

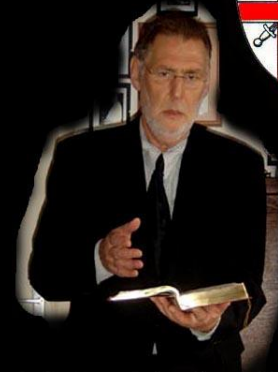


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**Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119: 105**



ds. Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th.,D.D.

Evangelical House Churches

Divine Healing

Ministry to the Sick

by

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A Vision for the New Testament House Church Ministry Today

“The pivot point hangs on whether or not God has revealed a universal pattern for the Church in the New Testament and for this New Era. If He has not, then anything will do so long as it works. But I am convinced that nothing so dear to the heart of Christ as His Bride should be left without explicit instructions as to her corporate conduct. I am further convinced that this starting twenty-first century has in no way simulated this pattern in its method of ‘churching’ today’s community...it is incumbent upon me, if God has a pattern for the church, to find and establish that pattern, at all costs.” (Rev. Ph.L.De Coster, B.Th.,D.D.)

Guidelines to Healing Ministry and Prayer According to the Bible

There is a stream of God’s divine healing power flowing from his cosmic throne to heal sickness and disease afflicting humanity. In God’s love and power, there is absolutely no sickness, no disease, no physical or mental affliction that God cannot and will not heal! Let us detail what we are saying,

remembering that the same powerful, life-giving Spirit that was released to open blind eyes and heal the sick through Christ is working within us today.



James 5: 13-16:

*13: Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.
14: Is any sick among you? 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:
15: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
16: Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

1. Who is the Healer?

Let us be clear on this. We live in a spiritual world and Christians are engaged in a battle against 'spiritual forces of wickedness' (Ephesians 6.12). These forces are very deceptive (2 Corinthians 11.5-15) and their powers are very real (Exodus 7.10-12). When Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and it became a snake, the adversary imitated the miracle:

"Then Pharaoh called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts." (Exodus 7.11)

The adversary imitates what God does, and that includes healing. So we are told to 'test the spirits' (1 John 4.1) and any form of healing that has a spiritual root other than Christ should be avoided. For example, the New Age concept of Reiki Healing involves 'channeling' or contact with 'spirit guides' - something expressly forbidden in the Sacred Scripture (Deut 18.11). Similarly, although often passed off as physically and mentally helpful, Yoga has hidden spiritual roots which can cause real harm. So in order to distinguish God's healing from other forms of healing (some of which can be very real due to black powers), it is vital to acknowledge that Jesus is the healer at all times (Isaiah 53.4), (Matthew 8.17). Peter said to the paralyzed man:

"Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed." (Acts 9.34)

True, God-given healing is always through Jesus Christ (Acts 3.6), and *His* power. Man is simply His instrument through whom healing is sometimes administered. So beware of all forms of 'divine healing' that do not honour Jesus as the healer. Jesus is the only true healer. He healed 2000 years ago (Luke 7.20-23) and gave His disciples authority (Matthew 10.1) (Mark 3.15) and power (Luke 24.49)(Acts 1.5) to heal in His name (Acts 3.6) as a sign of the Kingdom of God. This same Jesus rose from the dead and lives today to give the same authority and power to modern-day disciples. And He lives to answer our prayers for healing even when we do not have the anointing of the Holy Spirit (as for example in a healing ministry or the gift of healing).

2. Essential Theology

Before we consider how we might pray for healing, or minister healing, we need to summarise Biblical teaching on healing. The main point is that sin and sickness are inextricably linked *and both were dealt with by Christ's death on the cross*:

"(The Lord) Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases." (Psalms 103.3)

"Our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried ... He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities ... and by His scourging we are healed." (Isaiah 53.4,5)

"He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases." (Matthew 8.17)

His death freed man from the 'the curse of the law' (Galatians 3.13). What does this law mean? It was a law which required a completely perfect life to impress God, and also a law which caused all creation to 'groan' (Romans 8.18-23). It was a law that resulted in a death penalty for sin, and also a fallen creation - which includes sickness. The victory of Christ's death over this curse (He took the curse for us) is underscored by two redemptive names of God:

JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU meaning "The Lord our Righteousness"

JEHOVAH-RAPHA meaning "The Lord our Physician"

Our Sin: The 'curse of the law' meant that our sin before God had a penalty - death. But by faith we accept the forgiveness of sin that Christ offers as He took that curse. We believe we are 'saved' from God's judgement of our sin and that we are reconciled to God through Christ (Isaiah 53.5)(John 3.18). So believers should consider themselves 'dead to sin' (Rom 6.11) in the sense that they no longer wilfully sin. The fact that they still fall into sin is acknowledged in the Bible, and there is an antidote (1 John 1.9).

Our Health: The 'curse of the law' also brought a fallen world (Genesis 3.14-19), a world of accidents and disasters, a world of human imperfection, a world of sick people (Romans 8.18-23). But Christ's death on the cross also took our sickness, disease and pains. Like our sin, they were carried 'carried away' (Matthew 8.17). But, like on-going sin, we often get sick! The good news is that, just like on-going sin has an antidote, there is an antidote to on-going health problems. This is the subject of our study on healing.

The Key Point: Why did Jesus link healing with the preaching of the gospel (Matthew 4.23, 9.35, 10.7,8, Luke 9.2, 10.9)? Because both redemption from sin and healing were to be dealt with through His work on the cross! If we can't believe in the healing of our minds and bodies, how can we believe in the forgiveness of sin? Those who trust in Christ are offered 'wholeness' in body, soul and spirit; it is God's will that we are saved and it is normally God's will that we are healed.

So healing the sick is a *sign* of the kingdom of God and confirms the truth of the gospel message:

"He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God, and to perform healing ... heal those who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" (Luke 9.2, 10.9)

3. But we still get sick, and some are not healed!

3.1 We still get sick

Remember that we live in a fallen world which is under God's curse (Genesis 3) and the whole creation, including ourselves, is groaning and imperfect (Romans 8.18-23). We are freed from sin - but we still sin, and we are freed from sickness - but we still get sick! Theologically, we say the kingdom of God is both *now* (in healing power) and *not yet* (in on-going sickness). The kingdom of God has not yet fully come upon the earth (Luke 21.31).

