

How I Moved Past My Awkwardness to Pray for People to be Healed

Over the years several individuals have asked me to share my thoughts on the ministry of healing. They were particularly interested in learning how to operate powerfully in an evangelistic context. One man said that he wanted to get over the awkwardness and really begin to touch the lives of people.

I understand the questions and even the hesitation that many feel in this area. Ministering healing can appear difficult to those who have never functioned in it. In fact, when I started out, I struggled with this (*and often still do*).

Most have the idea that it's overly "*mystical*" or even the byproduct of a perfect Christian life. I don't think that this is the right way to look at it. God often uses regular, everyday believers who are still finding their way. I'm so glad that it doesn't take "*perfection*" to touch the lives of others. If that was required, I would certainly be disqualified (*and you would be too*).

I also want to point out that healing is deeply relational; even "*ordinary*" in its outworking. It is not taking people out of their "*earthly*" experiences. Instead, healing is bringing the power and truth of Jesus into a fractured human body. Arguably, it is one of the most incarnational realities imagined. We engage and watch as the glorious God of the universe brings life to broken, corruptible flesh.

I want you to understand that healing doesn't have to be so complicated. It begins by simply taking notice of ill individuals. You might see them in the checkout line or standing next to you at the gas station. Reach out and show some genuine concern about their life. People can usually tell

whether you're speaking to them out of a posture of love or not.

In a calm, reassuring voice, say something like, "*I noticed that you're in pain. Do you mind if I ask what happened?*" Give them a moment to explain what's going on. As you're carefully listening and interacting, be sure to get their first name and affirm their great value to you.

After they share their diagnosis, be sure to mention that you're a Christian and that you love to pray for people. Ask, "*Is it alright if I pray for you?*" Often, they will say, "Yes," thinking you intend to intercede later. Explain that you would like to pray for them right now—if that is at all possible.

There are a few things to consider when you actually get the opportunity to pray (*sometimes you don't get that opportunity to pray, but you should bless them just the same*). First of all, it's good to be at peace. If you're overly agitated, it will be hard for them to receive from you. Secondly, keep in mind that you don't have to be loud or even pray for an extended time. It is not length or volume that brings healing. These things can make a real difference in people's receptivity.

As you begin to pray, invite the presence of the Lord to come. Pray that His goodness and strength would be manifest. Bless the Lord and thank Him for all He has done! Center everything you are doing in the person and work of Jesus.

Then out of a position of authority, simply command – in the mighty name of Jesus—that the pain leave their body. Be direct and firm against the infirmity! Demand it to go! Throughout the New Testament they prayed prayers of command, not prayers of petition. We should always try to follow the Scriptural example when we pray.

Also, if appropriate, you might ask if you can lay hands on them in the place where they feel the most pain. "*Laying on of hands*" is a dynamic way of imparting the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

After you've prayed for a minute or two, it's good to ask them how things are going. Find out if the pain has lessened or if they feel anything "different" taking place in their bodies. When a person is experiencing a touch from God, they may feel tingling, coolness, heat, peace, joy, or perhaps nothing at all. Have them provide a little feedback so you can get a sense of how things are going.

If there's a sense of breakthrough, ask them to do something they couldn't do before. For example, if pain was in their leg, have them now put a little weight on it and walk. Obviously wisdom must be shown in each circumstance. The ill should only be encouraged to respond in a way they're completely comfortable with. I've found that sometimes the healing comes in a moment of response.

Obviously not everyone will respond favorably to this kind of prayer engagement. Healing doesn't fit the common understanding of Christianity in North America or Europe. Because of this, some will reject your efforts. This is always disappointing.

Nevertheless, the possibility of rejection is probably not our biggest problem. I believe the greatest impediment to the ministry of healing is our own insecurities and fears. Christians often become their own saboteurs.

It is important that one doesn't allow the awkwardness and discomfort to dissuade them from making an effort. It is not always easy, but Spirit-filled believers need to press in anyway.

I always get a knot in my stomach when I talk to someone about their illness, but I refuse to let that stand in my way. I

have pressed against the awkwardness and have personally engaged hundreds of sick people. To my great joy, many were powerfully impacted by the mercy of Jesus. I've seen healing take place in gas stations, restaurants, and department stores. While my sincere efforts are occasionally rejected, most of the time people are genuinely open to an encounter with Jesus.

I think it's time for Christians to get over the awkwardness and discomfort and start advancing the kingdom. It is time to be brave. There is a sick world that is desperately waiting for us to advance. Will you join me?

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