



A MINISTRY SCHOOL OF THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF THE UPPER MIDWEST

Introduction to Healing Ministry

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“Pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

“Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” Luke 10:9

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire the spiritual gifts.” I Cor. 14:1

I. Introduction

CONCERNING THE RITES OF HEALING (from the 2019 Book of Common Prayer)

Healing was central to the ministry of Jesus, our Incarnate Lord. Healing is central to the ministry of the church, the body of Christ. Spoken prayer, anointing with oil, and the laying on of hands are the principal outward means employed by the church for its ministry to those whose health is in any way impaired. The rite of reconciliation and the reception of Holy Communion are also gifts through which healing takes place.

All Christians are called to be agents of healing. Nevertheless, the regular forms of healing ministry set forth in this prayer book are expected to be coordinated and ordered under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop and the Priest having spiritual charge. Some aspects of healing ministry, most notably absolution and formal blessings, are reserved for to bishops and priests. The use of holy oils (healing and exorcism) like the ministries of which they are a sign, may be extended to lay ministers by the Bishop and Priest having pastoral jurisdiction. Similarly, laypersons may be trained and authorized to carry the consecrated elements of Christ’s body and blood to the sick (or those otherwise confined or kept away from regular celebrations of the Holy Communion) under provisions set forward by the Ordinary.

Because physical, emotional, and spiritual healing are often interrelated, it is particularly appropriate to encourage confession, reconciliation, and forgiveness in the context of ministry to the sick. The content of a confession is not normally a matter of subsequent discussion period the secrecy of a confession is morally binding for the confessor and it's not to be broken.

These rights are foundational to the many ways that the church ministers to those who suffer in body mind or spirit.



i. Three ways of praying for others

1. Intercession for others in our private prayer time (Ephesians 1:15-17).
2. Joining with one or more other Christians to intercede (Matthew 18:19-29).
3. Praying for God's immediate action in the moment of prayer.
 - This kind of prayer can be called "healing prayer"
 - The term "Healing prayer" is shorthand for the continued healing ministry of Jesus through and with us, his disciples, by means of prayer, to the whole person, physical, emotional, and spiritual.

II. Jesus commissioned his disciples to share in his ministry of healing

- a. Luke 9:1-2, When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick...So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.
- b. Matt 10: 7-8, "As you go, proclaim this message, 'The Kingdom of God has come near'. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.'
- c. Luke 10:1-7, After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves...When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

III. The disciples continued the ministry of healing after Jesus' resurrection and ascension.

- a. Acts 3:1-16, Peter and John and the healing of a man lame from birth. "Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong." ..."And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.
- b. Acts 5:12-16, Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.



- c. Acts 8:4-8, Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.
- d. Acts 14:8-10, Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking.
- e. Acts 28:7-9, Paul heals a man on Malta. It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured.
- f. James 5:14-16, Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

IV. Jesus invites all believers to share in his ministry of healing through the Holy Spirit

- a. Mark 16:15-17 – "These signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons, they will speak in new tongues, they will pick up snakes with their hands and when they drink deadly poison it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."
- b. The Holy Spirit "lives with you and will be in you." John 14:16-18
- c. "You will receive power when the holy spirit comes on you..." Acts 1:8
- d. "This is how we know that we live in him and he is us: He has given us of his Spirit." 1 John 4:13
- e. "He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts, as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." 2 Cor 1:22

V. The Holy Spirit equips us with "gifts", ways that the Spirit supernaturally flows through us to minister others in ways that are beyond our human power or knowledge

- a. 1 Cor 12:7-10, Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different



kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

- b. 1 Cor 14:1 to “Follow the way of love and eagerly desire the spiritual gifts.”
- c. Luke 11:13, If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

VI. Healing prayer is a ministry of love rather than power

- a. I Corinthians 12:29-13:2, Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
- b. Historically, Christianity has been characterized by primarily by CARE for the sick. We care for everyone who suffers any impairment of health, physical, emotional, or spiritual or social, as though we were caring for the Lord Jesus himself.
 - 1. Matthew 25:35-36, For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’

VII. A simple template for prayer: “Listen, Love, Pray”

i. Listen

- a. Listen carefully to the words that are said and notice non-verbal communication, such as body language or facial expression.
- b. Communicate that you are listening, nods, facial expressions, or a validating statement.
- c. Say very little before you begin to pray for the person.
 - 1. Don’t give advice or council or a little mini-sermon.
 - 2. Don’t talk at length about your similar experiences.
- d. As you pray, also listen for any guidance God might be giving to aid your prayer.

ii. Love

- a. Showing love and care for a person who is hurting is a healing act in and of itself. We allow Jesus to love people through us. At times, supernatural love is given to us in the moment that is beyond our own capacity to care; it is evidence of the Spirit at work in the time of prayer.

iii. Pray

Speak directly to God, perhaps to the Father, or Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

Expect and ask for God’s action in the very moment of this prayer, on you as the prayer minister and on the person you are praying with.



- a. The kind of words you use reveal your faith, or lack of faith.
- b. “Lord, would You now come and, touch...fill...comfort...console...energize...soak, shine...illuminate...strengthen...cleanse...heal...reveal,” and so forth
- c. Allow images and metaphors from scripture and nature to shape your prayer.

Example:

A 35-year-old man named Joe approaches asking you to pray for him because he feels unloved by God. Things are not going well at work and he feels forgotten by God. He feels like a failure and is afraid he might lose his job. It might be tempting to pray something like, “Lord, please remind Joe of how much you love him. John 3:16 says, for God so loved the world...”

Instead, you express to him your care and compassion. “Wow. That sounds really painful and nerve racking. Can I pray for you? Is it OK if I put my hand on your shoulder while I pray for you?”