There must be a reason for the sickness or disease. It may be our own fault e.g. lung cancer through smoking, or environmental and beyond our control (industrial pollution or nuclear accident), or physical disablement from a car crash, or a birth defect, or spiritual attack. Whatever the cause, the good news is that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3.13) and so we can come to Him for healing. Apart from Paul's case, there is no record of Jesus saying "sorry, you must suffer a little longer with this illness". And given the diagnosis of a potential illness, we can claim Isa 53.4,5 and believe in faith that it has already been dealt with by Christ's sacrifice, just like our past and future sin. Unless God tells us otherwise), we can simply claim 'Christ has borne away this disease' and we could recite the following statement of faith:

"I stand on the word of God. I confess Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of my life. I believe His sacrifice on the cross reconciled me to God my Father and also freed me from the power of sin and sickness. I am freed from the power of the curse over mankind and from the power of all principalities and powers. In the name of Jesus and by His authority I command all attacks on my health to flee and never return. Through His work on the cross I am made whole in body, soul and spirit. Christ offers me both salvation and healing. So I confess all known sin in my life and ask Jesus to forgive me and to heal my body. I believe that this is the normal will of God for me."

3.2 Some are not healed

Despite the prayer of faith, the fact remains that some are not healed. Paul had to leave his friend Trophimus in Miletus because he was sick (2 Timothy 4.20). Maybe Paul had prayed but clearly Trophimus hadn't been healed at that time. And Paul encouraged his young Pastor friend Timothy at Ephesus to 'use a little wine for his frequent ailments' (1 Timothy 5.23).

We all know people, Christians included, who have not been healed despite obedience, repentance, authority, power, faith, prayer, and compassion. Does

this negate the promises of Isaiah 53.4,5? No! Paul had a physical problem - possibly an eye problem (Galatians 4.13-15) - and he was not healed despite his petitioning the Lord three times (2 Corinthians 12.8). We are given several reasons why he wasn't healed. His physical problem enabled him to evangelise the Galatians (Galatians 4.13). But Paul highlights another reason. Jesus gave him a powerful healing ministry, and to keep him from boasting he was given a form of weakness (2 Corinthians 12.7). It was to keep him humble and to remember his human weakness. Jesus told him:

"My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12.9)

C.S. Lewis recognised this too. He argued that there must be some reason for on-going physical 'tortures':

"The tortures occur. If they are unnecessary, then there is no God or a bad one. If there is a good God, then these tortures are necessary."

As in Paul's case, Lewis argues there must be a reason for an on-going 'torture' or sickness. Put another way, since it is normally God's will for us to be healed, there must be a reason why healing does not take place. Events in the Christian life don't follow laws of randomness and chance (Romans 8.28). Healing may not always happen because of God's sovereign wisdom and understanding of the situation (human lives are complex). In Paul's case God revealed it, but often we never know why.

4. What about Faith?

Let's first consider the sick person. From the biblical records it seems people usually had to ask for healing - they had to exercise faith in Jesus (Mark 1.40-42) (Mark 5.25-34) (Matthew 9.21,27,28). Jesus was sometimes amazed when people expressed strong faith in Him (Luke 7.9). From the gospels it seems that a person's faith in Christ was enough to release the healing power in Christ; in such cases Jesus said: "your faith has made you well" (Matthew 9.22,29)(Luke 17.19) (Luke 18.42)

But what if the sick person does not have strong faith? Jesus didn't heal many in Nazareth because of their unbelief (Matthew 13.58), and so this *may be* one reason why someone is not healed. Having said that, there are no hard and fast rules. An well-known evangelist sites cases when God has healed people who have had no faith whatsoever! Apparently a sick person does not necessarily need faith to receive healing. We cannot insist that healing has not occurred because of their lack of faith! God even heals when a person is not primarily looking for healing (Acts 3.1-10).

On the other hand we are told that it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11.6). So it seems that at least those praying for, or ministering healing, should have faith (although, as in Nazareth, a recipient's lack of faith may still prevent healing). In this case it is the faith of the believer that releases the power of God given to them by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.8). They need:

- Faith in the written word as absolute truth
- Faith in God alone and not in our own determination and will
- Faith in God's faithfulness and not in our faith
- Faith in God's wisdom and understanding of the situation
- Faith in God's power to heal any sickness (Luke 7.20-23)
- Faith in God's goodness, love and compassion (John 16.27)
- Faith in God's desire to heal in His way and His time

So when we pray for healing in Jesus' name we have faith in the power and wisdom and compassion and faithfulness and love of God, coupled with the knowledge that we are human and often lack wisdom and knowledge about the situation. We show faith by simply praying for healing. And when we minister healing to someone, we are moving out in faith together with spiritual gifts - we may be 'endued with power' at that time, such as a 'word of knowledge' or 'discernment' about the situation. In such cases we may be able to say with absolute confidence, like Peter (Acts 3.6), that God has healed, or will heal at a particular time or place .

4.1 The Effect of a lack of Faith and Prayer

Given His power, Jesus expected His disciples to 'heal the sick' as instructed (Matthew 10.1-8), and He got frustrated when their faith fell short (Matthew 17.14-21)(Mark 9.14-29). Apparently they lacked faith in certain situations and because of this no healing took place. Like the disciples we often lack confidence in praying for the sick and that cannot please Jesus.

Also, it is not helpful to have unbelief around us even when we have the confidence to pray for healing. As mentioned, even Jesus himself could not heal much when people around Him disbelieved (Matthew 13.58) (Mark 6.1-6).

5. Healing Scenarios

In Sacred Scripture we can identify several scenarios in which healing is sought. Clearly, the sick person can pray to God themselves, or others can intercede in prayer for them, or they can receive prayer ministry.

5.1 Healing through individual prayer

If we are obviously sick in some way, we have several choices in prayer. We can simply ask God to take the problem away, expecting Him to do so (Mark 11.24), and thanking Him in anticipation (Philippians 4.6). We might feel able to say the statement of faith in the Saviour and stand on the fact that Jesus has already 'taken away' our sickness. Such a stand is also appropriate if we feel the sickness is from spiritual attack. If we perceive such attack, we can command all such attacks to go in the name of Jesus.

If we do not receive healing, even after some time, we can plead, beg and implore Him like Paul did with his apparent physical problem. But then there were reasons why Paul was not healed and this might be our problem too. Are we right with God or with others? Is there is a problem that needs dealing with first?

