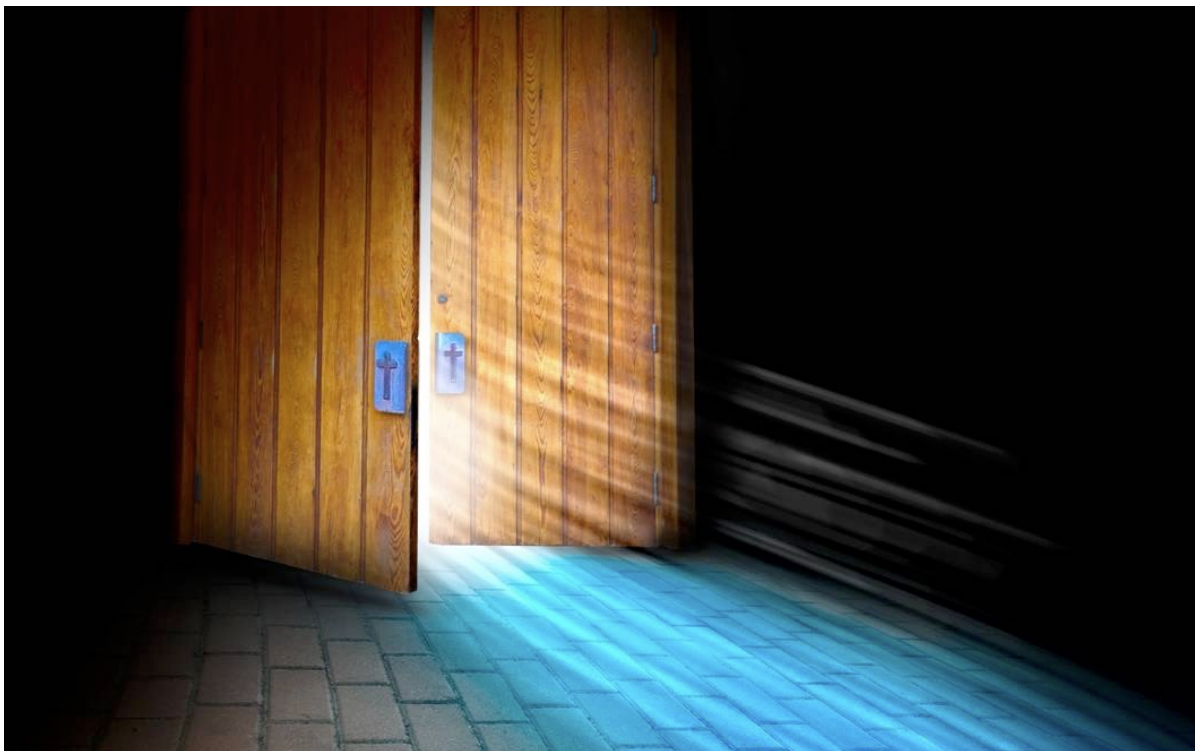

The Presence of God

Training People to Experience God's Presence While Praying for Others



The Reverend Bill Blomquist

Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. 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 [d]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.” (Mark 16:14-18)

The Great Commission

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Introduction

I remain convinced that the *Presence of God* is the only thing needed to receive ministry, do ministry, and fulfill the Great Commission.

His Presence is everything: a passion for God, salvation, healing, witness, and resurrection. Healing is good. Salvation is better. Deliverance is awesome. But many times it's when the Presence of God - that peace that transcends all understanding — is prayed over a person when things really click. Regardless of one's need, when a person encounters the Presence of God under the hand of a faithful prayer minister all becomes right in the world. Even if healing doesn't occur they walk away settled, knowing that God is with them in their pain.

Praying the Presence of God onto others in no way disqualifies, or circumvents, specific prayers (as we'll see later) for others. It only assures that they will happen. Indeed, I have been surprised more than once by the direction prayer goes after the Spirit of God is invited and followed while praying for others.

In our time we will be looking at key understandings of God's Presence as he works in us and through us to others for the fulfillment of his will. We start where it all started for us, with Jesus.

I. The Continuous Mission of Christ

“**T**he Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:18-21

Getting There From Here

Signs and wonders are the experiential attributes of love - God’s Love.

