

Real Life Stories
Visit in The Hospital? . . . Not Me!

Week after week, I lay flat on my back in the hospital bed, weak and in pain. Long, white strips of gauze were wound round and round each of my arms, around my chest and back, and around my right leg. As I lay there in the hospital suffering from the gas fire that had seared so much of my body, it seemed to me that the world around me was sick. Seven long weeks went by.

Finally, one sunny September day my parents arrived to pick me up from the Royal University Hospital. Although I was still pale, weak, and thin, I was eager to go home. It took an hour.

Seeing so many healthy people was a surprise to me. Each one was busy doing their own thing. A lot had happened in the seven weeks that I'd been gone, and I wanted to see everything at once. There were so many changes.

My wife and I had a baby girl, now three weeks old! My one-year-old daughter was walking! Other children had really grown. Healing of my burns sped up at home, and being in my own home and in my own bed did wonders.

During this difficult time, the church family, Helena's family, and my family were just wonderful! They gave support to Helena, cared for the children while she was in the hospital, picked and canned berries for her, and brought over meals. Willing to help for several months, Gary, Helena's youngest brother, milked the cows and fed the cattle. One day local farmers brought home all our hay bales and later harvested our crop. There were far too many good deeds to list!!!

My body healed slowly. Recovery took a long time. Graciously answering the prayers of His people, God gave strength to Helena to care for me and our nine little children. Within a year I began work on the farm. God is gracious! Now, over forty years later, I thank God that I am alive and that I have no aches and pains!

Seven weeks of lying in a hospital bed taught me the importance of visiting the sick, but visiting in the hospital was not a priority for our pastor. Helena and I began praying that someone would visit the patients in our Borden hospital.

Then one winter day as I was working in the barn thinking about this, God said to me, "You do it." Impossible! I thought. I find it hard to speak. I have no education! However, in time I began to think more positively about the idea, so I asked Helena, "Do you think I should visit in the Borden hospital?"

"No," she replied. In her mind, she thought that she would have to go along.

Feeling that there was a great need for hospital visitation, I kept praying. God used the months that followed to prepare me to share with patients about the Lord. While daily reading God's Word, I highlighted verses that were meaningful to me. These verses would be suitable to share with people when God opened the way to visit the sick.

About a year later when I again asked Helena about hospital visitation, she replied, "If you don't drag me along." She had ten children to take care of and that took a lot of work; however, she was fine with me to go and visit in the hospital. Now it was up to me!! How would I start? It seemed that I just couldn't get going. One thing after another hindered me.

Finally, I set a goal to start visiting in the hospital sometime during the week of Thanksgiving. This proved to be God's timing. I had no idea what would happen.

The Tuesday after Thanksgiving Day, our church had a meeting to elect a deacon couple. Qualified couples were nominated. All declined. Then someone nominated "Arnold and Helena Stobbe." I was stunned! I couldn't say anything! We were voted in! While driving home from church, I asked Helena, "Why didn't you say anything?"



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"I thought it was a good idea," she replied. "I admired your parents when they were deacons."

This was the exact week I had planned to begin hospital visitation! So, on Friday afternoon, I anxiously arrived at the hospital with my Bible under my arm.

When I put my hand on the doorknob and turned it, the door did not open. "In Jesus' name I claim the victory," I said to Satan, and the door opened. I'm in. What do I do now? I came to my senses. The men's ward is first. Walking into the first room, I greeted the man lying on the bed. He responded warmly, and we had a wonderful time.

"What do you want here?" was the challenge after I told the man in the second room my name.

"Lord, give me the answer," I prayed silently. Out loud I said, "The church has elected my wife and I as deacons, and one duty of deacons is to visit the sick."

"Oh," the man murmured and settled quietly on his pillow. Again, God gave us a good visit

For the next ten years I went to the hospital one day a week to visit patients. God gave me many wonderful opportunities to visit with the patients, to try to talk to them about God, to read the Bible to them, and to pray with them. In those days people stayed a lot longer in the hospital, and some patients later shared how God had answered the prayer that I had prayed with them. I made a lot of friends. Frequently I gave children and adults pamphlets that explained how a person could have forgiveness of sin and a relationship with God. A few patients gave their lives to the Lord.

Those seven weeks of lying in a hospital bed were what God used to open my eyes to the need of hospital visitation. As I obeyed and went, I was greatly blessed!

. . . . by Arnold Stobbe with Naomi Epp