Of course we can ask others to pray for us, although our problem might be deep rooted and we need prayer ministry. It may need the spiritual insight and wisdom of others with a healing ministry, and the healing process may take some time. If we sense this, we should seek ministry.

5.2 Healing through Petition (Intercessory) Prayer

What about praying for the sick? Some claim that we should not *pray* for the sick, rather, we should *heal* the sick. They argue from Christ's work on the cross and His authority and power He has given His church. In fact, both are true since prayer and healing the sick are linked.

For instance, Jesus said that sometimes prayer is essential in order to deliver (heal) people from demonic spirits (Mark 9.29), Peter prayed before turning to the dead body of Dorcas and commanding her to 'arise' (Acts 9.40), Paul prayed for the father of Publius before laying his hands on him and healing him (Acts 28.8), the disciple John prayed that his friend Gaius would be in 'good health' (3 John 2), and James, a leader in the Jerusalem church, instructed the church elders to pray for the sick. But it helps if the sick person first asks for prayer (Jesus usually healed only when He was asked to heal). Likewise, a church should respond when asked:

"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 offered in faith will restore the one who is sick ..." (James 5.14,15).

These examples highlight two levels of healing prayer, one deeper than the other. Perhaps the most common approach in Christian fellowships is what we might call 'petition prayer'. Often when we are called to pray like this we have no real understanding of the medical situation and we are not moving in 'Spirit-led' ministry with Spiritual insight and gifts. Some would claim we are not moving in the fullness that Jesus wants for His church. Nevertheless, we are faithful and fervent in prayer and ask God 'in the name of Jesus'. In such cases we are really petitioning God (pleading with Him) to heal the person, whatever that problem might be. Lacking spiritual insight, we cannot be sure how, when or where God will heal, or even if He will heal, but we do pray having confidence in the power, wisdom, compassion, faithfulness and love of God. So it is very reasonable to pray like this because we know that it is normally God's will to heal.

Other important points in petition prayer: firstly, the prayer is offered in faith by the elders (as discussed, the sick person does not need faith). It seems God often waits for such prayers of faith before healing takes place. Secondly, these prayers may be accompanied with the anointing of oil, depending upon how the Spirit leads (see also Mark 6.13). In Jesus' time oil was a rudimentary medicine (Luke 10.34), but many believe that oil that has been blessed also brings a spiritual dimension - bringing the presence of God closer to the sick person. The blessing of any medicines being taken by the person can also mitigate side effects of medicine. Lastly, sometimes there is an obstacle to healing which needs dealing with first; there may be another problem we have not seen. We may even be praying against God's will. Perhaps we need to be praying on a different level?

The above examples indeed highlight a deeper level of healing prayer. Such prayer was followed by direct action as the people concerned moved in authority and power over the sickness. This leads us to healing through what might be called 'ministry and command'.

5.3 Healing through Ministry and Command - Spiritual Gifts

The Dangers:

Apart from the raising of Lazarus from the dead, there is no instance in the gospels where Jesus prays directly for the healing of the sick. Rather, He acted firmly with authority and power towards sickness. He commanded, and healing happened, totally and quickly. Does this apply today? Consider the following scenario:

Someone asks the church (a body of believers) for prayer for healing. They have an obvious medical problem, such as loss of eyesight, loss of hearing, severe back pain, a spreading skin rash, or a lump. How does the church respond?

Many would engage in petition or intercessory prayer. In many churches it's seen as the most common and 'safest' response. After all, to act firmly as Jesus did might not work and the problem might not go away! Nevertheless, as discussed, petition prayer is scriptural, if not ideal.

But some might step out in faith and attempt to deal with the situation firmly, as Jesus did. They observe the command to 'heal the sick' (Luke 9.2) and base their actions on biblical theology and a knowledge of the authority and power Jesus gave His church. They stand upon the fact that His death on the cross 'carried away our diseases' (Section 2). This may or may not be the right approach and great damage can result if such action is not appropriate at this time.

There is a danger in appropriating the healing work Christ did on the cross **and on this basis alone claiming healing for the person**. It is wrong to minister healing by simply attributing power to the words we confess and to our faith. Such an approach could be seen as a 'healing method' or 'mantra', even heresy. Rather, should not we first ask 'what is the mind of the Spirit - what is God thinking about the situation?' Shouldn't we acknowledge that people are only healed through the move of the Holy Spirit and by the power of Christ (Luke 24.49) (Acts 1.5,8)? The woman with an issue of blood was healed by her faith releasing power from Christ, and Christ alone (Mark 5.28-34).

Lastly, we could cite the case of Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Corinthians 12.7,8). He lived after Christ's resurrection and so Isaiah 53.4,5 applied! Why didn't Paul claim his healing through Christ's healing work on the cross? He had great faith, so why didn't he simply confess his healing through Christ's sacrifice? Perhaps because he recognised that his healing was actually subject to the will of Christ, and was not determined through his strong faith and the power of his words!

Spirit-filled Ministry:

This is where we must recognise the importance of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12.4-11). They are essential when 'ministering' over sickness in a firm way like Jesus did. Such ministry may involve the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, discernment, faith and healing. The gifts may be 'transient' - for the immediate situation (1 Corinthians 12.11) - or someone may be present with a healing ministry. The gifts may give a special revelation from God about the situation and reveal hidden problems that need dealing with before healing can take place.

They may give instruction as to how to pray and what to pray for. They may, through a word of knowledge, encourage someone to ask for healing. This type of healing ministry will certainly involve people who are 'filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5.18, Acts 6.3, 7.55, 11.24, 13.52) - prayerful people who are listening to the Spirit, whilst having the compassion and love of Christ for the sick.

So before embarking upon this assertive type of healing ministry we must ask ourselves:

- Are we looking to Christ and His presence? Are we waiting for Him and listening to Him? Are we expecting His Spirit to move in power? Are we being moved by His Spirit to pray in an assertive way?
- Or are we simply looking to theology and attributing healing power to the words we confess and the faith we have?

If the latter, then perhaps we should refrain from declaring healing in case we harm the sick (impose guilt upon them) and harm the faith of those praying. But if we discern that spiritual gifts are present and that the Spirit is moving, then we can humbly embark upon such ministry. It will be as though we have the mind of Christ and know His will at that time. We will move against the sickness **'in His name' - meaning we come in His stead, just as though Jesus Himself is there to heal**. We may be assured by the Spirit that Jesus is going to heal there and then and can pray with confidence "Be healed in Jesus name". Like Peter we can command in Jesus' name "rise up and walk" (Acts 3.6). We can confidently stand on the authority and power Jesus gave his disciples, and heal the sick (Matthew 10.1, Mark 3.15, Luke 9.1, 10.19).

