

The Christian Fellowship of Healing (Scotland) worked from the early 1950's to support and spread the healing ministry within churches and to encourage engagement with the medical profession. To further these aims a centre was run in Edinburgh where people could come for prayer, listening and healing. A loving and supportive prayer community formed, which came to an end in 2011. This document is part of a legacy of resources which we hope will support others in their engagement with the healing ministry. More archived material is available to the public at the National Library of Scotland.

His tool rack

By Ian Cowie (Chaplain 1976-88)

The tools we use when healing, intercession, group prayers, laying-on of hands, sacraments, anointing with oil, healing memories, listening, etc

The Carpenter of Nazareth has a tool rack, with tools suitable for the various tasks He is working on. We, His living tools, must be available to Him, ready for His use. Here, we are going to look at some of the ways in which He works when He is healing. We also have separate leaflets giving more details about many of the tools mentioned here.

The Tools

Intercessory Prayer

This is the basic tool whose work prepares for all the others. In prayer we open our lives to God so that He may pour His healing love into us, and our part is to direct this love towards the sick person. It is not that we are trying to persuade God to heal, rather it is that we open our lives so that He can use us.

At the Last Supper, Jesus stressed that fruitful, answered prayer is linked with abiding in love, loving one another, being part of the Living Vine. As we grow together in tenderness we find that our prayer becomes more effective. We do not need to be all in one place every time, our togetherness in prayer can span distances. The Fellowship, in its disciplines of daily prayer, provides a core so that prayer partners all over the country can be together in prayer.

When praying in a group it is not necessary that everybody know the name or the trouble. If one or two of those praying know and have a real link with the sufferer, then healing love is channelled through them. You may not know who 'John' is or what is wrong with him, but God does, and that is enough. This ministry of intercession is one which any of us can do, especially those who have time on their hands. Sometimes it is those who

Former CFH Resources can be found at:

www.st-cuthberts.net | www.mindandsoul.info
www.emmaushouse-edinburgh.co.uk

can no longer run around doing good who are the people who find a new calling in life as they undertake this ministry.

How do we go about it?

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus ..." Focus your whole being on some aspect of the love of God as seen in Jesus. Then bring the name of some sufferer into that love and just hold it there lovingly and confidently. If you want to put that prayer into words then do, but many people just like to be quiet before Him. When your loving concern has faded, surrender that person into the hands of God and go on to do the same for the next person, with a time of praise and loving communion between each name.

The Chain of Prayer

In this a number of people arrange that for a time, say 24 hours, there will always be somebody upholding the sufferer in prayer. This is sometimes used when there is a particular crisis.

The Vigil

This is an even more powerful tool in His hand. It is like a chain of prayer but with several people praying together in one place, operating a shift system.

Both these tools call for a group of people who are used to prayer and can easily be called on without having too much explanation. Some churches have a "telephone tree" to mobilise prayer quickly.

Laying on Hands

It is natural to use our hands to express loving concern. Jesus took Jairus' daughter by the hand and said "Talitha cumi" ("Up you get, lassie"). He used sign language to the deaf man, and so on. We naturally lay our hands in blessing on a child at bedtime, or on the shoulder of someone who is upset. It is in this simple, loving way that the laying on of hands begins.

Often, more than one person is ministering in this way. As a rough guide there are two varieties of it, sacramental and special gift.

Sacramental

In this, we lay our hands on the sufferer "in the Name of Jesus" ("with the authority of Jesus", to put it another way), to convey God's love. Any committed Christian can and should do this; ministers in particular should give this blessing not only at the end of the service but also to individuals who need it.

Special gift

Within the praying group, the Body of Christ, there will emerge people with special gifts of healing. Their hands may give off heat, or they may

vibrate, for instance. In this approach it is more likely that their hands will be over the affected part of the body, and it may be that their hands are guided to the root of the trouble. It is best if this "gift of the Spirit" is used within the setting of the Sacramental and as part of the prayer of the Christian community. When it becomes a solo item it can lead to pride and various dangers.

Because of our human weakness it is likely that several sessions will be necessary for the laying on of hands to be fully effective.

Anointing with Oil

This was and is a natural act for people in the Mediterranean area. The disciples anointed people when Jesus sent them out on a mission (Mark 6:13). Later we find it commended in the letter of James, chapter 5, as the normal thing for a Christian to do in illness. The Roman Catholic and Episcopalian churches retain it as a Sacrament. Although biblical, the Reformed churches typically have not used it, but it is becoming more popular today. It is more formal, and is usually only done once for any particular crisis.

Healing of Memories (sometimes called Inner Healing)

Often the bodily illness is an SOS sign that something is wrong deep down within us. In the past or in the subconscious there is an experience which has never been properly digested but is still poisoning the system. It must be dealt with before the symptoms will disappear, as in the story in Mark 2:1-12 where Jesus dealt with the lad's guilt before healing him.

In this approach to healing we pray about the person's whole life, allowing time and quietness so that the Holy Spirit can bring to the surface what needs to be dealt with. Listening skills are needed to complement this deep prayer. This prayer should only be led by somebody who has learned to handle their own emotions and the emotions of others.