God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit,
who has been given to us.

Romans 5:5b

Miracles always happen in the Presence of God. They were always present when Jesus taught. In fact nearly 40% of the Gospels are devoted to describing the miraculous ministry of Christ. These miracles were not “miracles for miracles’ sake,” but served as *credentials* and *proof* that the Kingdom of God was breaking into the present.

How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hebrews 2:3-5

The miracles of love (flowing forth from God's Presence in Christ) were actual *proof* which lent credibility not only to who Jesus was, but to his teachings, and his overall witness to others. Essentially they affirmed that what he was saying was true.

In addition, signs and wonders pointed others to God, and his most wondrous love for them. Once he got their attention — and miracles do get peoples' attention! — he often used it a salvific leverage, or a teaching tool to get people saved. This trajectory of ministry held true in the early church.

But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders.

Acts 14:2-4

A Call to Mission

The Presence of God revealed through signs and wonders was originally intended to be all about others, the marginal, disenfranchised, those without hope and in dire need of a saviour, for the benefit of others, "that they may believe" (John 10:25, 11:41f, 12:9-11, 17-19, and 28-30).

This in no way speaks against the goose-bumpy experiential accolades of the Spirit we experience (i.e. healing, deliverance, purpose, comfort, peace, etc.), as these are equally valid in the life of a saint, but we can never lose sight of God's heart for the lost. His passion to increase his Kingdom is way bigger than our needs (which of course include his passion). The Holy Spirit is given to us, not for us, but for the sake of the outsiders, the "fringers," and the yet-to-be church. It's all about fulfilling the Great Commission.

He said to them, “*Go into all the world* and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.

Mark 16:15-18

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and *you will be my witnesses* in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8

Our Job description (described above) can in no way be done on our own. No uncooked pasta sticks to the wall. Likewise, nothing sticks in the hearts of the yet-to-be-churched outside an encounter with the Presence of God burning through us, for the sake of those around us.

This is the *normal* way God works. It is the continuation of what he’s been doing all along. Simply said: Nothing lasting happens outside the Church without the Church being inside the Holy Spirit.

II. That Glorious All-Essential Gift

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit**, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:17-19

A Wonderful Perk!

A curious thing happens when we are rooted in the Spirit for the sake of making him known to others: we get closer to Jesus. We learn what his voice sounds like, how he leads, what blesses him, what grieves him, and just that everyday adventure of being in a surrendered relationship with him.

I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

Luke 10:19-21

The power and authority we have in the Lord is so grandiose that it is easy to forget that the best perk of all is that it proves that you and I are children of God. It was for the apostles anyway. They were so jacked up and excited about all the healings and deliverance going down that Jesus had to call him back to reality — their names are written heaven, their status as children in relationship with their Father.

This awesome awareness/relationship only increases as we are about the business of sharing his Love with others through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, this dynamic (that of a deepening relationship between us and the Father) may be behind why he's set things up the way he has in the first place. Not only is he the provider of the miracles through us, but he accomplishes them in tandem — *in an ongoing relationship* — with us.

Assurance of Call

Jesus released the promised gift of the Holy Spirit at the annually cycled Jewish Feast of Pentecost.¹ It came as a promise to all his followers and given with the awareness that we would continue the ministry of Jesus on a much larger scale.²

Even with this assurance from Scripture, we still wobble. We wonder things like, *How can I be sure that his Spirit lives in me, anoints me, and wants to use me?* We may think, *This Holy Spirit stuff might be good for some people, but how can I be sure it's for me?*

Let's look to the Scriptures.

- Jesus himself was filled with the Spirit and was called into a ministry. He believed and embraced what Scripture said about himself and simply walked it out. It says:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Luke 4:18-19

- When we received God's gift of salvation through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross, we instantly became members of his Body. This infers that he is still alive (because he has a living body), and he is actively continuing the work he was anointed to do in the first place.

¹ This feast was originally to offer God the first fruits of harvest from farmers and others in the agricultural community. More recently, it has become a celebration and remembrance of Moses and the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai. Either way, it's a fitting time for the Spirit to fall - as it is the "first fruit" of God's harvest to us (Jesus) and the fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 11:19, 36:26. (See also Hebrews 10:15-16) where it is prophesied God's Law would move from tablets to hearts.

² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12)

Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

1 Corinthians 12:27

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is in you*, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

1 Corinthians 6:19

- Thus, since we are in him and he is alive in us³ — and his heart for the world is no different but continues to reveal the Father’s love to all creation — that too is our call as well. We are cosmically united with Christ’s DNA in all aspects of his being, his passion, his will, hopes, and dreams.

Therefore, holy brethren, *partakers* of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 3:1 (*Emphasis mine.*)

Three Ways the Spirit is Gifted

Now that we have established our call in Christ, with the equal understanding that there is no way in the world we can carry it out without the indwelling Presence of God living in us and in the power of the Holy Spirit, the question beckons: *How are we to step fully into the anointing of Christ?*

We can in no way limit the mysterious ways of God. That being said, three ways emerge from Holy Scripture.

1. Sovereignly For No Good Reason

God has a mind of his own. Sometimes he simply decides to fall and fill for no “apparent” reason. He can do that because he is God.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

³ This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. (1 John 4:13)

Then Peter said, “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Acts 10:44 - 48

2. Intentionally Through the Prayers of Others

Other times the Love of God can be poured out through the Spirit through others as they intentionally place their hands on others in prayer.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John’s baptism,” they replied.

Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Acts 19:1-6

3. As We Ask

Our Father *loves* to answer prayer — especially if it’s something he’s been longing to give us, something that he knows we need, and something that has been already paid for.

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

Luke 11:9-12

One Baptism, Many Fillings

It's important to note that, when we initially come to Christ two things happen: We are adopted as children of God⁴ and we become recipients of a deposit of the Spirit his life in us now and in the world to come.⁵

Yet it doesn't stop there. Like the priests of old, we must have a *continuous relationship* with the Spirit.⁶ Daily we need to him to fill us, wash us, anoint us for ministry, suit us in his spiritual armor, empower us, and sanctify us to his Name. This isn't a one shot deal, but an ongoing relational experience with our God.

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled⁷ with the Spirit,
Ephesians 5:8

A Prayer for the Continuation of His Life in You⁸

Dear heavenly Father, I know that I've been born of the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit and am indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That why asking you for a fresh work of the Spirit in my life is an easy thing to do. You are quintessential generosity—the most bighearted and openhanded Father imaginable. You won't give us snakes and scorpions, when we ask; but grace and more grace, and still more grace! Hallelujah, many times over!

⁴ God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba,[c] Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir. (Ephesians 4:4-6)

⁵ He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (2 Corinthians 1:21b-22)

⁶ The priests in the temple washed daily in the waters of the laver (symbol of the word of God and the Spirit) before *and after* they ministered to Yahweh.

⁷ This word in the original Greek has a sense of *ongoingness* to it. It may better read, *Keep on being perpetually filled with the Spirit.*

⁸ Taken from [The Gospel Coalition](#) website.

So Father, not doubting your promise one bit; and, without shame or hesitation, acknowledging my need, I ask for a fresh stirring and filling of your Holy Spirit.

Several things motivate me to ask for a new work of the Spirit in my life.

I know that, apart from your Spirit, I can't believe the gospel and love Jesus, the way I want to. So Father, by the power that raised him from the dead, free me from my under-believing and over-compensating. Open the eyes of my heart to see more of Jesus. Dazzle me with his delights; buckle my knees with his beauty; put me face down on the ground from a renewed awareness of his glory and grace; grant me jaw-dropping wonder and awe, in response to Jesus' majesty and mercy of Jesus, and the perfection and completion of his work for us.

Grant me power, with all your children, to know the height, depth, width and breadth of Jesus' love—a love that surpasses knowledge; the only love that is better than life; the only love that is enough. You've poured out his love into my heart before; do it again, and again and again. May the love of Jesus be the most compelling and propelling force in my life; turning my whining into worship; my timidity into fearless faith; small dreams into a kingdom vision; my hesitation to risk much, into a life of gospel adventures.

By the grave-robbing, kingdom-advancing, Christ-exalting power of the Holy Spirit, restore to me the joy of your incomparable salvation; renew my love for the beauty and freedom of holiness; and intensify my awareness and excitement about the occupied throne of heaven.