But even if those praying are not operating in this way, we are sometimes moved by the Spirit in anger against the sickness (as an enemy) and we are led to rebuke the sickness in Jesus' name (Luke 4.39). Again, these are times when we stand upon the authority Christ gave His church over sickness.

Spiritual healing of the sick rests only upon the work Jesus Christ did on the cross, and the clear promises of Sacred Scripture, and upon the faith and authority (in Christ) of those praying or ministering. However, we must acknowledge where we are in praying for, or ministering to, the sick. If we are not operating in the spiritual gifts Christ gives His church, if we are not moved by the Spirit or receive a special revelation from God about the situation, if we do not feel 'anointed with power from on high' (Luke 24.49), then our prayers are more like petition prayers - which can be equally effective. Great damage

can be done by pretending otherwise e.g. by claiming healing. We should be humbly aware of our limitations at any point in time!

What you should bear in mind when you are praying or ministering to the sick!

- Remember that healing glorifies God, and God alone (John 9.3). In fact, God *wants* the glory when healing takes place (Luke 17.18) - so give it to Him! It is easier to glorify God in a public healing scenario than in private (Luke 7.11-17).
- Remember that healing is often used as verification of the truth of the gospel. The good news of salvation in Christ is preached, the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and the sick are healed (Matthew 10.7,8)(Luke 7.22). In fact, wherever a believer goes, they take the kingdom of God with them (Luke 17.21).
- Remember that healing is by the power of the Holy Spirit and *not* simply by our words and our faith (avoid animism).
- Remember that healing is normally God's will, even in old age (Exodus 23.25,26) (Psalms 103.5)(Job 5.26).
- Remember that, even though a situation looks impossible from a human point of view, it is possible with God (Luke 18.27).
- Remember that praying 'in the name of Jesus' means to pray *in the person of Jesus*. In other words, we are speaking the mind of Jesus, just as though He was there. Avoid using the phrase like a mantra!
- Have faith in God alone, and not in 'methods' of healing. Turn our minds to the Father, or to Jesus.
- Be encouraged - your prayers can be very effective (James 5.16).
- It helps to be 'specific' in prayer. Don't just pray for a release of the pain. If we know there is a whiplash injury from a car accident, then pray for healing of the neck! But be aware that God may heal a completely different complaint!
- When Jesus healed the sick He also had compassion for them (Matthew 9.35,36)(Matthew 14.14)(Mark 1.41). He was concerned and cared for them. Likewise, our prayer must be 'heartfelt' - full of the compassion and the love of Jesus for that person.
- Always be 'positive' in prayer, not emphasising the sickness, but see the person as whole and well, as God normally wants them to be.
- The time factor: ask God for healing but do not try to tell Him how or when to heal. Remember there is sometimes a time interval over which healing occurs ('process healing'). Sometimes the sick person needs time to work back to the source of the problem. Suffering can persist until, at some point, God is there to heal (deliberate delay - John 11.6) (many

years - John 9.1-3) (12 years - Matthew 9.20-22) (18 years - Luke 13.11). In the Bible, when the time was right, God healed instantaneously and was glorified. If the person feels partial healing, let them know that God sometimes heals over a period of time.

- Unless the Spirit speaks very clearly to us, never promise a person that God is going to heal them, or tell someone they are healed after prayer or ministry. Wait until they confirm it themselves. If the person feels that they have been healed, ask them to test their healing e.g. walk without the support.
- Although we may be praying a petition prayer (we lack spiritual insight), we can still pray in confidence. We can be confident in the faithfulness of God. We can still have faith that God in some way will hear and answer our prayer. To end a petition prayer in 'if it be Your will' acknowledges that we may well not know what God's will is in the situation, but it weakens our confidence in prayer. Underneath we start to believe that nothing really is going to happen! In contrast, Jesus said:

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." (Mark 11.24).

Healing and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion



The Apostle Paul about the Lord's Super (Holy Communion or Holy Eucharist Celebration): (1 Corinthians 11: 23-34)

23: For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is

my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.
25: After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26: For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

27: Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28: But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

29: For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30: For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31: For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32: But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

33: Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34: And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

There is no definition of regularly. Each of us has to find that rhythm of life as God reveals it to us. My personal practice is to commune once or twice a week. Some of my brothers and sisters in Christ are led to commune once a month or once a quarter. Since it is Jesus' command that we "Do this," I suggest that each of us ask Him what He has in mind for us. He knows what He wants for you far better than anyone else.

There have been many ideas put forth about what we receive when we receive Communion. "Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to His disciples and said, 'Take, eat; **this is my body.**' And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; for **this is my Blood** of the Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'" Matthew 26:26

"The Apostle Paul said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not **a participation in the Blood of Christ?** The bread which we break, is it not **a participation in the Body of Christ?** Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body for we all partake of the one bread." (I Corinthians 10:16)

However we explain what occurs when we set apart the bread and cup at Holy Communion, we must see two things. It was important enough for Jesus to take

the last hour that He had with His disciples, and give them this one thing to do. He seemed to be clear about it. **This is my body. This is my blood.**

This is not blood which you are offering to God. You are forbidden to eat or to drink of that blood. This is the wine you drink in remembrance of the blood that God was once for all offering to you on the Cross, and that His life might be in you through your personal faith in Him, and you might dwell in Christ and Christ in you. When Paul writes that we participate in the blood of Christ, he is saying that we are participating in the Life of the resurrected Christ.

Jesus makes the statement in John's Gospel that confirms this. "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you; **he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life**, and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:53

Rather than argue about what actually happens, let us say that in the action of partaking of the bread and the cup, we are in some way partaking of the Life of Christ. My personal opinion is that we are receiving the Word of God made flesh in bread and wine. Even if we interpret the Lord's Supper to be a memorial, we must say that it brings with it an effect of being in communion with the crucified, dead, buried, risen and ascended Lord who has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the age. Matthew 28:20

He has promised that He would dwell in us and we would dwell in Him. He has come to take up residence in our lives. We are to be made one with Him as He is one with Father, and He prays that we might be made one with each other as well as with Him. John 17.

