



DHM
Divine Healing
MINISTRIES

Interceding for the Sick

By Brother David Jardine

One of the most wonderful things that we can do for anyone is to pray for them. What a marvellous privilege to be able to influence another person's life for good, especially if they are sick or in need. Yet that is what we can do through prayer. And distance is no obstacle. Our prayers can be just as effective for someone in New York or Melbourne, as for someone just down the street. What an exciting prospect!

So I want to give some practical advice in this pamphlet about praying for the sick, not by laying-on of hands, but by interceding for them. My aim is to help us to pray more effectively so that sick people can be helped, healed and set free.

Personal Preparation—God responds to our prayers whether we happen to be committed Christians or not. Many of the people whom Jesus healed were certainly not His followers at that time. The centurion, for instance, was almost certainly not a follower of Jesus when he came and appealed on behalf of his son. But Jesus responded to his request in a most powerful way, as indeed He is quite capable of doing today. Yet at the same time I would want to emphasise that in my experience I have normally found that the closer we are to Jesus the more powerfully our prayers will be answered.

So if we want to become more effective as intercessors for the sick we must be trying to grow in our own relationship

with Jesus, asking Him to deepen our spiritual lives. We do not need to be perfect, but if there is something wrong in our lives we should be working to put that right. Someone has said that when we intercede for the sick we put one hand in the hand of Jesus and the other in the hand of the sick person, believing that the love and power of Jesus can flow through us into them. So let us try to take care that there is nothing in our hearts to hinder that flow.

Power of Prayer—prayer has been described as ‘the mightiest force in the world’. Certainly Jesus made some very powerful promises about its effectiveness:

‘if you ask for anything in My name, I will give it to you’.

‘if you abide in me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it will be given unto you’.

Jesus must have really meant these promises, or He would not have given them. I believe that when we pray we ought to take Jesus at His word and step out in faith, expecting Him to respond to our prayers.

I find it exciting to think of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, how it transformed the lives and ministries of the apostles. The Good News is that that same Holy Spirit is still available today and we have the privilege of inviting God to release it in the life of the person for whom we pray.

Take encouragement—sickness is not the will of God. He wants us to be well and to enjoy good health in body, mind and spirit. Jesus never refused to heal a sick person who came to Him. He came and died on the cross that we might be set free from everything that oppresses us, including sickness. He came that we might have life and have it in all its fullness. That is what Jesus wants for the person for whom we are praying.

Jesus in the Healer—it has been well said that those who pray for the sick are like the four men who brought their paralysed friend to Jesus. We bring people to Jesus in prayer that He might heal them. This, of course, means that, as well as receiving ministry from others, sick people can pray directly to Jesus themselves, because He is the healer. It also means that all the glory and credit for healing through prayer must go to Jesus. If we try to take the glory for ourselves when people are helped or healed that is a good way to lose power in this ministry.

Pray with Faith—when we pray for the sick it is important that we pray with faith and not with anxiety. This may be difficult if the person is a close friend or relative, but it is important. When Jesus ministered He often created an atmosphere of faith. When He went to where Jairus's daughter was, He found exactly the opposite atmosphere that He needed. The official mourners were in full swing. So what did Jesus do? He put them out. Then He took with Him people of faith - James, John and the child's

parents. And when He had created this atmosphere of faith He was able to work a miracle by bringing the girl back to life.

When we pray for the sick we must try to surround them with faith and trust and confidence in God's power to heal. We do people no favours when we surround them with fear and anxiety. It can help when we pray, to picture Jesus standing beside the person, His hands upon their head, releasing His mighty power in every part of them. We do not focus on the sickness. That would be counterproductive. We keep our eyes on Jesus, who died that we might be set free and who is longing to heal and release this particular sick person.

It can also help to take some minutes each day to picture in good health the one for whom we are praying—not sick, not looking unwell, not lying in bed; but doing something physical—jogging, jumping, out for a walk, playing tennis—and thank God by faith that that is how He is making them.

Giving thanks—the prayer of faith must be accompanied by thanksgiving. We pray in faith for the healing of the sick person. We believe in a response from God, and we give thanks that He is answering our prayer. We do not go back and pray the same kind of prayer, making the same request, time after time.

Instead, we give thanks that God is responding!

‘Lord Jesus, we brought Jimmy before You. We thank You that You are answering this prayer. Thank You for bringing healing to Jimmy. Thank You, Lord Jesus!’.

