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Divine Healing
MINISTRIES

Praying In Faith

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Praying in Faith

Prayer must be one of the most wonderful gifts that God has ever given us. It enables us to build our relationship with Him, but it is also a marvellous way to help other people and other situations. Yet there is something even more wonderful than prayer, and that is answered prayer. But if our prayers are going to be answered then we have to pray in the way that God taught us to pray. And that way is the prayer of faith. James said in the 5th chapter of his letter that if anyone is sick they should send for the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil, and the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well.

What is the Prayer of Faith?

To pray in faith is to pray in such a way that we express our belief and confidence that our God is a God who answers prayer. And why should we not believe this? After all, Jesus made some very powerful promises about prayer:- ‘If you ask for anything in My name I will give it to you’; ‘if you abide in Me and My word abides 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’.

Canon Jim Glennon says that to pray in faith means you believe you have received the answer to your prayer to the point where you do not doubt in your heart.

Whose Faith?

There are three groups of people who are asked to show faith when we pray for the sick. First of all, the Church. Ideally what we want is an atmosphere of faith in the Church today whereby we believe that God really does heal sick people in response to prayer. Unfortunately, the faith of the Church is often weak, but it is possible in any area to find a group of Church people who have this kind of faith and will surround the sick person in prayer. In Divine Healing Ministries we provide intercession every day for a month for those who telephone 028 9031 1532.

Secondly, there is the faith of those who pray. Do you remember the occasion when the disciples were unable to heal a demon-possessed boy and they had to come to Jesus and ask Him to heal the boy? Then they asked Him why they had failed. Jesus said that it was their lack of faith—not the faith of the boy, not the faith of his parents, but the disciples’ lack of faith. So the faith of those involved in the ministry of prayer and the laying on of hands is important.

Thirdly, there is the faith of the person receiving prayer. They can exercise their faith while being prayed for by picturing Jesus with His hands upon their head, and give

thanks that His mighty power is coming into every part of them. Then after ministry, they can continue to give thanks by faith that because our God is a God who answers prayer He is answering the prayer made on their behalf.

When we ask for healing it is most important that we pray in faith. But the sick person does not have to take the whole onus of responsibility for exercising faith. This would not be fair, nor would it be New Testament teaching. So they should ask other people to pray with them and for them especially if the mountain to be moved is a big one.

How do we Pray the Prayer of Faith?

First of all we have to find out what God wants. We find this from Scripture. What did Jesus want for the people who are sick?

Read: Matthew 4:23

Matthew 8:1-3

Matthew 8:16

Matthew 9:35

This is only a very small selection of verses, but it seems to make clear that Jesus wanted people to be well and to be healed of their sickness. And is Jesus any different today? Not according to the Bible, because we are told in Hebrews

that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and for ever. Now this is exciting. When we pray for healing God is on our side. We are praying for something that Jesus actually wants. And Jesus said if we ask for anything that He wants, if we ask for anything in His name, He will give it to us. Those are Jesus' own words: that is His promise to us.

How Do We Appropriate What God Has Promised To Give?

By praying the prayer of faith. By believing we receive the promises which God has made in Scripture so that we do not doubt in our heart. Whether we are praying of ourselves or for others, praying the prayer of faith means thanking God and continuing to thank Him by faith that He is answering our prayer and that we are being healed. This will mean that we must be promise-centred and not problem-centred. In other words we focus on the precious and very great promises God has made in Scripture and keep concentrating on those, and we take our eyes away from the problem. In fact we put the problem behind us and use it to make us more dependent on God - and the way to do that is to be promise-centred, to keep our eyes as continuously as possible on the promises made in Scripture.

Giving Thanks

There must come a time in praying the prayer of faith when we switch from asking to trusting that our prayer is being answered. And the way to show that we really do believe and trust is through praise and thanksgiving: 'thank You, Lord, for all those lovely promises in Scripture. Thank You that You are a God who keeps Your promises, who answers prayer. Thank You that as we pray for Jim's healing You are on our side, we are asking for something that You actually want. So thank You, Lord, that Your mighty power is flowing now, flowing into every part of Jim and bringing your healing to him now, to every part of him, to his soul, to his mind, to his body ...'

Someone said that praying in faith is not asking, asking, asking but believing, believing, believing: and the way to show we believe and trust is through praise and thanksgiving.

Healing Gradually

If your faith were perfect, as Jesus' was, healing would be instantaneous. But it is not perfect, so more often today healing takes place gradually over a period of time. If the illness is serious, if the mountain is a big one to move, it can take years. Jim Glennon was praying the prayer of faith for three or four years before he was healed of fear. But throughout that time he was gradually making progress, and at the end of four years he was completely

healed to such an extent that the problem of fear has never come back upon him. Of course, there will be many problems which are resolved much more quickly in response to prayer, but it may well be that we do have to be patient and to persevere. Perseverance is a big word in Jim Glennon's vocabulary.

So when we pray for healing we must give thanks by faith that God is responding, and healing is taking place even when nothing seems to be happening. Could we compare this stage of healing to sowing a seed in the ground? It is buried, nothing seems to be happening, but all the time that seed is growing and developing until a little shoot breaks through the ground. It is the same with healing. For a time nothing may appear to be happening. But if we continue to pray in faith eventually that little shoot will break forth. Then we rejoice and give thanks for what has already been achieved, however little. We do not worry about what still remains to be done. We give thanks for the healing that God has given, even if the improvement is very small, and focus on that. 'Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving'.

