

Foundations 7a — Laying on of Hands

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits”. **Hebrews 6:1-3**

In the Old Testament the “laying on of hands” was practiced to impart blessings, spiritual gifting and to ordain leaders. We see the laying on of hands continue to be practiced in the New Testament. In the New Testament, the laying on of hands also includes healing and the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The laying on of hands to impart blessing

“Then Israel (Jacob) stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said:

“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.” **Genesis 48:14-16**

Laying on of hands to ordain a new leader

When Moses was near the end of his earthly ministry and it became time to ordain a new

leader, God instructed him as follows:

“And the Lord said to Moses: “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.” **Numbers 27:18-20**
“So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. And he laid his hands on him and inaugurated him, just as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.” **Numbers 27:22-23**

“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” **2 Timothy 1:6**

The result of Moses’ obedience, seen in Joshua’s life, is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy.

“Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses.” **Deuteronomy 34:9**

By “laying on of hands” Moses imparted to Joshua a measure of the spiritual wisdom and authority that Moses had received from God. This not only impacted Joshua, but it impacted all of the congregation of Israel as they now heeded Joshua.

This may be one of the primary reasons that “laying on of hands” is a foundational

doctrine. By the laying on of hands at the direction of and obedience to the Lord, Joshua was recognized by the people as a God-ordained leader to be heeded. If we are to grow to the full stature of Christ, we should be rightly connected to true, God ordained leaders.

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the

stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ” **Ephesians 4:11-15**

True, God-ordained leaders are given by the Lord Himself to equip the saints and to protect us from being deceived by false teachings so that we may grow up into the fullness of Christ.

In the New Testament, we see five distinct purposes for the laying on of hands:

- 1) for physical healing

- 2) to impart the Baptism with the Holy Spirit
- 3) to impart spiritual gifts
- 4) for sending out Christian ministries from the local church
- 5) for recognizing and appointing deacons or elders in the local church

Physical healing

In the Gospel of Mark the Lord Jesus commissioned his disciples to preach the Gospel with supernatural signs following them.

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

Five supernatural signs will accompany believers who preach the Gospel. The fifth sign is that “In My Name . . . they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Through the laying on of hands, the healing virtue of the Lord is imparted from the believer into the body of the person being ministered to.

Another ordinance for healing is found in the book of James.

“Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” **James 5:14-15**

The first ordinance for healing, “In My Name . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover”, is a sign that follows believers as they go and preach the Gospel to unbelievers. What is required? We must simply go and preach the Gospel of Jesus and then lay hands on the sick. The supernatural sign of healing will follow.

The book of James is written to Christians who have already believed in Jesus. The ordinance for healing is slightly different for Christians. Here, the believer is to call for the elders of the church. They will pray over him anointing him with oil. In the Old Testament, when people or temple vessels were consecrated and dedicated as holy to the Lord’s service, they were anointed with oil. * The ordinance of anointing with oil for the believer speaks of their re-consecration and dedication to a holy life of serving God. So the sick believer calls for the elders. As they pray over him/her and anoint them with oil, the believer is re-dedicating his/her life to holiness and service to God. The prayer of faith made by the elders will save the sick. The Lord will raise him/her up. If they have committed sins they will be forgiven.

***Oil was used (along with the blood) to consecrate (set aside as holy unto the Lord)**

“Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which *was* on the altar, and sprinkled *it* on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.” **Leviticus 8:30**

***The temple and all vessels in it were to be anointed with oil as “holy”**

“And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shall hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. **Exodus 40:9-10**

Baptism with the Holy Spirit through laying on of hands

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” **Acts 8:14-18**

Laying on hands to impart spiritual gifts

“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” **2 Timothy 1:6**

This gifting, imparted to Timothy through the laying on of hands, was connected to Timothy’s God-ordained ministry assignment. Timothy was given wisdom to lead, anointing to preach and teach and gifts of the Holy Spirit to minister to people.

The gifts that we receive must be stirred up. It is up to us to spend time in the Word and alone with God in prayer. Prayer and feeding on God’s Word will stir up the gifts in us.

Laying on hands for sending out Christian ministries

“Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” **Acts 13:1-3**

The “sending” of these two ministers was initiated by the Holy Spirit speaking as the prophets and teachers ministered to the Lord and fasted. These elders heard the voice of the Lord during a time of united prayer.

How much of modern church work is done today without prayer and fasting? How much is done without ministering to the Lord and waiting to hear His instructions? Jesus said “My House shall be called a House of Prayer.” Having prayed and fasted, in obedience to the voice of the Lord, they laid hands on them, sending them out as the Holy Spirit directed. May our churches become Houses of Prayer as God intended. May our leaders be examples of consecration and prayer.

In our next teaching segment (Foundations - 7b) we will look at the “laying on of hands” for recognizing and appointing deacons and elders in the church.