

Before All Things and Above All Things

by St. Benedict of Nursia

The sermon emphasizes the importance of caring for the sick with compassion, patience, and attention to their specific needs, motivated by the honor of God and the example of Christ.

Scripture: Proverbs 31:8, Matthew 25:36, Matthew 25:40, Galatians 6:2, Philippians 2:4, Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Hebrews 6:10, James 5:14, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Christian Care", "Compassionate Ministry"

Description

St. Benedict of Nursia emphasizes the importance of caring for the sick as if they were serving Christ Himself, quoting Matthew 25:36 and 25:40. He encourages the sick to consider their care as an honor to God and advises them to be patient and not make unnecessary demands on those serving them. The Abbess is instructed to ensure the sick are not neglected and to provide them with a special room and a God-fearing attendant. Special care is to be given to the sick, including the use of baths and, when necessary, meat for strength, with a gradual return to regular diet as they recover.

Transcript

Before all things and above all things,
care must be taken of the sick,
so that they will be served as if they were Christ in person;
for He Himself said, "I was sick, and you visited Me" (Matt 25:36),
and, "What you did for one of these least ones, you did for Me" (Matt. 25:40).
But let the sick on their part consider
that they are being served for the honor of God,
and let them not annoy their sisters who are serving them
by their unnecessary demands.
Yet they should be patiently borne with,

because from such as these is gained a more abundant reward.

Therefore the Abbess shall take the greatest care

that they suffer no neglect.

For these sick let there be assigned a special room

and an attendant who is God-fearing, diligent and solicitous.

Let the use of baths be afforded the sick

as often as may be expedient;

but to the healthy, and especially to the young,

let them be granted more rarely.

Moreover,

let the use of meat be granted to the sick who are very weak,

for the restoration of their strength;

but when they are convalescent,

let all abstain from meat as usual.

The Abbess shall take the greatest care

that the sick be not neglected by the cellarers or the attendants;

for she also is responsible for what is done wrongly by her disciples.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-benedict-of-nursia/before-all-things-and-above-all-things/>

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