Indeed, Father, you ARE working in all things for your glory and our good; and you ARE working all things together after the counsel of your will; and you ARE summing up all things in Christ. Hallelujah, what a Savior, Jesus is; hallelujah, what a salvation he has won for us!

So very **Amen** I pray, in Jesus' exalted and awesome name!

III. The Holy Spirit and Jesus

When the historic Jesus walked and lived among us he was both God and Man in nature but chose to live as a man in practically every way.

This laying aside⁹ of the practical fullness of his Godhead was intentional. Theologically, he needed to be human to provide an atoning sacrifice for humankind. Practically, if he was going to continue the expansion of his kingdom through us, he needed to show us you didn't need to be God to do it.

Jesus' unique modeling of the Father's ministry is something we'll look at later. In this section we're going to chronologically track the role of the third member of the Trinity in the life of this Hebrew man.

A Unique Relationship

The Presence of the God and his activities through the Holy Spirit were *deliberate* and can be traced, for the most part through Christian Scriptures.¹⁰ Here are some of the high points:

- Jesus was *conceived* by the Holy Spirit.

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:35

- Jesus *grew* in age and wisdom in the Presence of God.

And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

(Luke 2:40)

⁹ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

¹⁰ But, "Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." (John 21:25)

- Jesus was *anointed* by the Holy Spirit.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. Suddenly the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and resting on Him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!”¹¹

Matthew 3:16

- From early on, Jesus *understood* the Spirit’s anointing and call on his life.

“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s **house**?”

Luke 2:49

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

Luke 4:20-22

- Jesus *ministered* in the God’s power.

You yourselves know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee with the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him.

Acts 10:37-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness.

Matthew 9:35

¹¹ Note the words of our Father to him at this time, affirming who he *was* before he had *performed* anything.

- Jesus *modeled* healing prayer for the disciples.¹²
- Jesus *called* and *gave* his authority to his followers. It was a necessary move to assure the expansion of his ministry.

And calling His twelve disciples to Him, Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits, so that they could drive them out and heal every disease and sickness. As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

Matthew 10:1,7

- Jesus *shared* his ministry with 72 others, who had the same power as he had to minister in the same way to others.

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[a] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.

Luke 10:1-2, 7

- Jesus *asks* the Father to gift all who follow him with the same Spirit and tells them they’d be doing greater things that he did.

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth.

John 14:16-17a

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.

John 14:26

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

John 14:12

¹² See Mark 5:22-24, 35-42 and compare how well they learned/copied that incident in Acts 9:36-42.

- Jesus was *raised* from the dead in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who dwells in you.

Romans 8:11

- Jesus *promised* his followers he would empower them with the Spirit.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth

Acts 1:8

- Jesus *delivered the promise as promised*.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:1-4

The Beat Goes On | Through the Ages

The early Church's foundation was to carry out of Jesus' ministry, revealing the Presence of God, through words and works, or signs and wonders/deeds.

The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people, and with one accord the believers gathered together in Solomon's Colonnade. Although the people regarded them highly, no one else dared to join them. Yet more and more believers were brought to the Lord—large numbers of both men and women.

As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem,

bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were healed.¹³

Acts 5:12-114

The Apostle Paul, perhaps one of the most gifted men of his time¹⁵ intentionally chose to lean away from his natural abilities and into God's supernatural abilities when he shared Christ.¹⁶

He wrote to the Church in Corinth:

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I decided to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith would not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Not an Option

The activities of the Spirit have ebb and flowed for thousands of years, and will continue to do so until his return. The realized Presence of God through witnessing with signs and wonders are not optional for the saint. They are *mandatory* and gifted in order to fulfill the call.

We have a call — an invitation into something so much bigger than you and I. It's a Sacred Stream that flows from Genesis and rushes into Revelation, book-ending everything in-between along its eternal banks.

¹³ Read Acts 19 for an amazing account on how God's Presence through the Holy Spirit rocked the world for Christ.

¹⁴ For an amazing insight to the Spirit's activity in the early church and tight on through the middle ages, check the Appendix of John Wimber's *Power Healing*, Francis MacNutt's book, *Healing*, and Mark Pearson's book *Healing*.

