



Praying for Our own Healing

By Brother David Jardine

When Canon Jim Glennon began the healing ministry at St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney, Australia more than forty years ago, a committed Christian couple came along to him with a particular concern. As their young daughter was growing up she appeared to be a little bit round-shouldered, but as time went on it turned out that she had become a fully-fledged hunch-back.

The mother and father were naturally very upset at this situation and searched the scriptures for references to healing. Eventually they came to the conclusion that God did not want their daughter to go through life as a hunch-back. They decided on two courses of action.

First of all, they brought their daughter to receive prayer every week at the healing service in St Andrew's Cathedral. That was important, but they did not expect those praying with their daughter to take all the responsibility. They knew that they had to play their part, exercising faith themselves for the girl's healing.

Every day they praised God that because He has promised to answer prayer that is made in His name, He was responding to the prayer offered for their daughter. They did not go back and make the same request time after time. They praised God by faith, and with confidence, that He was responding. They were praying for six or seven months before they saw the tiniest bit of improvement. That was an encouragement to keep going, hour after

hour, day after day, week after week, for three or four years. At the end of that time their daughter was completely healed, her back was perfectly straight, and her breathing returned to normal. Today, the girl is married, with her own children, and no one would ever believe to look at her that she was once a medically incurable hunchback.

It is important to note that a two-fold process was taking place:

the girl was brought to receive prayer on a weekly basis, but at the same time the parents exercised faith themselves everyday by praising God that He was responding. They had every reason to pray in this way when you think of some of the things Jesus said: -

'If you ask for anything in My name, I will give it to you'.

'Ask and you will receive'.

'If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it will be given unto you'.

'If you have faith no bigger even than a grain of mustard seed you will say to this mountain "move from here to there" and it will move. Nothing will prove impossible for you'.

'Whenever you pray, believe that you have received it and it will be yours'.

Those were just some of the things Jesus said about prayer, but surely they make it clear that when we ask in His name He will respond positively. So I believe that to pray in faith means that we can approach God in such a way that we do not just think, we know He is responding. If we accept what Jesus has said, we can pray with that confidence.

‘Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see’.

(Hebrews 11:1)

Maybe the best way to express our confidence when we pray is through praise. That will eventually mean moving from asking for the same thing time after time, to believing that God has heard our request, has taken account of it, and is responding.

We express that trust in praising God. Jim Glennon says that praying in faith is not asking, asking, asking: it is praising, praising, praising. I heard a preacher say that praise is the language of those who are excited at what God is doing. This is very true. It is also the language of those who are excited at what God is going to do.

To sum up; I believe that it is all right for people who are ill to receive prayer and the laying-on of hands as often as they wish. At the same time they need to be getting the balance right by praying and exercising faith for

themselves. One way to do this is through praise. A woman used powerfully in the healing ministry said that she says ‘*please*’ the first time she prays, and after that says, ‘*thank you*’. I would not want to be legalistic in stating that we can only say please once. But there must come a stage where we accept that our prayer has been heard, God is responding and we praise Him for that.

I recently heard a speaker say that praying in faith requires expectation and not exertion. Sometimes we approach God putting far too much of ourselves into it. I have made that mistake many times; my earnestness and striving have been a barrier to prayer being answered. What we need to do is relax, bring the topic for prayer before God and rest in the assurance of what He has promised. That is really praying in faith: resting in the assurance of what He has promised.

That was a lesson which Canon Jim Glennon had to learn soon after he was ordained. His whole life long he had suffered from fear, and particularly a fear of people. The problem eventually became so bad that he had a severe nervous breakdown. He went to doctors, social workers, clergy, looking for healing, but while they all did their best, none were able to help in any significant way. When the problem was at its worst Canon Glennon felt God say to him “*What can you learn from this whole experience?*” Before he could answer God Himself spoke again “*You are to learn to depend more on Me*”.

The way in which he expressed that dependence was to take the problem, which was fear, and put it firmly behind him. But because it was behind him Canon Glennon was not focusing on it anymore. He used the problem to force him to focus on God.

From he woke in the morning until he went to bed at night he tried to keep his mind on God, often incorporating the promises of Scripture into his prayer:

'Praise You, Lord, that You are faithful to Your promise that You will never leave us nor forsake us. Praise You that You are right with me now. Praise You that they who wait for the Lord will renew their strength, they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint. Praise You that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Praise You that You say to us those words that You spoke to Your own disciples "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you". Praise You, Lord that You are right with me now'.

Canon Glennon tries to remain focused on God all his waking hours. If fear tried to sneak round the corner he pushed it back, not by focusing on the fear, but on God. There was no immediate improvement. The best he could say for some time was that he was no worse in the evening than in the morning. But eventually, after a number of months, Canon Glennon was able to sense a slight

improvement. That encouraged him, so he kept going, and after three or four years of praying in this way he was, and has remained completely healed. He often says that he was able to draw on the healing power of God because '*he did not doubt in his heart*'. This phrase was used by Jesus in Mark 11 and by James in the first chapter of his letter. Maybe this is the secret of being able to exercise faith for healing—not to strive but to pray so that we do not doubt in our heart, resting in the assurance of what God has promised.

Certainly one of the worst things we can do is to surround other people by doubt or even certainty that they are not going to get better. This is very common, especially if the hospital has predicted that the person has only a certain length of time to live. Most people in the Western world take that as gospel, and accept that that is how it will be. Far better to surround the person by the prayer of faith, believing that God can still turn circumstances around and bring healing. One thing is certain: even if the person does not receive that full physical healing asked for, being surrounded by the prayer of faith will bring healing in so many other areas.