When we receive Communion in whatever fashion, we might visualize the presence of Jesus going into every part of our body, permeating every cell, bringing new life to each part of the body that is dis eased. We might visualize the blood of Jesus circulating in our own cardiovascular system, bringing light into every part of our body as He cleanses the blood vessels and takes His healing presence into every part where there is dis ease.

It is simply a matter of taking Jesus at His Word, and receiving the gift of His presence within us. Where He is received, His presence is manifested in new life. I am convinced that is why He gave us this healing practice when we come together with one another and with Him.

I am sure there are many ways in which people approach the sacrament of Holy Communion with Jesus. I have never been one to deride anyone for their faith in what occurs at Communion. I am simply recommending that people who are

seeking healing from the risen and present Lord, visualize what is actually taking place, and allow Jesus to have access to ourselves, our souls, our bodies, our minds, our spirits, and our relationships to touch and to heal us within.

It is well not to hurry through such a time of communion as if it is something to complete and get on with the important work of the Lord. This is the important work of the Lord. This is one of the building blocks of the Kingdom. It is the reception of the presence of Jesus within, that we might be healed and equipped with the wholeness and resources to become His presence for those to whom He sends us to minister in His Name. "He who receives you, receives Me, and he who receives me, receives Him who sent Me." Matthew 10:40

It is well to be still with Him. Allow Him to have His way within us, to make known the creative power of His love to restore our lives to the measure of health that we need to perform the purpose for which He created us and to which He has called us today.

The suggestions in this tract have been tried by many people who have found in them a release of the power of God for healing within them. It is simply one of the ways in which the Healing Christ comes to work His will within us to prepare us to minister in the power of His Holy Name.



The Cenacle (Jerusalem) where Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover, and instituted the Lord's Supper, also known as the Holy Communion or Holy Eucharist.

This is the magnificent story of the “Institution of the Lord’s Super” (the Holy Communion or Eucharist), ever to remember: (Luke 22:13-27)

13: And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.

14: And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15: And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17: And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

18: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

19: And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20: Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21: But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

22: And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23: And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

24: And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25: And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26: But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27: For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Example of a Lord's Supper Celebration also called Holy Eucharist or Communion

Holy Eucharist Liturgy

The centre of our worship is the Holy Eucharist. Other traditional names for this service are: the Holy Communion, the Mass, the Lord's Supper, and the Divine Liturgy. It is the service specifically commanded by Jesus in the New Testament. The Eucharist joins our offering of worship to Christ's offering of Himself upon the altar of the cross. As He promised (Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 6; I Corinthians 11) Jesus is truly, spiritually present under the outward forms of the consecrated Bread and Wine, to infuse our lives with the spiritual strength of His life.

By receiving Holy Communion, we give our Solemn Assent, our "Amen," to the entire Christian Eucharistic Service. We express our belief that the Eucharist is a symbolic spiritual sacrifice which must be administered as a rule by a bishop or a priest whose ministry derives in succession from the Apostles themselves in memory of Jesus' death and resurrection. Nowadays, the theologians differ on this doctrine. Holy Communion is open to all baptized believers that profess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.



The Traditional Holy Eucharist Rite in Short

General Instructions:

At the Generic Christian Church, the Service of the Word is about 45-50 minutes long.

Genericans call the first part of the service the Service of the Word because its main features are Scripture readings and the sermon. It follows the plan of Jewish synagogue liturgy, which in turn follows Nehemiah 8. If the Service of Communion immediately follows the Service of the Word, which is normally the case, it has the following order of worship:

- **Greeting** (clergy)
- **Opening Prayer** (clergy)
- **First Reading** (lay person)
- **Psalm** (lay person)
- **Epistle Reading** (lay person)
- **Gospel Reading** (clergy)
- **Sermon** (clergy)
- **Creed** (all)
- **Pastoral Prayer** (clergy) or **Prayers of the People** (lay person)
- **Offertory** (clergy)

I have put “lay person” or “clergy” to show what is most common. There may be an occasion when there are visiting clergy who perform roles labelled here for lay people, or a lay person might preach the sermon if the pastor is home sick.

Now that is how the Generic Christian Church does it; your church might have some variation of this structure. For example, there might be a congregational prayer of confession right after the opening prayer, or the pastoral prayer might be later, in the middle of the Service of Communion.

The member of the clergy who leads Communion is called the ‘celebrant.’

If you are clergy in a denomination that requires or recommends a specific Communion liturgy, don’t stray from it. However, if you are clergy in a denomination that does not give you that sort of guidance, you can use this as a resource for a historic, orthodox, scriptural, and complete Communion service.



***The Lord's Supper and Ecumenism.** This is a high church Eucharist celebration in a House Church community as in the Acts of the Apostles and Apostolic times in general. What is a house church? We are used to thinking of church as a building, but how does the Bible portray the church? Interestingly, the Bible never uses the word "church" to describe a building; instead, it gives us the picture of the church as a family. Like a family, there are spiritual mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers in Christ. The church is called "God's household" (1 Timothy 3:15). They shared common meals together (Acts 2:46, 1 Corinthians 11:20-21). Lived life together (Acts 2:44-46) and as a family, were to care for and love one another deeply (1 Peter 1:22). Not surprisingly then, the New Testament churches typically met in the homes of believers. Here are some biblical examples of New Testament house churches*

Lydia's House (Acts 16:40)

An Upper Room (Acts 20:8)

Priscilla and Aquila's house (Romans 16:3-5, 1 Corinthians 16:19)

Nympha's house in Laodicea (Colossians 4:15)

Archippa's house (Philemon 2)

Some in the West see the house church as a new phenomenon when, in reality, house churches have existed since the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47). Many large churches today started because of a small group meeting in the homes of

believers. In China, for example, the house church has been one of the vehicles God used to multiply the number of Chinese disciples from a few thousand in the 1930s to, by some estimates, more than 80 million believers today.

The Complete Liturgy

Greeting

The service begins either with a call to worship or a set of responses, taken from Scripture.

Confession

The congregation and celebrant together:

O Lord Jesus Christ,
We confess that we have sinned against you
in our thoughts, words, and deeds.
We have had anxieties about the future,
even though we proclaim you as Lord.
We have failed to love our neighbours,
and we have disobeyed your commands.
Have mercy upon us, Lord Jesus,
Forgive us our sins
and cleanse us of all unrighteousness
That we may walk in your ways
and serve you in grace and love.
This we ask in your holy Name
Amen.