¹⁵ Circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. (Philippians 3:5-6)

¹⁶ And he wasn't alone. Miracles were the convincing proof that God's Presence was breaking into their world and the Apostles and early church relied upon them in their ministry. See Acts 3:6-8, 4:33, 6:8; Romans 1:6, 18-20; 1 Corinthians 2:4-6, 20, 12:9-11; and 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6.

Regardless of its varied expressions, it continues spreading the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ to a lost and hopeless world hell-bound without him. In this day and age — and for those of us who want to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ — and where revival is about to crest, the infilling of the Presence of God is not an option.

What soldier would go into the battlefield without everything needed for victory?

IV. Foundations

Jesus had a growing knowledge of his anointing and who he was in God. While his desire for all people to experience the Father's love was paramount, he did not do it all. Strangely, he did not attend to every human need around him. He did not offer salvation to everyone he saw.

And, just in case there's a tiny bit of codependency in you, you don't need to do it all, either.

Framing Who We Are As We Pray for Others

Understanding our role in ministry is important as we pray for others. Let's look at a few things that will help answer the questions:

How do you see yourself when people approach you for prayer? What is your prayer posture?

Boundaries

After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone.

Matthew 14:23

When we step into the public arena of ministry we need to be cognizant of the boundaries that keep us humbled within the obedience of Christ - not only for us, but for the welfare of those we're praying with.

Jesus had boundaries. Even with the eternally powerful Holy Spirit residing within him he often withdrew to pray, and get alone with his Father where he could receive fresh perspective, rest, and empowerment in his call.¹⁷ Jesus knew his limitations. He knew when he had to get away to recharge, and we need to as well.

¹⁷ The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. (John 6:22)

Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. (Mark 6:47)

Recharging happens in a variety of ways. Introverts like to get away and be alone. Extroverts need to get into a social scene. Figure out what works best for you and do that. You want to be the best “you” you can be for the sake of the Call.

It sounds crass to say, but Jesus often overlooked people who needed prayer and healing.¹⁸ He never turned away anyone who asked him for prayer or healing but he didn’t sniff out the bushes looking for people either. He was a man, a human like us all. He grew weary, he got frustrated with stuff, was hungry, angry, tired, thirsty, and at times emotional. Like us, he had 24 hours in a day, with more demands on his life than we will ever know.¹⁹ It was because of his boundaries that he was able to maintain and do only the things that were on God’s heart at any given time, which leads us to the next point.

Solely Dependent on God’s Agenda

Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

John 5:19

Jesus ministry was *intentionally* limited, or expanded, all in accordance with the will of the Father. He could have done less and certainly had the resources to do more (Matthew 26:53) but he had made it a priority in his ministry to only do (and speak) what the Father was doing.²⁰

How did he know what the Father was doing? How do we know which way to proceed when we are in the midst of a ministry situation? Do we automatically pray for whatever they ask for? Or do we “check in” with the Father to see if he may have something different for them?

Once we are fully aligned with the idea that God has a specific agenda for those we pray with we can then seek direction from the Father through the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus did. This is why it is essential to be filled with the Holy Spirit, as it is in that relationship wherein we

¹⁸ Think of all the people Jesus must have walked passed who needed salvation. No doubt he knew their need, but he also knew God was big enough to meet their needs as well.

¹⁹ His stamina may have had something to do with the statement he gave to his disciples after a long day of ministry, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about,” (John 4:32) as God’s ministry is oftentimes supernaturally energizing.

²⁰ I often think of all the crippled and lame Jesus walked passed in order to get to that one man in John 5. He could have healed them all (and may felt compelled to do so) yet he made a bee-line for one person, and one person only.

hear the Father's heart. It is a great idea to ask him to fill/anoint you ahead of any ministry opportunity.

Authorized as a Legitimate Agents of Realized Eschatology

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, divine utterance may be given me, so that I will boldly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it fearlessly, as I should.

Ephesians 6:20

When Jesus said to his disciples, "Behold, I give you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Nothing will in any way hurt you (Luke 10:19), he wasn't kidding. God has given us the authority to *be him* when we minister as well.²¹

By the very virtue of **who we are** in Christ, called into the anointing of Jesus (Luke 4:18-19) and a member of his Body (1 Corinthians 12:13) it's all right to humbly assume we have the same power and authority and call to do "the stuff" that Jesus had. Refusing it flies in the face of all he died to give us.

