



ELDERS TRAINING 2026
ENGAGE

**Relational Ministry
for Church Leaders**

MINISTERING WITH THE HEART OF A CHAPLAIN



ELDERS TRAINING 2026
ENGAGE

Relational Ministry
for Church Leaders

HAROLD ALTAMIRANO. MDIV. BCC

A person wearing a blue hospital gown is lying in a bed, their hand being held by another person's hand. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a hospital or care facility setting. The text is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

And Jesus Wept....

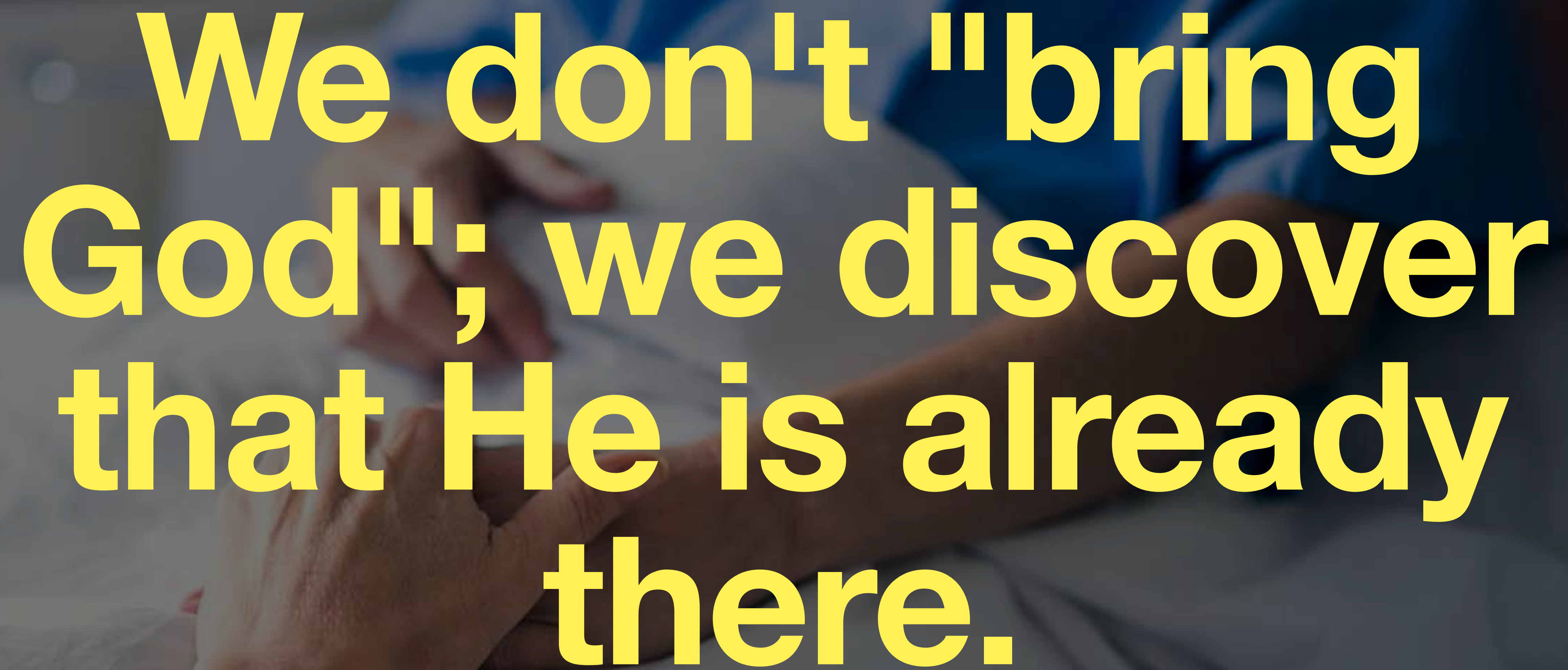
John 11:35

A person is lying in a hospital bed, covered with a white sheet. Their hands are clasped together over their chest. The background is slightly blurred, showing a blue patterned blanket. The overall tone is somber and supportive.