Many of us have found that going back to an incident or relationship in the past, praying for all concerned including oneself as one was then and seeing Christ in the situation, has been a wonderful release and leads to a new sense of inner freedom and 'space'.

Listening

The skills of reflective listening are the building blocks foundational to any effective ministry. They can be learned and taught to the surprise, enjoyment and benefit of all concerned!

www.acornlisteningscotland.org.uk

Medical Healing

This is, of course, the most common instrument of healing, and most of us have good cause to be grateful for it. Our prayer should always include

doctors, nurses and all medical staff. A doctor in Richmond, Virginia, USA conducted an experiment checking on the results of those treated by prayer alone, by medical means alone, and by both medical and spiritual treatment. The recovery figures of those who had both prayer and medicine was much higher than the others. As a general rule we would never interfere with medical treatment, but co-operate as far as possible with the medical profession.

Which Tool?

How are we to know which approach to take in any one case? It is not enough to say, "The last case of arthritis got better when we laid on hands so that is what we shall do in this case". Subtly, we move into the sphere of magic if we do that. No, the answer is one word: LISTEN.

LISTEN to the sufferer, ... LISTEN to God.

Jesus was so sensitive and so open to people that He picked up on their SOS signals straight away, and then He knew what the Father wanted Him to do in that particular case. Each case recorded seems to be quite different from the others. There is no sign of magic with Him.

Listen to the sufferer

We are experts at talking at such lengths that our words disguise the real self, the true needs. When the story comes out 'pat', when all the right religious phrases are carefully used, one suspects that one cannot hear for 'words' and a lot of listening must be done before the real need surfaces. This can be a long and exhausting business.

Listen to God

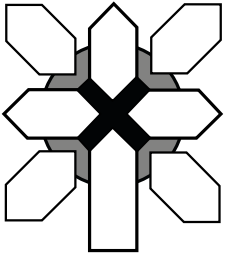
Much of our prayer and worship is full of words, human words, and more words, so that we never really hear God. Our ideas about God, our emotions, our favourite hymns and much else can insulate us from hearing what the Lord is really saying. We have to learn to listen to Him, to wait upon Him, to be still and KNOW that He is God. As we learn that inner stillness we will pick up His words more clearly. As a praying group learns to do this together, they will discover that His Word can speak directly, giving guidance. The gifts of prophecy and discernment must be developed within the praying Fellowship, so that the Lord can tell us which tool HE wishes us to use.

As we learn to become listeners, listeners to God and listeners to our fellow human beings, we will know what to do, we will realise our limitations, we will be led into yet further experience and training. When we have learned to listen He will work through us in His own way, which is sometimes ...

Incognito

Whenever people are peacemakers or strive for justice and reconciliation the Holy Spirit of God may be working incognito. Therapies with secular

roots (eg, Gestalt, Counselling, Psychodrama, Transactional Analysis, Community Building, and Clinical Theology) may be baptised into Kingdom service and given Christian expression. But special training is required in all these areas and some Christians still find them controversial.



Credo

used by the

Christian Fellowship of Healing (Scotland)

The Christian Fellowship of Healing:

is united in its commitment to the practice of prayer as the foundation of all our ministry.

Prayer is the means through which we believe the Holy Spirit can use us, here and now, to continue the practice of healing incarnated by Jesus.

is an ecumenical group of Christians who openly embraces a range of theological understanding and language to describe 'how' God heals.

We accept that health and healing can and does come through medicine, counselling, complementary therapies and other means. This does not negate the real contribution of prayer, rather it upholds the role of prayer to support individuals to listen to the Holy Spirit within them, guiding them, facilitating health and healing.

is committed to being alongside people who are suffering and experiencing pain, struggle and distress whatever their background.

We acknowledge that suffering faces us all and challenges our understanding and belief. Yet we can, with integrity, offer reassurance of God's loving presence accompanying every human being as seen in Christ who has shown us the capacity of God to be vulnerable even to the point of death. Living in and from this truth of the ever present loving God we respond as authentically as possible from our hearts, and we can offer an understanding of the range of meaning of healing which includes miracles.

is convinced of the importance of the varied aspects of healing displayed by Jesus in the miracle stories.

This includes an intense personal encounter with Jesus; affirmation of the individual as a person of value, physical healing, restoration of meaning and purpose, social inclusion; as well as challenge to those in power; confronting rigid thinking and lack of compassion. We believe all these components are aspects of the transforming love of God and reflect the wholeness Jesus calls us into. We see healing as deeply linked with the Christian tradition of vocation through which the living God calls each of us to discover and fulfil our potential.

is united in our understanding that healing in the New Testament includes wholeness.

This links the transforming love that effects miracles with the transforming love that brings the disciples through their fear and resistances into their ministry of apostleship. Our experience is that the practice of prayer in small groups, with a commitment to sharing and listening, enables those of us offering healing prayer to grow in ourselves and in our capacity to experience and share God's love. This includes the reality that some people have a gift of healing and a greater capacity than average to bring about healing.