It's important to note that Christ's authority in us runs independent of our feelings, fatigue, or how good or bad we've been. It's simply a matter of believing what God says about is true, taking a deep breath, and stepping into the thing.

Additionally, when we minister to others we are presenting a foretaste of the Kingdom (which includes healing, deliverance, and wholeness on every level) — which is the *eschatological* (future) piece. Heaven reaches back to our present, through our ministry. When we pray over others, we are essentially calling into the present that which is in our future, just like he did.

²¹ Assuming of course, you are ministering in his Name and (usually) with the blessing of your church's leadership.

Blessing What God is Doing

Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly.

Mark 8:22-25

There is a certain fluidness, or flexibility, during ministry. It is living, and requires we are alert and blessing God in the direction he has chosen. In other words, we get to go with the flow of the Spirit.

Regardless of what the Lord is doing, our job is to bless it. In blessing what God is doing, affirmation is pronounced and ministry oftentimes deepens. Blessing is encouraging to the person receiving ministry as well. As a mid-wife might "bless" the mother birthing her child, we too encourage and honor the Lord's work through with our hearts set above and our tongues blessing God for his work in our midst.

Complete Reliance on the all Sufficient Provision of the Cross

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Colossians. 2:13-15

Everything we have to give comes from one place: Calvary.

Healing, power, redemption, salvation, forgiveness, grace, restoration ... none that comes from anything you or I could muster up. Our prime sufficiency in ministry lies solely in everything that Jesus hung on the Cross to give us.

This changes the landscape of our ministry tremendously. It excludes anything we may want to bring to the ministry and includes every need without hesitancy or apprehension. We have nothing to offer. It all comes from the provision of the Cross. We also have confidence to pray for anything anyone approaches us with — be it a hangnail, addition, or a cancer - because we know the power to address such things doesn't come from you or me. It all comes through our humbled hearts from the all sufficient provision of the Cross.

Since we have been commissioned to bring the loving Presence of the Father through the Holy Spirit to others we are, in a sense, always on call, to “do the stuff” (a great term John Wimber epitomized in the mid-80's) let us move into a model of prayer ministry that is naturally supernatural and includes everything we've been talking about.

V. Incarnational Presence

There are a number of ministry models out there, all of which need to be held on loosely. Why? Because God never limits himself to a standard way of doing things. That being said he does honor framework wherein he can work within. (Many of us see this happening in our liturgical contexts every Sunday. The framework is the same, but he has chosen to work within it in a plethora of varied ways.)

The model presented here is an effective way to cooperate with the Presence of God and what he's doing. I present it with gratefulness to Mike Flynn, John Wimber, Nikki Gumbel, Francis MacNutt, and others who have had a hand in forming Jesus' ministry into our contemporary culture.

A Five-Fold Model of Healing

I. Interview

After a welcoming greeting, you'll want to have a brief interview. This is best done by asking something like, "What are you asking Jesus to do for you today?"

This should allow you to get a *bare minimum* of information. (In your role as a prayer minister you are not a doctor, counselor, friend, or buddy.) You may ask a clarifying question but your main job here is to listen as if they were the most important person in the world.

Two Kinds of "Ears"

Natural Ears

- Watch the person's body language. Look for common experience, knowledge, or situations in your own life which helps foster compassion
- Don't get sidetracked. Too much information may be superfluous. A clarifying question here and there is ok but leave it at that. Since this is not a medical interview, the person's medical history probably won't help. It may even hinder your confidence as you begin to pray.

*Supernatural Ears*²²

- Be attentive to “whisps,”²³ certain revelatory information that God may be speaking over you. Illnesses are complex and can stem from a number of dynamics. Healing has to do with repentance, renunciation, extending/receiving forgiveness, and can be very complicated. We rather rely on the word of God to get to the heart of the matter.²⁴
- Be on the alert for red flags, seeking discernment on how to pray, as they listen:
 - **Sin.** Their own sin (intentional or otherwise), or another's sin toward them.²⁵
 - **Natural:** disease, accident, addictions, poor habits, emotional stress, etc.
 - **Supernatural:** Evil spirits (the illness may be caused by a spirit or may be a spirit), a spiritual curse, familial spirits (illness or predisposition towards an illness that is inherited), involvement in magic, a cult, or the occult, etc.
 - **Reaction to an authority figure** can “box in” God so that healing is blocked or hindered.