**We are not there to
rescue, fix, preach or
impose!**

A photograph of a person lying in a hospital bed, wearing a blue hospital gown. Their hands are being held and supported by a caregiver's hands. The caregiver's hands are visible in the foreground, one wearing a red sleeve. The background is softly blurred, showing the white linens of the bed. The overall mood is one of care and support.

**IT IS NOT ABOUT
YOU!**

A person is lying in a hospital bed, covered with a white blanket. Their hands are being held by another person's hands, one of which is wearing a red sleeve. The background is a blurred blue wall. The text is overlaid in a large, bold, yellow font.

**We don't "bring
God"; we discover
that He is already
there.**

A person wearing a blue shirt is holding the hand of another person wearing a red sleeve. The background is a light-colored, textured surface. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

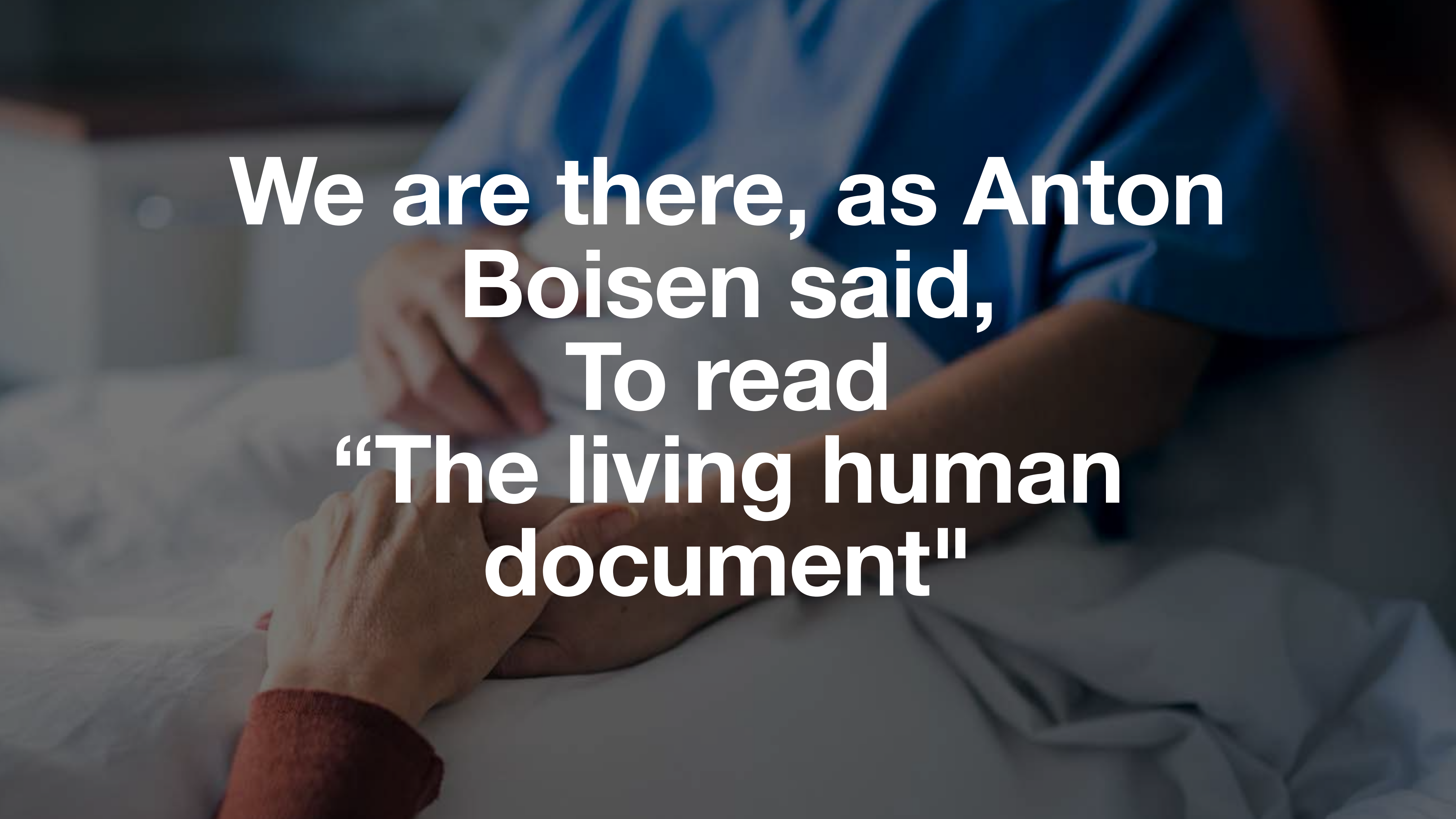
CONNECT

ASSESS

INTERVENE