I came across a good example of this some years ago. Edward was suffering from cancer and had been given three months to live. But he and his family were people of faith and we all agreed that, in spite of the prognosis, we would pray for healing. There was just one problem.

Edward was well-known in Northern Ireland in a number of different circles. Everywhere I went I met people who knew him. The first thing they said was *'it's a pity about Edward, isn't it?'* The hospital had said he had three months to live, and in three months they had him dead and buried. The family and Edward were marvellous. They came to receive prayer regularly and they believed for healing. Indeed, great healing took place: Edward never lost his peace, he was free from pain, his whole relationship with God was completely renewed, when he died the family were in no doubt where he had gone, during his illness he made a deep impact on family and friends. Great healing took place, but he did die after a number of months. Surrounded by so much doubt and unbelief it was amazing that God's response to the prayers of the people of faith was so remarkable. One thing is certain: if those who seemed sure that Edward would not recover had been able to believe for God's healing, the response to prayer would have been even more remarkable.

The same principle applies when we are seeking healing for ourselves. Believing for healing will help us receive what God wants to give us. Encouraging a negative way of thinking will make that more difficult. Willie was a good example. For years he had suffered from chronic anxiety. I saw him on a number of occasions, talked to him for a while and then prayed with him. Because of his anxiety, and the fact that it had gone on so long, he found it hard to

believe for his own healing. I remember once, when I had talked to him for almost an hour and prayed with him for 15 minutes, as soon as I lifted my hands off his head he looked up and said “*David, do you think I’ll ever be better from this ‘oul’ anxiety?*”

After the effort that I had put in, that was discouraging for me, but for Willie it was worse. He was making it more difficult for himself to receive the peace that God wanted to give him, because of his negative outlook. What we need to do, whether receiving prayer or praying for others, is to believe for and affirm the answer God wants to that problem and not, by our doubt and unbelief, affirm the problem itself. Whatever the area of need God’s appropriate answer is to be found in scripture, and that is what we should be affirming and believing for. Praising God by faith, with confidence, that He is responding is the attitude we would do well to develop.

One way of praying for ourselves

This basically involves learning how to welcome the Spirit to flow into every part of us. It is probably best done in the privacy of our own homes, in a quiet place where we will not be interrupted.

We can lie down flat on a bed (which I prefer to do), or we can sit in a chair, relaxed, with our back straight and hands on our knees. This way of praying will be very suitable for those who are or have been physically ill or

weak, and also for those seeking God's peace and strength. I would recommend that we take at least 20 minutes for this prayer, once or possibly twice per day.

Find a quiet place where you are not going to be disturbed. Insofar as is possible make it the same time and place each day.

Lie down flat on a bed, or sit in a chair with your back straight.

Take a few minutes to relax every part of your body. Really let go. (3 minutes)

Focus on God in whatever way is helpful to you—talking to Him, praising, saying the Lord's Prayer slowly, quietly repeating the name of Jesus. (about 3 times)

Start to surrender to God anything on your mind— anxiety, worries, anger, resentment, prejudice, past hurts, fear, your illness, etc. (about 3 minutes)

Focus on the Holy Spirit. Think of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and the impact He made. Repeat the words of Jesus *'you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you'*. (3 minutes)

Welcome the Spirit to come and flow into every part of you—your head, your mind, your spirit, your shoulders, arms, body, legs, feet into every part of you. Picture this

happening. If you are sick or injured picture God's Spirit flowing especially into that part. (5 minutes)

Praise God that He is responding, that His Spirit is flowing. Continue to picture the Spirit flowing into every part of you, and praise God that that is what He is doing. (5 minutes)

Jesus said 'if you know how to give your children what is good for them how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him'.

Picture yourself well, doing something that maybe in your present state of health you might find difficult—running, jumping, digging, walking briskly, swimming, climbing a mountain—and praise God that that is the way He is making it. *'Praise You, Lord, Praise You Lord. Praise You Lord. All of the glory to You, all of the glory to You. Praise You, Lord'.* Don't strive. Rest in the assurance of what God is doing. Some people (including myself) may find it difficult to picture ourselves in this way, so I have another suggestion to make: -

Picture yourself telling someone that you are healed, that you are feeling well, that you have a new strength and peace within you. Develop this idea in whatever way is helpful to you. Picture someone telling you how well you look, and you confirm to them how well you are feeling. Picture your doctor examining you and telling you that he can now find nothing wrong. And all the time that you can

see these pictures in your mind you are gently but confidently praising God that that is how He is making it, and all to His glory. I find this second alternative much easier to practise. (5 minutes)

Praying for others

Hopefully, after this length of time we will be very much at peace. We are now in a strong position in which to pray for others, bringing them before God in an atmosphere of peace and faith.

Picture the person you are going to pray for. They may in reality be very ill. But as you picture them they are not ill. They are well, explaining to you how well they are in body, mind and spirit. And all the time that they are explaining this you are praising God in your own words that this is how He is making it, and all to His glory. (5 minutes)

Many times during the rest of the day we can affirm with thanksgiving the peace, strength, healing that we and the person for whom we have prayed are receiving, resting in the assurance on what God is doing and not striving.

Also remember that what God gives us we should give away to others. If our body is still weak or sick we may not be able to do this in practical ways, but we may be able to do it through prayer.

I repeat again that we are welcome to come and receive prayer as often as we like. But we must get the balance

right by praying and exercising faith for healing for ourselves. God's touch is available through the prayers of others, but He will expect us to do what we can for ourselves. If we are prepared to pray in the two ways that I have suggested—praising God by faith and welcoming the Spirit to come—we find the power of God released in our lives in a new way, and all to His honour and glory.

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