

NURSE

1 Thessalonians 2:7 - "But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children."

1 Kings 1:4 - "The maiden was very beautiful; and she became the king's nurse and ministered to him; but the king knew her not."

The ancient definition of a nurse could be "one who looks after, tutors or guides another, as in a period of inexperience or sickness." In these ancient times, the nurse was an honorable person. It is probable that male tutors (perhaps eunuchs) were sometimes considered nurses.

Generally, though, the nurse was a woman, and she cared for the sick, the infants, or the very old. She doesn't seem to have had any formal training, and she was usually a member of the family or a friend.

Nurses who cared for infants fed them, bathed them, dressed them, played with them, and kept the children's quarters clean. Occasionally they were also wet nurses, when, for some reason, the mother could not suckle her child herself. After the child was weaned, only the royalty and the very wealthy employed a nurse for the child.

Nurses also served as midwives. Among the duties of the midwife was the severing of the umbilical cord, washing the child with water using salt as an antiseptic, and announcing the birth to the father.

In her function of caring for the child, we could probably consider today's babysitter as a comparable occupation, although a children's nurse would also fit. The regular hospital or private duty nurse of today has far greater training, knowledge, and responsibilities than her ancient forebear, but the principle of caring for the helpless remains - and the necessity of giving love and care to the utmost.

As followers of Christ we are called to care for others. We are called to help others experience the love of Christ. Who was that person for you? Who introduced you to Christ? How was your relationship with Christ nurtured so that you continue to grow in Christ? How are you sharing Christ with others today?

God bless,
Pastor Barbara