A photograph of an elderly man in a dark suit and glasses holding the hand of an elderly woman in a white hospital gown. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is a hospital room with a bed and a chair. The text "THE MOST IMPORTANT" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters.

THE MOST IMPORTANT

A group of people, including a child in a blue shirt, are holding hands in a circle on a light-colored surface. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

**We are there, as Anton
Boisen said,
To read
“The living human
document”**

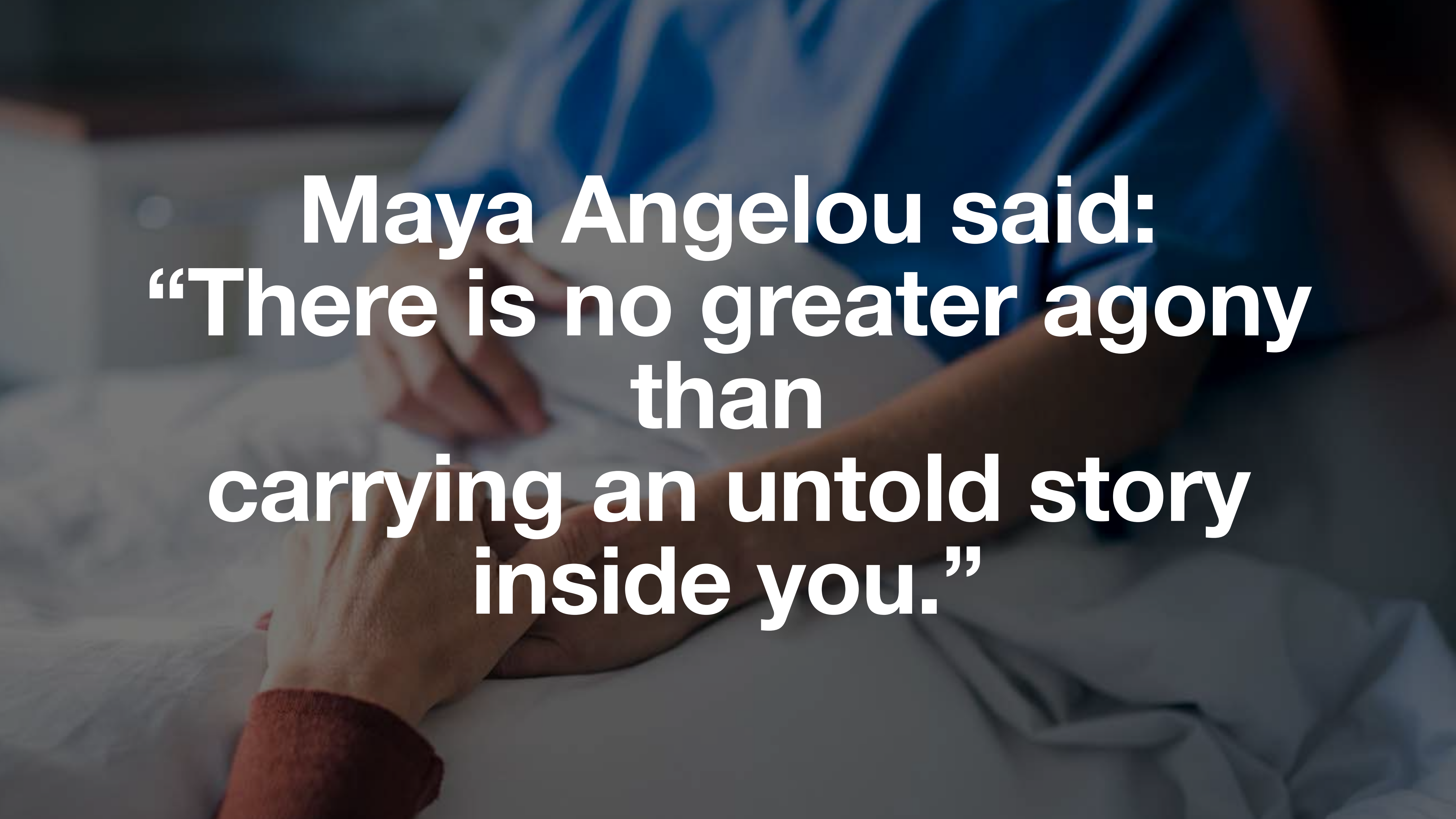
A group of people are shown holding hands in a circle, suggesting a prayer or support group. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark overlay. In the foreground, a person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt is visible, with their hands clasped in prayer. The background shows other people's hands and parts of their clothing, creating a sense of community and shared faith.