Absolution

The celebrant:

The Lord Jesus Christ is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness; therefore you are forgiven! You are cleansed of all unrighteousness, and you are worthy to partake of this holy meal.

The “Kyrie” and the “Gloria” are appropriate as in Roman Catholicism. The “Gloria” is not always sung or recited.

V/: Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

R/: Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

V/: Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.

R/: Christ, have mercy. Or: Christe, eleison.

V/: Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

R/: Lord, have mercy. Or: Kyrie, eleison.

Glória in excélsis Deo
et in terra pax homínibus bonae
voluntátis.
Laudámus te,
Benedícimus te,
Adorámus te,
Glorificámus te,
Grátias ágimus tibi propter magnam
glóriam tuam,
Dómine Deus, Rex cæléstis,
Deus Pater omnípotens.
Dómine Fili Unigénite, Iesu Christe,
Dómine Deus, Agnus Dei, Fílius
Patris,
Qui tollis peccáta mundi, miserére
nobis;
Qui tollis peccáta mundi, súscipe
deprecatióem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserére
nobis.
Quóniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus
Dóminus, tu solus Altíssimus,
Iesu Christe, cum Sancto Spíritu: in
glória Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on
earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you,
We bless you,
We adore you,
We glorify you,
We give you thanks for your great
glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the
Father,
You take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
You take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer.
You are seated at the right hand of the
Father, have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One, you
alone are the Lord, you alone are the
Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in
the glory of God the Father. Amen

Opening Prayer

Genericans call it the opening prayer, not the invocation. The word “invocation” implies that God is not present and needs an invitation to join the service, which they certainly hope is not the case.

First Reading

The first reading comes from the Old Testament, except during the Season of Easter, when it comes from Acts. The first reading is thematically related to the gospel and epistle readings, except during the time between Pentecost and Advent, when the first reading can follow a separate and continuous story line.

Psalm or Hymn

The first reading is followed by a psalm, which the congregation can sing, chant, or read responsively.

Epistle Reading

The epistle reading comes from one of the epistles, Acts, or Revelation.

Gospel Reading

A member of the clergy reads the gospel, most often the one who is preaching. The congregation stands during the reading, as a sort of corporate memory of the time when there were no pews.

Sermon (ad libitum)

A member of the clergy delivers the sermon.

Creed

The congregation recites the Nicene Creed after the sermon. Anglican churches use the Apostles Creed if there is no Eucharist or if the service includes a baptism—the Apostles Creed was originally a baptismal liturgy. In some churches, it is possible to substitute the Apostles Creed

for the Nicene Creed at any time. In Methodist churches, the Apostles Creed is the norm.

Traditional Wording

I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation
came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost
of the Virgin Mary,
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under
Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
and the third day he rose again
according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory,
to judge both the quick and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost the Lord,
and Giver of Life,
who proceedeth from the Father [and the
Son];
who with the Father and the Son together
is worshipped and glorified;
who spake by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Catholic and
Apostolic Church;

Modern Wording

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus
Christ,
the only son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the
Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of
the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the
Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and
the Son].
With the Father and the Son
he is worshipped and glorified.

I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

Pastoral Prayer *or* Prayers of the People

Most churches generally call the prayer the “pastoral prayer” if the pastor prays one big prayer, or the “prayers of the people” if there are a series of short prayers with congregational responses. Genericans prefer the second option. The prayers are in a different place in the service in different churches, but Genericans like to put them between the scripture readings. The pastor collects prayer requests from the congregation and incorporates them into a series of short prayers with congregational responses. (Genericans think it is odd to ask for prayer requests and then not pray about them.) Because there are congregational responses, the congregation is praying, not daydreaming.

Offertory

In the Generic Christian Church, the offertory is the time when lay people present the clergy with bread and wine for use in the Eucharist. The offertory includes various prayers and blessings. At the same time, there is a collection of donations, so the money is presented also. If there is only a collection of donations, it is a collection, not an offertory.

In some churches, someone lifts up the offering plates as the congregation sings the Gloria. Since this parallels the practice of elevating the Communion elements, it looks like “the adoration of the money.” So Genericans keep the offering plates at waist level to avoid this effect.

Sursum Corda

This is the only part of the Communion service that is not a prayer; it is a call to prayer. The words “sursum corda” are Latin for “hearts up!” It refers to a series of responses that are invariably a part of every Christian Eucharist. The

celebrant alerts the congregation to the “sursum corda” by using the Christian call to prayer. The congregational response is in italics.

The Lord be with you!

And also with you. [Or: And with your spirit.]

With these words (which come from Ruth 2:4 and 1 Samuel 17:37) the congregation empowers the celebrant to perform the service. And, by the way, the pastor at Generic Christian Church uses this call and response before every public prayer.

The purpose of having responses is to get the congregation to do worship rather than just watch it. These aren't the Middle Ages! If I'm the one conducting the service and I don't get a hearty response, I say, “What? You don't want the Lord to be with me? Let's try it again.” Usually that fixes the problem for the rest of the service. I want the congregation to *roar* back the responses!

The actual “sursum corda” follows. Again, the congregational response is in italics:

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

It is right to give Him our thanks and praise.

“Lift up your hearts” comes from Lamentations 3:14. Since ‘Eucharist’ means ‘thanksgiving,’ the rest is basically a call to Communion.

After the “sursum corda”, the celebrant prays a brief (and I mean *brief*) prayer that is the proper preface for the season or for the special holy day—or in other words, a prayer that is in line with the theme of the season or the day (which makes it proper) and that leads into the Communion itself (which makes it a preface).

or

The celebrant, with congregational responses in italics:

The Lord be with you!

Congregation: “and also with you.”

Lift up your hearts! *Congregation: “We lift them up to the Lord”*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

Congregation: "It is right to give him our thanks and praise."

The whole Communion service is essentially one big prayer. The celebrant begins with wording that is appropriate to the occasion or the season, then continues:

It is a right, good, proper, and joyful thing, at all times, and in all places to give you thanks, Lord God. We join our voices with the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven who forever sing this song:

Tersanctus

The word 'tersanctus' is Latin for 'thrice holy.' This prayer-hymn is historically a part of every Christian Service of Communion. The first half derives from a synagogue prayer that is based on Isaiah 6. The second half is a portion of the narrative of Palm Sunday in the gospels. It is called the tersanctus because it begins with the word "holy" three times in a row (in Latin, "sanctus, sanctus, sanctus"; hence: tersanctus). The celebrant, the lay reader, the choir, or the congregation can say it, sing it, or chant it, and they like to do it different ways on different Sundays.