This kind of simple prayer of faith and thanksgiving can be prayed in your own words many times each day. Be prepared to persevere—Jesus made it clear in two of his parables that there will be occasions when we will not find an immediate answer to prayer. We are to persevere.

In the ministry of healing some people are healed instantaneously, but most seem to be helped and healed gradually, over a period of time. If the illness is serious, deep-seated or long-standing, we may have to pray over a long period. In cases like this we can offer up many very short prayers during the day so that the person is constantly being surrounded by an atmosphere of prayer and faith. Even with serious illnesses it is amazing what can be achieved in time if we are prepared to persevere.

Ask others to pray as well—if the need is serious do not be afraid to ask others to pray as well. It can be helpful to encourage people to pray every day at the same time for five minutes, e.g. 8.50pm. The reason we choose 8.50pm is because if we pick 9pm most people may want to watch the news on television. Make sure that the sick person knows to be receptive, in an attitude of prayer at the appointed time.

It can be very powerful if you are prepared to meet for prayer with one or two other people. Jesus said, 'if two of you agree on earth any request that you have to make, that request will be granted by My heavenly Father'.

Wholeness—when we pray it is right to be specific. Pray for the specific illness or injury of the affected part that needs healing—and expect results. But do not leave it there. Also pray for the healing of the whole person.

Wholeness is a big word in the ministry of healing—not just physical healing, but spiritual and psychological as well; a deepening of the spiritual life; overcoming sin—a healing of the whole person.

Pray also that the sick person's attitude may be positive, that they may really want to get well and that they are prepared to make any changes in their lives that God requires.

Prayer by proxy—it is quite permissible to receive the laying-on of hands on behalf of someone else. We should take encouragement from the centurion who appealed to Jesus on behalf of his son, paralysed and wrecked with pain. Jesus responded in a mighty way to this request. In the same way today, Jesus can respond powerfully when we receive the laying-on of hands on behalf of someone else. Indeed it is a very beautiful thing when we unselfishly receive ministry, not for ourselves but for someone else.

Results of our prayers—when we pray we are right to pray with faith, with confidence, expectantly. But we have to remember that results are God’s department. It is our responsibility to be obedient to Christ’s instructions to pray for the sick, but results must be left to God. I believe that the vast majority of people who are prayed for feel some benefit from this ministry, but we cannot guarantee what the result will be. For instance, some may find peace of mind and be free of pain, but not healed physically. Yet in spite of the fact that results may not always be exactly what we ask for, I have no doubt that we should always step out in faith and pray for the healing of the whole person—body, mind and spirit.

Gift of tongues—if you have the gift of tongues this can be a very powerful way to pray for the sick. Picture Jesus with His hands on the sick person’s head, or just keep your mind focussed on Jesus, and pray in tongues. One of the advantages of this type of prayer is not just that it is powerful, but that we can go on for a long time without getting too tired.

Committing the person into God’s hands—there will be occasions when we simply want to commit the sick person into God’s hands and leave them there. Whenever we start to worry about them again we gently say, ‘Lord, I have committed Jimmy into Your hands. I’m not taking that burden of anxiety back on my own shoulders. I leave him with You’.

When we take someone to God and leave him there, there can often be no limit to how powerfully God can work in that person's life.

Who can be involved in intercession?—anyone can intercede for the sick. But there are some people especially suited for this ministry. I believe that senior citizens have a vital role to play in the whole field of intercession. Maybe they feel that because they are no longer so fit and active they are not so useful to God and to the Church. If they are prepared to take on a ministry of intercession their best days of ministry could be about to begin. Many of our best intercessors in the ministry of healing in Belfast are senior citizens because they have that most powerful combination—time and motivation and faith.

Do not neglect to use this gift—prayer must be one of the most wonderful gifts that God gives to His people. It is one of the main ways to develop our own relationship with Him, but is also the means of asking for God's blessing upon other people. We can approach the God who is our Father, as His children, as His sons and daughters, in the confidence of knowing that He delights to respond to our requests on behalf of the sick.

Down through the years I have seen many sick people healed through prayer. It is a ministry which has brought me closer to God and deepened my faith but, more importantly, has given me the thrill of being able to help

many who have been in great need. So let us not neglect this great gift and responsibility that the Lord has given to us. The sick and suffering are depending upon us to ask God to give them peace, strength, relief and healing.

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