**Jesus asked 307
questions.**

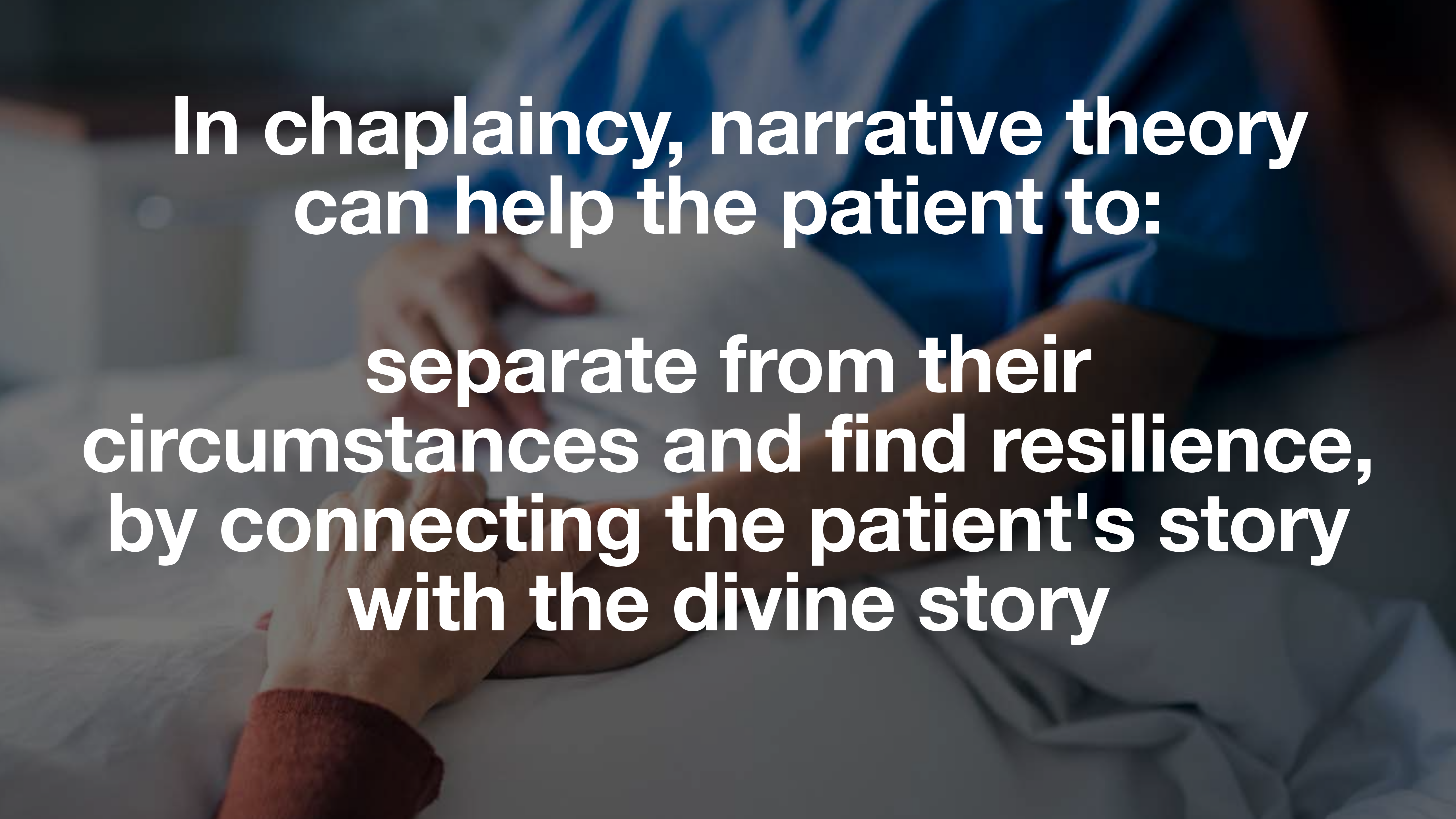
**He was asked 183 and
he only answered 3.**