The Tersanctus is:

**Holy, holy,
Holy Lord
God of power and might—
Heaven and earth are full of your glory,
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!**

Again, the first part comes from a synagogue prayer based on Isaiah 6:3; the second part comes from Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:9-10, and John 12:13. The Generic Christian Church doesn't change the words "blessed is He" to "blessed is the one" because that change allows people to interpret this as applying to the celebrant. It does not. The "He" refers to Jesus entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday

or

The celebrant, the congregation, the choir, a reader, or a singer:

Holy, holy,
 holy Lord
God of power and might
 Heaven and earth are full of your glory
Hosanna in the highest!
 Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord
Hosanna in the highest!

Anamnesis

The celebrant:

In the beginning, O Lord, you created us for yourself. But even though we have fallen through our disobedience to sin and death, you in your infinite mercy, grace, and love sent your only begotten Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to live among us as a man, born of a virgin. He suffered every hardship and adversity, every trial, trouble, tribulation, and temptation that we face—except without sin. Finally, He stretched out His arms upon the cross in perfect obedience to your will and offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

On the night on which our Lord Jesus was given over to suffering and death through the betrayal of a friend, He took bread, and after He had blessed it and given thanks to you for it, O Lord, He gave it to His disciples and said, **“Take, eat, this is my Body, which is given for you.”** After the supper, he took the cup, and after He had blessed it and given thanks to you for it, O Lord, He said, **“Drink of this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new covenant, which is shed for the remission of your sins and the sins of the whole world.”**

Therefore, as often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup, we eat the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We proclaim His death until He comes again. Let us proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Mysterion

It goes without saying that “mysterion” is Greek for mystery, but I said it anyway. This consists of the congregation proclaiming the mystery of our faith.

The celebrant and the congregation together:

Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ is coming again!

Epiclesis

‘Epiclesis’ is Greek for ‘calling down’—think of the Scriptures in which the Holy Spirit descends as a dove. The celebrant prays to the Holy Spirit to consecrate the bread and wine, using wording that is based on Acts 17:28 and John 6:53-59.

The celebrant:

Lord Holy Spirit, you are the giver of life in whom we live and move and have our being; consecrate this bread and wine to be, for us, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and consecrate us, O Lord, to partake of this holy meal. *(Additional wording can go here.)* All this we ask, Lord Holy Spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the glory of His Father, Amen. Therefore we pray the prayer our Lord taught us, saying:

Lord’s Prayer

The celebrant and the congregation together:

(The Lord’s Prayer)

The Lord’s Prayer, which is in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2b-5, is appropriate at this point, because it asks for forgiveness and our daily bread, which is Jesus, the bread of life.

The celebrant says:

As our Saviour has taught us, so we say.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done;
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power,

and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen

Fraction

The celebrant:

As Paul said to the Corinthians, I say to you: Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Let us keep the feast!

May the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you unto eternal life.

The Distribution

If the people come forward, the Communion servers might be tempted to pray long prayers with each parishioner as they take Communion, but that only lengthens the service and bores the congregation. It's best to keep it short and meaningful, and to say the exact same thing to each person, so no one feels like someone else got special attention or that they were publicly singled out. Remember, this is Communion, not the altar call.

The person giving out the bread could say to each person, "The body of Christ, the bread of heaven," or other words to that effect.

The person distributing the Communion wine could say to each person, "The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation," or other words to that effect.

If one person is giving out both, they could say, "May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you unto eternal life," or other appropriate words.

Before the distribution the minister says:

Draw near and receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, and his blood, which was shed for you. Take this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

Prayer

The celebrant:

We thank you, Lord God, that you have fed us with these holy mysteries of the Body and Blood of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. By eating His Body, we become members of His Body, and thus His agents in this world. Help us to be

the distributors of your blessings, the agents of your providence, the instruments of your grace, and the ambassadors of your love to all the people we meet in our everyday lives. By drinking His Blood, we have taken on His life, which was not finally pierced by the cross nor smothered in the tomb, but lasts for evermore. We thank you for this, the medicine of immortality; the antidote to death. All this we pray in the most holy and precious name of Jesus Christ, because He is alive, and He reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit. You are one God, now and forever, Amen.

Benediction

The clergy dismisses the congregation with a Scriptural benediction.

The grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

Immediately followed by:

The Laying on of Hands with Prayer and Anointing

(or Laying on of Hands only)

Notes

- 1 **Modification** The president at his discretion may vary the order provided.
- 2 **Preparation** Careful devotional preparation before the use of these ministries is recommended.
- 3 **The Ministry in Hospital** Where these services take place in a hospital, the co-operation of the staff should be sought.
- 4 **Seasonal Material** Provision of proper collects, readings, and psalms is made in the order following. The seasonal or Sunday provision may be used in place of that set out here. At Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost some at least of the seasonal provision for the Festival should be used.
- 5 **Explanation** An explanation of the particular ministry which is being used should be given, and this may come at the beginning of the service, or as part of the sermon, or immediately after the sermon. The form provided at section 7 may be used, or the minister may use his own words.
- 6 **The Needs of the Sick** If desired, at an appropriate place in the service, the physical condition and needs of the sick may be declared to the congregation in order to guide their prayers.

7 **The President** The president of the Eucharist also presides over the ministry of laying on of hands and anointing of the sick. He may invite others to share with him in the prayers and the laying on of hands, and may delegate the ministry of anointing to other lawful ministers. When the context of the service is Morning or Evening Worship or any other service than the Eucharist, a deacon or authorized lay minister may preside over the ministry of the laying on of hands.

8 **The Distribution of Communion to those not present at a Celebration** The order here provided may be adapted to conform with the distribution of communion to those not present at a celebration.

9 **Anointing of the Sick** Anointing is a sacramental ministry as stated by James in his letter, and authorized by the denominations, which provides that if a sick person 'so desires, the priest or minister may lay hands upon him and may anoint him with oil on the forehead with the sign of the Cross'. It should be used more sparingly than the laying on of hands, and is especially appropriate for use when a sick person is at a time of crisis. As provided by the denominational regulations, the laying on of hands may suitably be used in association with anointing.

10 **The Oil of Anointing** Canon B37 provides that the priest should use 'pure olive oil consecrated by the bishop of the diocese or otherwise by the priest himself...'

