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ETHICS AND CHAPLAINS AS LEADERS

When you hear the word ethics as it relates to medicine and the lives of patients, what are we talking about?



Ethics and Ministry

“What it means to have a meaningful life and how to live it. An interpretation of medical and theological values as they relate to the issues of life.”

Ethics and Ministry

“It is the process of reflection on *what* and *how* human behavior, human principles and human values *interrelate* with theology and good medicine.”

Ethics and Ministry

- The key dynamic at hand in a process of making an ethical decision is “POWER.” (The struggle between idealistic possibilities and human limitations).
- Pastoral care lives theologically in the midst of this power tension, (hope and finitude).

Ethics and Ministry

4 Polarities of Life and Theology

1. Finitude and possibilities
2. Contingency and control
3. Autonomy and dependency
4. Meaning and nothingness

Ethics and Ministry

Who really has the power to decide? The doctor, the patient, the family member, the institution?

Brief History of “POWER” in Medicine

- a. Throughout history, patient had the power
- b. 1800's to 1950's, physicians had the power
- c. 1950's to 1980's technology had the power
- d. 1980's to 2000's HMO's (money) have the power
- e. 2000's to today Social media and Internet have the power

Brief History of “POWER” in Medicine

Why is it difficult to make ethical decisions today?

Two reasons:

- Power assigned to physicians, technology and HMO by culture in the midst of access to information through social media
- The vulnerability of patients in the decision making process – overload of disconnected information

Brief History of “POWER” in Medicine

- What is legal may not be necessarily ethical.
What is ethical may not be necessarily legal.
- A central question is raised: are we **allowing** to die or **causing** to die?

Brief History of “POWER” in Medicine

The Greco-Roman philosophy based ethical decisions on three basic human values:

- Individual freedom (Life)
- Self-determination (Liberty)
- Quality of life (The pursuit of happiness)

Brief History of “POWER” in Medicine

The central issue in medical ethics becomes the dignity of the human being (quality vs. quantity of life) in light of present *possibilities and limitations* of the human experience, condition and predicaments. (Respect for the complexity of process becomes imperative)

Where Do Ministry and Ethics Intersect?

- HYPOCRITES OATH IS STILL INPRINCIPLE THE BEST ETHICAL RENDITION FOR MAKING DECISIONS:
“do good, do no harm”
- “Moral Neutrality” as a principle of ministry
- Core themes within pastoral care and ethics:
 - Autonomy
 - Reconciliation
 - Forgiveness
 - Acceptance
 - Grief
 - Hope

A Simple Model That Works For Me:

- What is the story? Based on the theological principle that human beings are parables and stories that have potential for revelation
- From whose perspective is the story being told? (Physician, family member, institution)
- Where is the patient in this story? Goes back to the basic principle of the dignity of the human being and his/her life

*Extending
the healing ministry of
Christ*