(Colossians 4:2)

Praying Without Ceasing

When Jim Glennon had a nervous breakdown in his 20s, he discovered then how vital it was to be promise-centred and not problem-centred. From the moment he woke up

in the morning until he went to bed at night, when he woke up in the middle of the night, even when he was having a conversation, with one corner of his mind he was affirming the answer and focussing on the promises of God. If our problem in our own lives, or in someone else's, is a very big one we may indeed need to pray without ceasing, affirming the answer, giving thanks for the promises and claiming them. Certainly we do need to pray the prayer of faith that God is responding, that He is healing, taking time each day to focus our minds in this way; and then on many occasions during the day just to give thanks by faith that God is healing especially at times when doubts come into our mind. We will need to be disciplined about this, not striving, not fighting, but rather accepting and resting in the promises of God.

I would recommend that we keep a notebook, and when we come across a powerful promise in the Bible we can jot it down, learn it off by heart, and use it. To repeat the promises of God out loud may well be helpful to some people. If we are in a room on our own and have privacy it may help to reinforce the message in our minds and spirits to give thanks to God out loud, even if we do it in a very low voice.

Vicarious Faith

This is when we ask others to add their faith to ours, or indeed even substitute theirs for ours. A good example of

vicarious faith in the New Testament is the story of the four men who brought their paralysed friend to Jesus. We are not told much about the faith of the paralysed man, but we are told a great deal about the faith of the four men who carried him. There is so much doubt and fear and unbelief today, especially surrounding people who are seriously ill, that we may well need to ask other people to add their faith to ours. Don't go it alone. Draw upon the faith of the Church. Ask others to pray with you and for you.

The Need To Forgive

I think that most of us know in our own experience how bad resentment is for our health, especially if it goes on for a long time. We may feel angry against another person, but almost certainly the one whom we are damaging most is ourselves. Jesus made it very clear, both in His teaching and in His life, that He wants us to forgive everyone for everything. He said that if we forgive others the wrongs they have done us we will be forgiven by our Father in heaven, but if we do not forgive others then we will not be forgiven by our heavenly Father. That could not be clearer, and yet sometimes it is very difficult to forgive, especially if we have been deeply wronged.

Often it can take a good deal of time. The important thing is that our intention be to forgive. God can honour and help us to fulfil our intentions. What we really need to do

is make a decision to forgive, and stick to it, affirming that decision when we feel angry again, and drawing upon the power and grace of God in prayer. I know a woman whose son was murdered by terrorists. I did not meet her until two months after the incident. She told me that she had spent the whole of the previous morning in prayer, asking God for the grace to forgive. But it was working. She was having to spend a lot of time in prayer, but she was free from the anger and bitterness that could so easily have made her captive. When we think of how bad resentment is for us, and what an obstacle it can be to prayer being fully answered, it is worth taking time to ask for God's grace to forgive, even if we have to request others to add their faith to ours.

Sacrificial Prayer

If we are not getting the desired results through prayer alone it may well be that the Lord is calling us to pray and fast. When we fast we are showing the Lord that we are really serious. Indeed, prayer and fasting is the most powerful spiritual combination we have. I personally have not always found it easy to discipline myself to fast, to abstain from food even for a day. But when I do practise it, it has always been beneficial to my spiritual life, and often has brought some wonderful answers to prayer.

If the mountain we are trying to move is a big one, and is proving obstinate, prayer and fasting is worth considering.

Again, to ask others to join us in praying and fasting with us and for us will be beneficial.

Christian Commitment

The type of prayer that I have been describing is not a substitute for Christian commitment. Any healing achieved must not be used selfishly, but in the service of God. This prayer of faith should make us more God-centred, and not self-centred. Healing is not an end in itself. Indeed, we need to remain aware of what we are told in the Presbyterian Catechism, that our chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.

Exercising Our Faith

There will be occasions when, using common sense, we will need to step out and exercise the faith in God that we have been expressing. This may be particularly so when we are praying for someone who has a problem with fear, encouraging them to step out and do something which previously they wouldn't have had the courage to do. There may be times also when we need to show God that we really do believe that He is healing us. Jim Glennon was praying for weeks about a painful eye condition, iritis, but he was only healed when he took a step in faith by turning on the TV and watching it, which on the human level would have been something far too painful to even contemplate.

But I do emphasise that any measures taken, as well as exercising faith, must be tempered by common sense.

SUMMARY ON HOW TO PRAY IN FAITH

1. Find out from Scripture what God wants (I have stated that the New Testament evidence seems to be that God wants sick people to be well).
2. Pray the prayer of faith for healing, so that we do not doubt in our mind.
3. Ask others to pray with us and for us.
4. Accept that the promises in Scripture are God's promises to us today and give thanks for them.
5. Be promise-centred and not problem-centred.
6. Switch from asking in prayer to believing, and the way to express our belief is through praise and thanksgiving.
7. Healing normally comes gradually today rather than instantaneously. So persevere.
8. Be prepared to pray without ceasing if necessary.
9. Keep a notebook to jot down the powerful promises of God.
10. If it is appropriate, repeat the promises aloud.

11. Learn to forgive. Draw upon the power of God in prayer.

12. Try prayer and fasting.

13. Healing is not an end in itself. Our chief end is to glorify God.

There may be occasions when in a common sense way we need to exercise our faith by taking a step of faith.

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