11 **The Anointing** The canons or regulations of the Christian denominations provide normally that the anointing should be made on the forehead with the sign of the cross, but other parts of the body may be anointed in addition to the forehead.

12 **Silence** Silence may be kept at appropriate points within the liturgical order at the discretion of the minister.

The Liturgy of the Laying on of Hands with Prayer, and Anointing, at the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion or Eucharist)

The Introduction

1. This sentence may be used.

Truly the Lord has borne our sufferings and carried our sorrows. *Isaiah 53.4*

2. The minister-president greets the people using these or other appropriate words.

The Lord be with you

All: and also with you.

3. Then may be said

Lord Jesus, you healed the sick:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you forgave sinners:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you gave yourself to heal us
and bring us strength:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

4 The president says one of the following COLLECTS.

Heavenly Father,
you anointed your Son Jesus Christ
with the Holy Spirit and with power
to bring to man the blessings of your kingdom.
Anoint your Church with the same Holy Spirit,
that we who share in his suffering and his victory
may bear witness to the gospel of salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

or

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom,
you know our needs before we ask
and our ignorance in asking;
have compassion on our weakness,
and give us Chose things
which for our unworthiness we dare not
and for our blindness we cannot ask,
for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

5. Either two or three readings from scripture follow, the last of

which is always the Gospel.

A canticle, a hymn or a psalm may be used between readings

6. A sermon may be preached

The Laying on Hands and Anointing

7. One of the ministers may explain this ministry, using one or both of these paragraphs or his own words.

Our Lord Jesus Christ went about preaching the gospel and healing. He commanded his disciples to lay hands on the sick that they might be healed. Following his example, and in obedience to his command, we shall lay hands on *N*, praying that the Lord will grant healing and peace according to his loving and gracious will.

Saint James writes, 'Is any 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 sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins he will be forgiven.' In fulfilment of this we shall anoint *N* with oil, praying that the Lord will grant healing and restoration and forgiveness according to his loving and gracious will.

The Prayers

8. *Intercessions are made, particularly for the sick. This form may be used.*

Minister Come, Lord, with your love and mercy in this
 ministry, and comfort the distressed. Free *him* from all harm.

All Lord, hear our prayer.

Minister Relieve *his* suffering: sustain *him* with your power.

All Lord, hear our prayer.

Minister Give new strength to *his* body, mind, and spirit.

All Lord, hear our prayer.

Minister In your name we lay our hands on (anoint) *N*. Give
him the assurance of your presence, and your peace.

All Lord, have mercy. Amen.

9. Minister

Hear the words of comfort our Saviour Christ says to all who truly turn to him:
Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest. *Matthew 11.28*

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. *John 3.16*

10. Minister

Let us confess our sins, in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments
and to live in love and peace with all men.

11. **All**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our
fellow men,
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who
died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness
of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

11. Minister

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon *you*,
pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins,
confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness,

and keep *you* in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Laying on of Hands

12. *At the laying on of hands these or other suitable words are used. If anointing is to follow, the laying on of hands may be done in silence.*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who laid his hands on the sick that they might be healed *I* lay my hands upon you, *N*. May almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, make you whole in body, mind, and spirit, give you light and peace, and keep you in life eternal. Amen.

The Anointing

14. *If anointing is also to take place the priest makes the sign of the cross on the sick person, using these or other similar words.*

N, I anoint you with oil in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. May our heavenly Father make you whole in body and mind, and grant you the inward anointing of his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of strength and joy and peace. Amen.

15. *This or some other appropriate prayer may be said.*

Minister or Priest

The almighty Lord, who is a strong tower to all who put their trust in him, be now and evermore your defence, and make you believe and trust that the only name under heaven given for health and salvation is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Communion

16. The president (minister/priest) resumes the Holy Communion at “the Peace” variously along the Christian denomination
17. These special forms are used.

Proper Preface

And now we give you thanks because in his victory over the grave a new age has dawned, the long reign of sin is ended, a broken world is being renewed, and man is once again made whole.

or

And now we give you thanks because through him you have given us eternal life, and delivered us from the bondage of sin and the fear of death into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Postcommunion sentence

O praise the Lord.
He heals the broken in spirit
and binds up their wounds. Psalm *147.1, 3*

Alternative Blessing

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.



Why do the House churches follow the practice of laying hands on the sick and anointing them with oil? What greater purpose does this offer over regular prayer?

Laying hands on the sick was a common practice in the Early Church. Jesus often laid hands on people before healing them (Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40; 13:13). Paul laid hands on a sick person and he was healed (Acts 28:8). Jesus said concerning His followers, "they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well" (Mark 16:18).

Anointing with oil for many different purposes was commonly practiced throughout the Scriptures. The New Testament mentions it specifically in connection with praying for the sick. On one occasion Jesus sent out the twelve disciples on a mission; they "anointed many sick people with oil and healed them" (Mark 6:13). In a congregational situation, the usual procedure is for a sick Christian to call for the elders of the church to pray over him and to anoint him with oil (James 5:14-16).

In biblical times oil was commonly used as a healing agent (Luke 10:34). But when used by the early Christians for anointing purposes it was merely a symbolic reminder to God's healing power. Today as then, the anointing oil itself has no healing power. Healing takes place by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38), of whom oil is a symbol (Zechariah 4:4-6).

In the Assemblies of God we believe neither the laying on of hands nor anointing with oil is indispensable for healing, for often in Scripture healing takes place without either. But at times the touch of a praying person and the

application of oil are an encouragement to faith, and such a practice is enjoined by Scripture (James 5:14-16).

Read the Bible Online

In English

King James Version (Public Domain Version)

<http://www.allonlinebible.com/>

In Dutch

<http://www.online-bijbel.nl/>

In French

Version Louis Segond (Normalement Domaine Publique)

<http://www.christianevents.mu/lire-bible-francais-louis-segond.html>

Contents

A Vision for the New Testament House Church	1
Guidelines to Healing Ministry and Prayer	1
James 5:13-16	2
Healing and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion	13
Holy Eucharist Liturgy	18
The Traditional Holy Eucharist Rite in short	19
The Complete Liturgy	21
The laying on of hands with prayer and anointing and liturgy (Anglican way)	31
Why does the House churches follow the practice of laying hands	38
Read the Bible Online	39
Contents	40



Looking unto Jesus

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