
Letting go trusts in God to care for me...

I consider it a privilege to serve the patients, families, and staff at San Antonio Regional Hospital. I am there to provide a supportive presence during what can often be the darkest hours of their lives. I encourage anyone, irrespective of their spiritual or religious affiliation, or lack thereof, who needs additional support while in our hospital to reach out to the Spiritual Care Department. **You can contact a chaplain by dialing "26326" from any hospital phone or making a request through your nurse.**

We look forward to serving you.

Blessings,

Rev. Alexander J. Aaron, M.Div, BCC
Staff Chaplain
Phone: 909.920.6326

Chaplain's Corner Web Page