As you interview, listen for “hooks” that get your attention. Go into the next step with these “hooks” on the back burner

II. Invoke

When the Spirit is asked into a ministry situation, he shows up with his agenda. Our job is simply to track with what he's doing and to honor and bless his Presence on/in the individual.

²² Remember you are seeking God's agenda which is *revealed* through the Holy Spirit.

²³ One of my mentors, Rev. Mike Flynn, will often say that the Lord speaks to us in *whisps*, which is half a whisper!

²⁴ For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

²⁵ This includes issues of un-forgiveness, resentment, bitterness, etc.

While may be helpful to understand the specifics of the situation, be resolved to know that you are clueless about what specifically needs prayer. You do know that God is doing something and you'll be eager to bless whatever he's doing.

Frame Your Time

Most people are unaccustomed to this kind of prayer. Before you pray, you'll want to share a bit of what will be happening, what is expected of them, and a bit about this model of ministry (which may be new to some). You're looking to ease them. Hearing from you will give them a sense of who you are, your expertise, and your care for them.

Tell them:

- To be *chilled* and know he is God.
 - Direct them to relax, and be open to what God will do, rather than to pray.
 - "Leave the driving to us."
 - People have varied experiences about receiving prayer ministry/healing. Some will get "religious." Others may really not know what to do. The person's inner posture will have much to do with his or her reception of the Holy Spirit.
- There will be *times of silence* and that's okay. It doesn't mean something is wrong. Silence is needed to hear God.
- To be *Conversational*. There may be times when you'll speak to one another. It won't "break the spell" or make God go away. It's all a part of *prayer*. You'll want to know what God is doing and sometimes the best way to do that is ask if anything is going on. This is called *dipsticking*, which we'll look at later.
- *Lean into God*. People most always experience the peace of God during prayer. Invite your pray-ee to lean into his Presence when he feels God's love, open-hearted and embracing of the goodness of God, as this will increase the awareness of his Presence.

Invite the Spirit to Manifest God's Presence and Angenda

God honors our [God-given] authority as we ask the Holy Spirit into the ministry arena. "Calling the Holy Spirit down" is by far the best ministry we can give to anyone. At its worst, it's like receiving a warm bath!

We like to ask the Lord to minister in our midst *orally*. While it is understood he is always around, there are times when his Presence is particularly needed, called upon, and invited

through a specific invocation (like a meal, a situation of dependence, or even a blessing/consecration/ordination). It will look something like this:

- A verbal *invitation*
 - "Come Holy Spirit," or "Holy Spirit minister to your child" or "Father, release your love over N."
- A period of *waiting*
 - This is the most difficult thing to do in the world. Even sixty-seconds seems like an eternity when no one is speaking. Some people seem to attract the Presence, others need more time. Usually you'll see something within 30 - 60 seconds.
- Some *looking* around.
 - Keep your eyes open (or peek a lot). We often miss the beauty of his ministry simply because we have our eyes closed.
 - Manifestations are by-products (evidences) of ministry, and not ministry itself. They are not the goal/focus of ministry. To make it more complicated, sometimes the most significant minister happens when absolutely nothing apparent is happening. That being said, manifestations of the visitation of the Spirit may be both internal and external.
 - Internal: peace, joy, love, conviction of sin, memories of pain/crisis, crystalline thinking, understanding
 - External: fluttering eyes, flushed skin, perspiration, a change in rate of breathing, heat or warmth under a hand, trembling, shaking, falling, crying, laughing, coldness, a visible glow
- *Blessing* God's Presence when he shows up
 - As the Spirit "lands" or is "released"²⁶ onto the person you're praying for, you will want to orally bless the Lord's Presence (aloud) at that time. You may bless him any way you'd like. Examples may be:
 - "Lord, we bless your Presence on your child," "Father we honor and worship you," "We bless your peace," "We agree with your love being poured out upon N.," and so on.