A group of people are shown from the chest up, holding hands in a circle. They are wearing light blue shirts. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hands and the text. The text is white and bold, centered over the image.

**My task is not to just
Listen to the story,
but for the story**

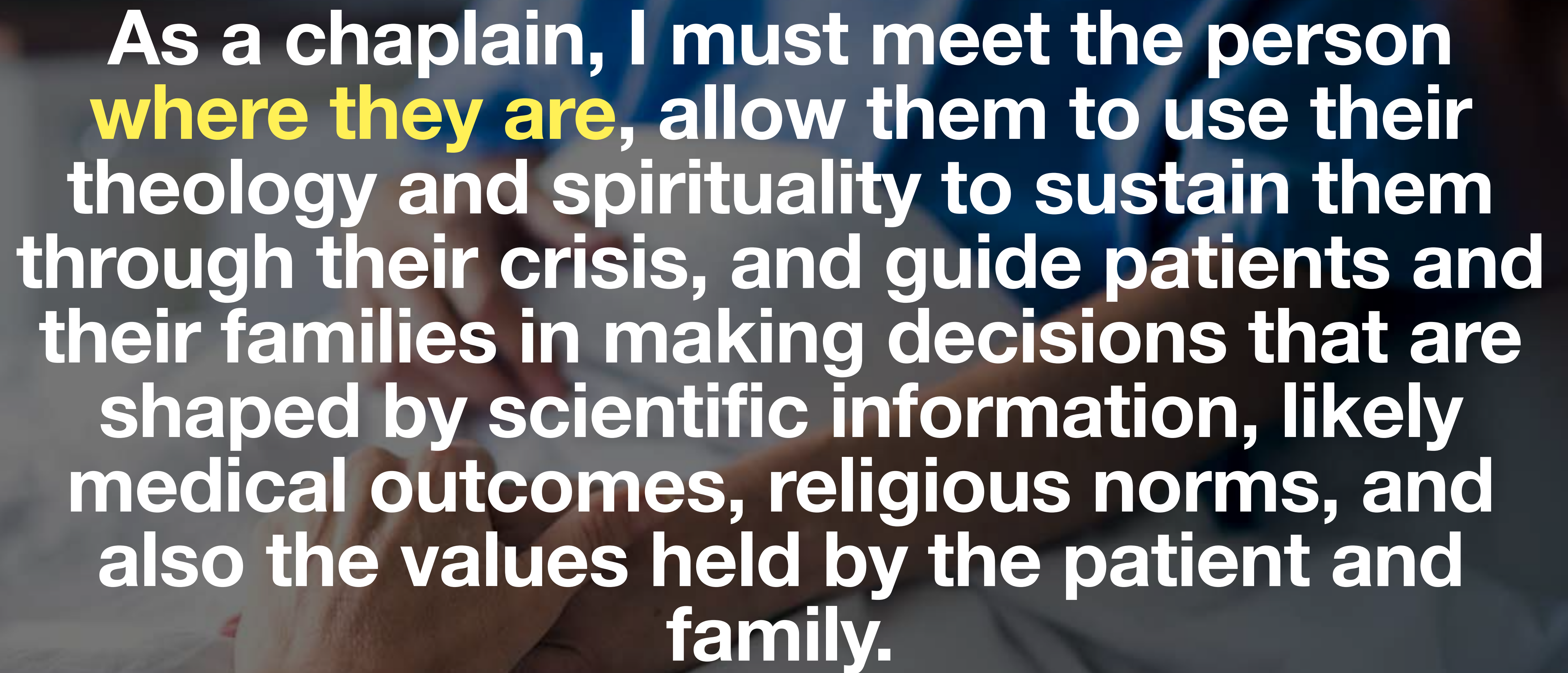


**Maya Angelou said:
“There is no greater agony
than
carrying an untold story
inside you.”**

A photograph of a person lying in a hospital bed, wearing a blue gown. Their hands are being held by another person's hands, one of which is wearing a red sleeve. The background is a plain wall.

