

Prayers for Healing and Laying-on of Hands

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Before the service the leader explains that it will include prayer for the healing of people and situations as well as the laying-on of hands for any who wish it.

The laying-on of hands may be done in different ways. It is always helpful when two or more people, who may have helped to lead other parts of the service, share in this. Some congregations have teams of people who administer the laying-on of hands. Other churches invite people to participate in giving as well as receiving the laying-on of hands. People need to feel valued and at ease whether or not they are actively involved at this point. It is best if those who share the leadership of the laying-on of hands begin or finish by ministering to one another. Where anointing takes place, a little olive oil is normally placed on the forehead in the form of a cross, after the laying-on of hands.

Prayers of intercession can be a time of silence during which people may call out names. Alternatively, names may be collected first and grouped into different concerns, or gathered from pieces of paper on a board or prayer tree. Using only first names helps to show that God knows us all. Not specifying the illness or distress may help the prayer to focus on health. Prayers could be for healing in body, mind and spirit, for relationships and situations, for the bereaved and dying, and for the healing of the nations. It is good to include those in the medical services and all aspects of healing and reconciliation, as well as giving thanks for those who are recovering. It is helpful to involve more than one voice in leading these prayers.

Any sermon or reflection should be brief and lead on to the intercessions and laying-on of hands. This may offer the chance to clarify an aspect of the service that relates to the Bible passage, or a short piece of prose or poetry may be used to shed light on the reading. The address could even come before the reading on occasions.

At the end of the service people may wish to stay in quietness for a while.

1. Call to Worship

Jesus said:

Come to me, all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11: 28-29

or

Jesus said:

Ask, and it will be given to you;
search, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened for you.

For everyone who asks receives,
and everyone who searches finds,
and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

Luke 11: 9-10

2. Opening Responses

God beyond us,
forming us in your own likeness,
delighting in all that you create:
**we turn to you,
we are made by you,
our hearts are restless
till they find their rest in you.**

God beside us,
companion on the road,
who has come to give us life in all its fullness:
**we listen for you,
we yearn for you,
we seek your healing touch.**

God within us,
closer than our breathing,
present at the heart of all that is:
**we are waiting for you,
we are open to you,
as you waken us with promise of new life.**

Silence

3. Hymn

4. Prayer of Confession

Living God,
always near to those who call on you:
make us confident in prayer, joyful in praise,
and responsive to your word,
that we may know your peace in our hearts
and your healing in our lives.

Loving God,
in silence we ask you to lift from us
all that weighs us down
or spoils our relationship with others
or separates us from you.

Silent confession

5. Affirmation and Assurance of Pardon

You are merciful to me, O God,
in your faithful love.

**You cleanse me of my sin
and remove the guilt that clings.**

You desire deep and inner truth:
you accept me as I am.

**You create in me a pure heart
and renew me from within.**

You restore to me the joy of your salvation;
you support and strengthen me.

**You open my lips
that my mouth may proclaim your praise.**

You accept the offering
of a broken spirit.

**A broken and a contrite heart
you do not despise.**

Jesus says: Your sins are forgiven.

Christ has set us free.
Thanks be to God.

6. The Lord's Prayer

7. Offering

An offering may be taken here or after the intercessions.

Generous God, we bring to you
our gifts, our prayers, ourselves.
Let our gifts be used well,
our prayers be sincere
and our lives reflect your generosity and love.
So may our offering be acceptable to you;
and may we be ready to receive
your healing and your grace.

Amen.

8. Hymn or Chant

9. Reading(s)

10. Sermon or Reflection

11. Hymn or Chant

12. Prayers of Intercession

Let us bring before God
those who are on our hearts and minds,
all for whom prayer has been requested
and any who have asked us to remember them.
Let us pray:

Loving God,
long ago people brought their friends to Jesus,
or approached him on behalf of others.
So now we bring to you
those who need your help.

*Prayers for healing, caring, reconciliation and thanksgiving,
which may conclude:*

God of compassion and love,
we offer you all our suffering and pain.
Give us strength to bear our weakness,
healing even when there is no cure,
peace in the midst of turmoil
and love to fill the spaces in our lives.

Glory to God, from whom all love flows,
glory to Jesus, who showed his love through suffering,
and glory to the Holy Spirit,
who brings light to the darkest places.

Amen.

13. Invitation

*People who are able to come forward are invited to do so,
during or after the next hymn, for the laying-on of hands.
If anointing with oil is offered this may also be mentioned.
Any who remain in their seats are invited to hold in prayer
those receiving and administering the laying-on of hands.
It is made clear that those ministering will come to any who
are unable to move forward. The invitation ends with these
or similar words:*

This is God's word, the word of your creator:
'Do not be afraid – I will save you.
I have called you by name – you are mine.
When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you;
your troubles will not overwhelm you.'

So come with your fears and your hopes,
come with your sadness and your regrets,
come with your pain and your doubt,
come with whatever faith you have.
Whether the storm is around you or within,
the Saviour holds you;
you are not alone.

14. Hymn

15. The Laying-on of Hands

In preparation for the laying-on of hands, the following prayer may be said:

Compassionate God, encircle us as we reach out in love.
Wounded Christ, touch us in our weakness and our strength.
Life-giving Spirit, breathe through us, channels of your peace.

As hands are laid on each person in turn, the following prayer may be said:

Healing Spirit of God,
at work in Jesus,
present here and now,
fill your whole being,
free you of all harm,
and give you peace.

Amen.

16. Anointing with Oil

When some present request anointing each is told:

I anoint you with oil of gladness
in the name of Jesus Christ.

after anointing:

Rise up and take courage:
God is all around you,
banishing the darkness
and bathing you in light.

or

Turn your face to Christ:
his mark is upon you
as, through all your days,
he gently leads you home.

or

Lift up your head:
the Spirit is within you,
cleansing and renewing you,
bringing you new life.

When some present request anointing each is told:

I anoint you with oil of gladness
in the name of Jesus Christ.

and when this has been completed all are addressed together:

Lift up your head
and seek the face of Christ.
His spirit is within you,
cleansing and renewing;
his presence is around you,
bathing you in light;
his mark is upon you,
as, through all your days,
he gently leads you home.

17. Closing Prayer and Blessing

When all have returned to their places:

**May the Christ of all that has been
and all that is to come
stay by our side through daylight and darkness,
heal us of the wounds of the past,
and welcome us into the future.**

Go in peace,
protected by God,
befriended by Christ,
empowered by the Holy Spirit,
and held by the prayers of the people.
And the blessing of the sacred Trinity of love
go with you now and always.

Amen.

