

rejoicing

a patient I  
**rejoiced  
over**

**Rachel Denno** looks at how attending to the spiritual needs of a patient and his family transformed their situation

work as a psychiatric liaison nurse in the emergency department of a big hospital. We assess people in mental health crises and are at a high risk of harming themselves and or others.

Recently on a night shift, I assessed an acutely unwell gentleman who had never had contact with mental health services before. His wife, Nina, had brought him to A&E concerned about his rapid decline in mental state and ability to keep himself safe. She was extremely concerned about him and anxious that the situation at home was now unpredictable and no longer manageable.

After assessing Ajay, I took Nina aside and sat in the family room of the A&E whilst another member of staff stayed with Ajay. I spoke with her to gather some collateral information about Ajay's decline over the past month and to offer her some carers' support.

The moment we left the room, Nina asked me, 'Are you a Christian?'. When I replied 'yes', she began to pour out her heart in the corridor, expressing how she and several others from church had prayed for weeks for God to heal Ajay. Once in the family room, I offered to pray with her in the name of Jesus, which she gratefully accepted. So we prayed together on

the blue plastic chairs, simply and sincerely. God allowed me to show his comfort to another believer in a time of distress and for us to pray together for his peace in a chaotic hospital environment.

I was reminded very poignantly that we are placed in our jobs for particular moments.

I realised that just my presence itself was a reminder to Ajay and Nina of God's presence with them. God had not removed Ajay from his circumstance of suffering, but he had met him in it. Ajay was one of the most acutely unwell and high-risk people I assessed that month. He wasn't healed there and then, nor did he recover quickly; his symptoms weren't any less severe than other patients who weren't believers. But God heard our cries, and they were not alone.

What a privilege we have working in healthcare to be there at landmark moments in peoples' lives. Often this is at their most vulnerable, most painful, most uncertain. We are placed to sit in tragedy with them, to be present in times of fear. What an opportunity we have, in the rollercoaster of our roles, to show Jesus' love through offering timely presence and simple prayers. 🙏

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