**In chaplaincy, narrative theory
can help the patient to:**

**separate from their
circumstances and find resilience,
by connecting the patient's story
with the divine story**

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together. One hand is resting on top of the other, with fingers interlaced. The skin tones are light and dark, suggesting a diverse pair of individuals. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white, possibly a hospital gown or a clean clinical setting. The overall mood is one of comfort, support, and care.

As a chaplain, I must meet the person **where they are, allow them to use their theology and spirituality to sustain them through their crisis, and guide patients and their families in making decisions that are shaped by scientific information, likely medical outcomes, religious norms, and also the values held by the patient and family.**

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together. The hand on the right belongs to a person wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt. The hand on the left belongs to a person wearing a red long-sleeved sweater. The background is a light-colored, textured surface, possibly a bedsheet or blanket. The overall lighting is soft and natural.

After the greeting

How are you?

What's in your heart?

Tell me about your feelings?

PATIENT

CHAPLAIN

SURFACE



STRUGGLE

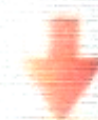


STORY



SELF-AWARENESS

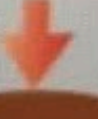
be STILL



be STILL



be STILL



PASTORAL INTERVENTION

A photograph of a man in a dark suit and glasses holding the hand of a woman in a white hospital gown. The woman has a medical device on her chest and a wristband. The background is a hospital room. The text is overlaid in the center in a large, bold, yellow font.

**LISTENING
CREATES A SAFE
SPACE**

A person wearing a blue hospital gown is lying in a bed. Their hands are being held by another person's hands, one of which is wearing a red sleeve. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a hospital or care facility setting.

- DON'T CONTAMINATE THE ENVIRONMENT

BE AWARE OF YOUR EMOTIONS



As chaplains, we are "**midwives who facilitate the birth of a story.**"

This will only be achieved if I am able to "**hold the space**" so that the person can feel safe, not anxious.

And be a **companion** who is willing to sit in the dark with them.

A person wearing a blue hospital gown is lying in a bed. Their hands are being held and supported by another person's hands. The scene is softly lit, suggesting a caring and supportive environment.

**Love and healing come from
feeling heard.**

**"Being heard is the closest thing
to being loved for the average
person. They are almost
indistinguishable."**

"Caring Enough to Hear and Be Heard" David Augsburger"

A photograph of a man in a dark suit and glasses holding the hand of a smiling woman in a hospital gown. The woman is sitting in a hospital bed and has a medical device on her chest. The background is a hospital room. The word "ASSESS" is overlaid in large yellow letters.

ASSESS

A photograph of a person lying in a hospital bed, covered with a white sheet. Several hands are visible, holding the person's arms and hands, suggesting a supportive or caregiving environment. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the person in the bed.

WHAT KIND OF VISIT IS THIS?

**PASTORAL
BIRTH
POOR PROGNOSIS
ACCIDENT
DYING PROCESS
DEATH**



FAMILY?

**PAY ATTENTION TO
FAMILY DYNAMICS**

A photograph of a person lying in a hospital bed, covered with a white sheet. Several hands are visible, gently holding the person's hands, suggesting a supportive or caregiving environment. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the hands and the person in the bed.

11 PRINCIPLES TO MINISTER TO THE GRIEVING

A photograph of a person lying in a hospital bed, covered with a white sheet. Several hands are visible, gently holding the person's hands and arms, suggesting a supportive or caregiving environment. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the person in the bed and the hands. The overall tone is somber and caring.

Companioning the bereaved 11 tenets



Tenet One:

Companioning is about being present to another person's pain; it is not about taking away the pain.

