

# The Prayer of Healing

Back in my childhood, I remember that every communion Sunday we had a time where people could come forward for prayer for healing. Following the command in James, Elders would ask if they had sin to confess, anoint them with oil, and pray for Christ to heal. I even remember some who were healed instantly.

Somewhere along the line, most churches have stopped that practice in services. A good number, however, would do it privately if a person asks. But people do not ask, because it is never mentioned to do so. It is almost exclusively only practiced in Pentecostal churches who believe (per Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24) that healing is also included in the Atonement (a belief I personally hold, as do many non-Pentecostal churches as well). Yet it used to be practiced in many streams of the church. What happened?

In the West, it was probably the explosion of knowledge and availability of services in modern medicine that caused people to ask for the elders to anoint with oil, less and less. But skepticism and the lack of churches regularly making prayer for healing available (except for putting the request on a prayer list or chain) has certainly been a culprit as well.

The result is that while every believer would likely say they believe God has the power to heal, few think He will heal in most situations. Or if He does, it will primarily be through "His giving knowledge to" doctors and the right medicine.

## Revive the Practice

Whatever the reason, we will not see many testimonies of miraculous healing if we give only mild lip service to pray for healing! We need to make prayer for healing visible again on Sunday mornings. We need to teach on faith (though only a

small amount needed by the asker) and on expectation. If we and our people have no sense of expectation that God will move in a church service or as we pray for healing, He very likely will not move!

Recently in the church where I am preaching, I did a 3-week series on healing. Multiple times I talked about expectation. When we gave people a chance to be anointed and prayed for, I was stunned by the significant response! In the days that followed I received more texts and email comments from people thanking me for the emphasis than I did any other message.

Every Thursday night for the last two years in June and July, events called "Jesus Rallies" have been held in the little town of Ephrata, PA (Lancaster County). Led by Circuit Rider GenZer, Joel Bomberger, these worship and preaching events have seen 800-1000 people every week, dozens saved and baptized each week, and many miraculous instantaneous healings, including spines straightening, and several girls' cutter scars on arms disappearing in front of the individual as prayer for healing was offered. (Needless to say, the girls surrendered their lives to Jesus and booked it to the baptismal tank!)

In these days, we need to raise our level of expectation for healing and make the practice of praying for healing both often and visible again!

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