

Elma's E-musings
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Dear Praying Friends,

"What is your law for me?" a patient about to go home after a hernia surgery asked me. This was the first time I heard the question phrased this way. I never thought of the doctor's advice being "laws," but if one considers the advice as "rules," then maybe it is. I realized this while I was in the Out-Patient Clinic last week. I have a 34-year-old male patient who first came one month ago. He had a big belly because of an enlarged liver. Also, he had retained fluid in his limbs and abdomen and was generally weak. In Liberian English, "Hepatitis B make his liver to work small. Liver failure." My advice was that he should eat protein-rich, high-calorie food and that he lay on his right side to ease his tummy pain. On this visit, his 3rd, he was obviously much improved: no edema, breathing fine, and smiling broadly when I said his cheeks were nice and fat. But he became serious and said he wants to clarify his "law." He asked if he can now eat food other than beans, and if he can lie on his back or on his left because his right side is hurting. "Of course you can!" We had a good time laughing because I explained that the

advice meant that those are preferential foods but he can eat the usual. The patient looked at his wife and scolded her because she had gotten everything wrong. But his wife just giggled and was happy that her husband was getting better. So what's my new "law" for him? I told him, "If you don't want to grow old, start drinking alcohol again." ...incredulous silence, then he asked, "Should I drink palm wine?". Emphatically I answered, "Yes! You will not grow old because you will die young." ...more laughter!

I have cut my hair! I did, I cut it myself and have lived to tell you. Only, I don't wear it down much. Remember the Tina Turner Pepsi commercials? Imagine me sporting that hair. Maybe I should stick to coloring.

I want to apologize to my non-United Methodist praying friends. I'm sorry that my last e-musings seemed to say that the only people who pray and support me are United Methodists. I know you love me dearly and have forgiven me already. I'm so amazed at how God has moved so many people who are going through economically challenging times. But the greater truth is that I am surrounded by a great multitude of loving, praying believers.

Many have inquired about my mother. She is well and remains active in church. It's her 3rd year to be Associate Lay Leader, mentoring the younger leaders at our home church.

We are praying for her second visit to Liberia before this year ends.



The OR renovation is running smoothly and on schedule. No one has had an accident. There have been no bites or stings from the resident creatures in the ceiling. The UMC church in Ridgecrest, Calif. is campaigning for two air conditioners and several fans—thank you very much!

Please pray for some of the patients who are weighing me down. Ask God to show me how to help more and to show me the way forward.

1. A 34-year-old female who had a criminal abortion elsewhere—she came with a ruptured uterus and colon. After having a hysterectomy, colon resection and anastomosis, her family doesn't want to buy her medicine or give blood. She is HIV positive. She believes the operation is enough.
2. A 17-year old male victim of a motorbike accident came in with a broken left leg (the bone was sticking out). No blood donor, no antibiotics, ...nothing. I was able to use pins (external fixator) to stabilize the fracture but there's still more to be done. I don't want to amputate because his foot is alright, but the odds are against us.

Thank you for sharing your heart with us.

Elma