Tenet Two:

Companioning is about going to the wilderness of the soul with another human being' it is not about thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.

Tenet Three:

Companioning is about honoring the spirit; it is not about analyzing with the head.



Tenet Four:

Companioning is about listening with the heart' it is not about analyzing with the head.

Tenet Five:

Companioning is about bearing witness to the struggles of others; it is not about judging or directing these struggles.

Tenet Six:

Companioning is about walking alongside; it is not about leading.

Tenet Seven:

Companioning is about discovering the gifts of sacred silence; it does not mean filling up every moment with words.

Tenet Eight:

Companioning is about being still; it is not about frantic movement forward.

Tenet Nine:

Companioning is about respecting disorder and confusion it is not about imposing order and logic. Principio diez:



Tenet Ten:

Companioning is about learning from others; it is not about teaching them.

Tenet Eleven:

Companioning is about compassionate curiosity; it is not about expertise.

LISTEN FOR EMOTIONS:

ANGER

GUILT

SHAME

REMORSE

FEARS

DOUBTS

A black and white photograph capturing a moment of emotional distress. In the foreground, a priest in dark vestments is seen from the side, holding an open book and looking towards a woman. The woman, positioned on the right, has her hands pressed against her face, suggesting she is crying or overwhelmed. The background is dark, with a white cross visible on the wall behind the priest. The overall mood is somber and poignant.

LISTEN FOR RELIGIOUS TRAUMA

"Religious trauma resides in our bodies and nervous systems in the same way that war trauma, developmental trauma, or sexualized trauma live within us. Although the triggers and environment of the original trauma may differ, the way religious trauma lives in our bodies, at a physiological level, is the same."

— Laura E. Anderson, *When Religion Hurts You: Healing from Religious Trauma and the Impact of High-Control Religion*

A photograph of a doctor in a dark suit and glasses holding the hand of an elderly woman in a hospital bed. The woman is wearing a white hospital gown with a small pattern and has a red identification band on her wrist. She is smiling warmly at the doctor. The scene is set in a hospital room with a brown chair and a white wall in the background. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark grey filter.

INTERVENE

A photograph of a person lying in a hospital bed, wearing a blue hospital gown. A caregiver's hands are visible, gently holding the person's hands. The scene is dimly lit, with a blue tint. The text is overlaid in the center in white, bold, sans-serif font.

**BASED ON WHAT I HEARD
WHAT DOES THIS PERSON NEED?**

1. Be present

**Sit down, don't rush.
Maintain gentle eye contact.**

Don't be afraid of silence; it is often prayer.

**If the context allows, a hand on the
shoulder can communicate more than a
thousand words.**

2. Listen deeply

Listen beyond the words: the tone, the breathing, the emotion.

Reflect what you hear: “That sounds like it hurt you a lot” or “I can tell you’re tired.”

Avoid interrupting or turning the conversation into a lecture.

3. Offer grace, not explanations

**Don't try to justify suffering.
Use texts and prayers as a
balm, not as a correction.**

4. Cuida también a la familia

Reconoce sus emociones: miedo, enojo, culpa, tristeza.

Anímales a decir lo que necesitan decir: “Te amo”, “Te perdono”, “Perdóname”, “Adiós.”

Recuérdales que el duelo no es debilidad; es la forma más pura del amor.



PETER THE
with Jesus
them
rest

AND when he
known, even thou,
things which belong
they are hid from thee,
shall come upon thee,
cast a trench about the
round, and keep thee in
lay thee even with the
within thee; and they
one stone upon anothe
not the time of thy
into the temple, and be
sold therein, and ther
them. It is written,
prayer: but ye have
And he taught daily

THE
GOSPEL

the Gospel
which also ye
by which
memory what
have believed in
first of all, that
Christ died for
scriptures; and that
again the third
scriptures; and that he
of the twelve; after
above five hundred bro-
whom the greater part remain
but some are fallen asleep:
seen of James; then of all the
last of all, he was seen of me also,
out of due time. For I am the
Apostles, that am not meet to be
Apostle, because I persecuted the
But by the grace of God I am
and his grace which was bestowed
not in vain; but I laboured more
they all; yet not I, but the
which was with me. Therefore
for they, so we preach, and

