

Case Study: Seventh Day Adventist and Workplace Accommodations

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Several nurses complained to the unit nurse manager about a co-worker who had every Saturday off for religious purposes. The staff members felt that the distribution of staffing was inequitable as it required that the remainder of the staff take on proportionally more Saturday shifts. Further, they did not understand why their colleague would require Saturday for religious observance as he reported that he was Christian.

The nurse manager discussed the concerns with the staff member and asked for clarification regarding his request for religious accommodations in his schedule. The nurse manager echoed the staff's concerns that this was an inequitable arrangement. The nurse explained that he was a Seventh-day Adventist, and his faith required that he observe the Sabbath on Saturday.

Reflection:

- What religious beliefs underlie this Seventh-day Adventist nurse's request?
- Do you believe the situation is equitable? Why or why not?
- Given that there is no official church teaching regarding Sabbath work in hospitals, how ought the manager respond to the staff member's request? What are the nurse's rights in this scenario?
- What options might the nurse manager offer to address the staff's concerns?

Additional Resources:

Carson, V.B., Koenig, H.G., & George, H. (2004). *Spiritual Caregiving Healthcare as a Ministry*. Philadelphia, Pa: Templeton Foundation Press.

Johnston Taylor, E. & Carr, M. (2009). Nursing Ethics in the Seventh-Day Adventist Religious Tradition. *Nursing ethics* 16.6. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19889912/>