

County-Wide Chaplaincy

Thanks you!

2500 NE 78th St. Vancouver, WA 98665 ~ (360) 573-7127

January 2018

I was recently asked by a friend, “So, you’re a Chaplain, what do you actually do?”

I’ve been pondering that question lately, and thought I’d try to share my response with you. Perhaps it will be beneficial if you ever find yourself in a position to explain to another what it is that we do.

Countywide Chaplains are what you might call second responders. First responders are generally from the fire or police department and are the first on scene that originated with a call to 911. Once a first responder arrives on scene, a Chaplain is dispatched at the request of the family or if the first responder deems that one would be helpful.

Most often these are unexpected deaths, some of which may be natural causes, and other times are accidents or suicides. Regardless, there is generally a Medical Examiner involved to determine as to whether or not an investigation needs to be conducted. If so, they arrive on scene and take the deceased to their office for an autopsy. If it appears to be a natural cause of death, again determined by a Medical Examiner over the phone, then they will release the body to the family for arrangements to be made for pick up by a funeral home.

Our role in these situations is to primarily help the family members, who are generally in a mild state shock. Help can come in a variety of ways; helping to notify other family members, bringing support to the loved one, general clean up, and arranging for a funeral home to pick up the deceased.

The other primary task we are involved with are death notifications. You know when you hear on the news that there has been some sort of accident, and they will not release the names of the victims until the next of kin is notified? Well, we are the ones making the notification. Often times, and most often in fact, these are unexpected incidents such as suicides, accidents of various kinds, and even homicides.

As you can imagine, there is no easy way to deliver a death notification. Whether it’s notifying a spouse their loved one was killed in an auto accident, or informing parents that their teenage son decided to take his own life, or was the victim of a drug overdose.

Our role, primarily, is to provide some semblance of comfort, help them work through the thought process of notification of other family members, and bringing support to their now upside-down world.

Sometimes on scene, after things have settled down a little, we may hear someone say to us “You have a horrible job.” Though it may not be pleasant, and I would be surprised if you found a street Chaplain that would tell you they ‘enjoyed’ what we do, it is extremely rewarding. Why? It’s because

our primary role, in any situation, is to bring the calming presence of the Lord to what may be a very chaotic scene.

We call it the Ministry of Presence. Yes, our presence on the scene helps to bring a stable and calming influence lending to guidance and support for the surviving family members. This is because the Lord is present with us and in us. He promises to never leave or forsake us, a confidence that is foremost in our minds when we plunge into these unknown circumstances. The ministry is really about bringing light and peace to what can be a very dark and troubled place. In this, I believe you would find most any Countywide Chaplain honored to serve. I know I am.

Gratefully,
Rob Pool

*Please remember to pray for the safety of all our first responders.
We are all so grateful for them!*

You can give online or by mail.

Your donations can be given by mail using the enclosed envelope, or online. To give online and/or set up recurring billing there is a link to give on the donations page of our website: www.911chaplain.org.

Or you can go straight to it with the following web address:

<https://911chaplain.churchcenteronline.com/>.

If you shop on Amazon.com, they will donate a portion of your purchase to County-Wide Chaplaincy if you designate us as your preferred non-profit. It doesn't cost you anything extra and you send some support our way. We have a posted a link to the smile.amazon.com portal on the donations page of our website and as long as you order through that initial page it will send us some proceeds. Or you can type that link in and designate us as your preferred charity. Thank you, and thank you Amazon.com!!