Pause for a moment to consider what you are asking God to do.

Then pray: perhaps, something like, “Come Holy Spirit and fill Joe with your love. Flood his body with a sense of your loving presence. Lift from Joe the weight of these feelings of failure and anxiety.”

Perhaps as you are praying you are reminded of the story of the good shepherd in scripture (John 10:7-18), or the image of a shepherd tenderly holding a lamb pops into your imagination. Turn that impression into a simple prayer: “Lord, you are the good shepherd. Take Joe up into your arms like a lamb and hold him close to your heart. Settle him and quiet him in your love.”

Resume a conversation with Joe and describe the image. Then invite Joe to see himself in that picture. “Joe, would you take just a moment to imagine you are that lamb and that Jesus is holding you tenderly?” Give him a minute or two of silence, then ask Joe what it was like for him to imagine himself as a lamb in Jesus’ care. He might say something like, “I feel how strong Jesus’ arms are and I see the lamb calming down and resting in Jesus’ care.”

As you wrap up the prayer, give thanks to God for what Joe reports about his experience. “Thank you, Jesus for your strong arms and your tender care for Joe. Thank you, Lord, that the lamb is feeling a little calmer. Jesus, pour out your Holy and life-giving Spirit on Joe. Bring him into growing experience of your love for him.” Then conclude by asking Joe if you can anoint him with oil, making the sign of the cross on his forehead.



VIII. Sunday morning prayer etiquette

Unless you know the person, introduce yourself and ask the person's name if you don't know it. Ask them simply, "How can I pray for you?"

i. Always ask permission

- a. "Can I pray for you." "Is it OK if I put my hand on your shoulder as I pray for you?" "Is it OK if I anoint you with oil."

ii. Ask questions rather than making assumptions

- a. Can you tell me what is happening for you as we pray?
- b. Can you tell me what the tears are about?
- c. You seem a little (anxious, agitated, angry ...) can you tell me more about that?
- d. I notice you are trembling (shaking, etc.) can you tell me what is happening for you?

iii. Prayer ministry can be prophetic; but we always Propose rather than impose

- a. Qualify what you are about to say before sharing
 1. It may be appropriate to share an image or word that comes to you during the prayer
 2. Something spoken in gentleness will have great impact if it is from the Spirit
- b. Differences from Pentecostal traditions:
 1. Avoid phrases like, "The Lord told me," "Thus says the Lord."
 2. Avoid emphatic exhortations such as, "You just start praising the Lord right now for the miracle this is coming your way!" "Claim your healing right now in Jesus Name!" "If you have faith, you WILL be healed!"

iv. Keep confidentiality and ask for help

Ask for help if you need it, especially if the person seems to be in immediate danger, reports harming another person, or if you suspect abuse of any kind.

Encourage the person to call or email the church office to an appointment if needed. Some examples would include: mention of a serious illness such as cancer, confession of grave sin like adultery or a crime; mention of mental illness. If you are worried about it, talk it through with someone!



IX. How to minister God's forgiveness to others

There are two ways to minister God's forgiveness to others

- a. In a formal confession using the BCP liturgy, "Reconciliation of a Penitent"
- b. In a church service or informal pastoral conversation

Listen → Reassure → Pray → Reassure

i. Listen

Introduce yourself and ask the person's name if you don't know it.

Notice the person's emotions and body language.

Notice how you feel too.

Three common scenarios:

- a. The person knows exactly what he/she wants to confess and tells you right away.
- b. The person is emotionally distraught and is afraid to say out loud what needs to be confessed.
- c. The person feels bad about something but needs your help to name the sin (or the false guilt).

ii. Reassure

"Thank you for your courage in sharing this with me."

"Before we pray, I want to assure you that Scripture says If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

iii. Pray

"We are going to pray now." "Ok, let's pray."

Ask the person to pray.

"Would you feel comfortable praying out loud and making your confession directly to God?" (If the person is afraid to pray spontaneously, you can pray and ask them to repeat after you.)

You pray for them.

"Lord, thank you for loving Joe, for hearing his confession and for forgiving him freely and unconditionally in this very moment."

If possible, let the person hold a crucifix as you pray for them and apply holy water as you feel led.



“Joe, receive the washing of this water, let it put you in mind of your baptism. Jesus took all your sin upon himself on the cross. Receive the forgiveness that God is offering to you right now,” or “Joe, receive the forgiveness of the Lord.”

a. Visualization / imaginative prayer:

It can be helpful to ask a person to visualize holding his or her sin in symbolic form in their hands and then to look up at Jesus dying on the cross. Ask the person to lift up their hands as they release the burden of their sin to Jesus, using their body in this prayer. Always ask, “What did you see happening to your sin when you offered it up to Jesus? Where did the sin go? What was your sense of how Jesus was feeling toward you in that moment?”

iv. Reassure

Conclude by anointing them with oil. Make the sign of the cross on their foreheads using your thumb dipped in oil.

“Joe, receive the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

“Lord, seal this prayer and bring the work you have started this day to completion in days to come.”

v. Follow-up if needed

“Reach out to your pastoral leader to talk and pray more about this if you want to.”

“Call the church office to ask for a pastoral appointment.”

If you think the person is in danger (suicidal), or if they confess to harming another person, please talk right away to clergy or another pastoral leader. If in doubt, please talk to a pastoral leader.

- a. If you are feeling overwhelmed, that is a signal that you should talk with someone.
- b. Processing what happens in prayer helps us grow as prayer ministers

vi. Scripture for assurance of forgiveness.

- a. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- b. Isaiah 43:25 I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.
- c. Isaiah 1:18 Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
- d. Psalm 103:8-12 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.