

We gain access to God's healing power by prayer and seek a balance of prayer and action in daily life.

We grow in awareness of God's love for us and are empowered to make our particular and appropriate contribution at each stage of our lives. As we realise our vocation, so we seek to help others realise theirs.

A healing church contributes to this ministry in offering friendship, a listening ear, acceptance and affirmation of all, whether or not people appear 'different,' or in some way socially unacceptable.

'All are one in Christ' and this knowledge is in itself healing.

Suggestions for reading on the ministry of healing

A Time to Heal: The development of good practice in the healing ministry: A Handbook. Church House Publishing, 2000.

Hacker, George: *The Healing Stream*; Catholic Insights into the Ministry of Healing. DLT, 1998.

Maddocks, Morris: *The Christian Healing Ministry*. SPCK, 1981.

Rees, Dewi: *Healing in Perspective*. Whurr Publishers, London and Philadelphia, 2003.

Wilkinson, John: *The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological commentary*. Hansel/Eerdmans, 1998.

See also the selected list on healing from the CFPSS Library and:

Leaflet 6 (a) **Natural Healing Gifts**

Leaflet 6 (c) **Christian Healing and Mysticism**

CFPSS Occasional Leaflets

1. Sensitivity or Mediumship in a Christian Context.
2. The Death of a Baby: Giving Words to Sorrow.
3. Deliver us from evil . . .
4. The Psychic – What does the Bible say?
5. The Spiritual and the Psychic.
6. (a) Natural Healing Gifts
(b) Christian Healing and Theology
(c) Christian Healing and Mysticism

available from address below

- A Prayer -

God our healer,
Whose mercy is like refining fire:
Touch us with your tenderness;
That, being comforted by you,
We may reach out
to a troubled world,
Through Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Further advice and information
may be obtained from

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The Churches' Fellowship

for Psychical and Spiritual Studies



Occasional Leaflet 6 (b)

Christian Healing and Theology

by the Revd Nancy Walthew

Healing - Wholeness - Holiness
Theological and Practical Perspectives
of the Christian Churches'
Ministry of Healing

' . . . I have come that they may have life,
and may have it in all its fullness.'

(John 10.10)

'Is anyone among you in trouble? Let him pray . . . Is any one of you ill? Let him send for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord; prayer offered in faith will save the sick man, the Lord will restore him to health, and if he has committed sins he will be forgiven.'

James 5.13-16

Gifts of healing are among the gifts of the Spirit *(see: 1 Cor.12)*

From the early centuries Christians laid hands on the sick and prayed for them, and this continues through the church today, offering the assurance of God's presence in all the vicissitudes of life.

How is the ministry of healing expressed by the church today?

- *By both lay and ordained Christians in public and private prayers of intercession for those who are suffering.*
- *Through the laying on of hands when requested. Hands are placed gently on a person's head, and a quiet prayer is said. This form of touch when we are suffering can help us to feel less isolated and fearful.*
- *In anointing: a minister/priest makes the sign of the cross on a person's forehead, in pure olive oil that has been consecrated previously for this purpose. An appropriate prayer is said. This may be accompanied by the laying on of hands and may take place privately, or in public worship.*

- *By reconciliation and absolution: confession increasingly is seen as an act of reconciliation; of our being consciously drawn back to God from whom sin has separated us. In the Anglican tradition a form of general confession is said as a communal act during most services. Private confession may be made in a formal or less formal setting, and may include spiritual advice and counsel as well as absolution.*
- *Publicly, as a routine part of worship; at services of healing and wholeness, including the Holy Communion, in institutions such as hospitals, hospices, residential homes for elderly or disabled people, prisons, and at healing centres, and related conferences.*
- *Privately, within the home, hospital, hospice, or side chapel of a church etc.*
- *Ecumenically, including all denominations, where possible through 'Churches Together,' and through hospital, prison and industrial chaplaincies.*
- *In caring for people from cradle to grave in and beyond the church.*
- *In co-operation with the medical and caring professions.*

Why is there so much suffering if God is a God of love?

The answer to this difficult question lies, in part, in the fact that God has gifted us with freedom of choice. Succeeding generations have abused that freedom and damaged our relationship with God, with each other, and with the world in which we live. Yet still creation is held securely within God's love, and through his life and work, Jesus reveals God's nature, God's unconditional self - sacrificing love.

God in Jesus on the cross embraces the darkness and pain of the human condition for all time.

Now risen, ascended, and one with the Father, he comes to us through the activity of the Holy Spirit to restore and heal.

'He has no hands but ours,' so through the Church's ministry we share his loving healing touch for the relief of dis-ease of body, mind and spirit.

'God meets us at the point of our deepest need;' therefore, unlike many complementary therapies, today, the proper focus is wider and deeper than the relief of physical symptoms.

We cannot predict the form our healing will take

It may be:

- a strengthening that carries us through prolonged illness or disability;
- a recovery more rapid than expected;
- experiencing a deep fear being driven out by God's love;
- a growing awareness that a prejudice, or negative attitude is softening;
- an ability to forgive someone who has hurt us;
- A healing so unexpected that we immediately want to thank God, and offer ourselves in His service;
- a widening awareness of ways in which we can be a healing influence in our homes, at work, and in the local community;
- a desire to pray for the healing of the world.