²⁶ Two paradigms of ministry: released from within the person and descending down onto the person are both equally valid in Scripture. Jesus says the Spirit will be like living water bubbling up from **within** (John 7:38) and Peter describes the Spirit as coming **upon** others (Acts 10:44).

- This serves to:
 - Magnify and deepen the his ministry
 - Serves as a pastoral affirmation to the person you're praying with that all is well.

Words of Knowledge

As you pray in silence, it is not uncommon for the Lord to guide the prayer ministers, giving certain revelatory indications of what he's doing. These revelations can be happening while you are blessing his Presence, waiting in silence as God is blessing the person you're praying for, or even anytime before, during, or after the ministry session.²⁷

We've mentioned them above but let's look at them a little closer now:

- *Defined*
 - "A supernatural revelation of facts about a person or situation, which is not learned through the efforts of the natural mind, but is a fragment of knowledge freely given by God, disclosing the truth which the Spirit wishes to be made known concerning a particular person or situation."
- Ways wherein "words" manifest
 - Picture
 - Impressions of a word, or a picture of a word
 - Pain in the body
 - Verses/Scripture coming to mind
 - A knowing in your knower
 - Memory
 - Vision
 - A sense about the real truth of the situation
 - Other:

²⁷ Words can be given the moment you wake up that day. If you are schedule to pray on any given day, be asking for words from the moment you awake!

“Words” are crucial in discerning God’s agenda for ministry. I believe God reveals what he’s doing to the prayer ministers as they pray.

Don’t feel expected to come up with a word of knowledge. You either are getting something or you’re not. If you’re not, perhaps your prayer partner is, or the person with whom you’re praying with. If no one is getting anything, perhaps God isn’t saying anything specific any only wants to love on the person you’re praying for.

Keep any words “under your hat” until the next turn of the corner, when you converse a bit about what God may be doing.

III. Inquire

It’s important to note that up to this time in the model you have not prayed specifically or interceded for anything but have only blessed the Presence of God on the person.

Yet it’s always a good thing to actually pray! How to pray is the big question. That is why we do something like “dipsticking.”²⁸

When is the best time to dipstick? This too takes discernment and a certain sensitivity. Not unlike the tides in the sea, the ministry of the Holy Spirit ebbs and flows in “wavelike fashions” as you pray. This is normal and you can actually see it. First one edd, then another — with the ensuing wave larger than the previous one. Between the waves are lulls. This is where you’ll want to check in to see what the Lord is doing.

Dipsticking should be done with everyone who is praying (the prayers and the pray-ee). It can be a glorious time to see what God is doing.

Ask around, *What’s going on? How are you doing? Or, What are you thinking? What are you feeling?*²⁹

As you listen, you’ll want to be seeking to track with the Spirit, looking for any indicators of what God is doing. This is a dialogue time, between all parties.

Share Words | Inquire Deeper

At this time you may share any words or revelations you received previously for the purpose of leveraging ministry in the right direction.

²⁸ A term that comes from the days when people would dipstick into the automobile engine to check the oil level. In short, checking in and seeing what’s going on.

²⁹ People are usually wither “feelers” or “thinkers.” If they can’t articulate an answer as a feeler, ask the same question to them as a thinker.

Many have been abused, or even “cursed” by those giving “words from God.” People trust you and, by this point in the ministry, have come to see you as an authority figure. Extreme care needs to be given when presenting something from the heart of God.

Here are some guidelines:

- Share gently, humbly. You may be wrong.
- Preface it with a phrase inviting them to consider whether it’s true for the. Something like, “I am getting the sense... would this be true?” or, “When we were blessing the Lord on you I had an image of ... does this make sense to you.” If accurate, your word may be confirmed in by the person you’re praying for, or your team mate, or both.
- Words in general do not forecast the future. Like New Testament prophecies, they generally share God’s mind on a matter, as opposed to telling a fortune, or laying out some kind of life call which will alter the course of life. It’s a word for that particular setting, not a description who they will marry, what town they’ll live in, or what they’ll do when they grow up.

On a typical Sunday morning where there are kids running around, the band is breaking down the stage, and there is loud conversations aching about the room, you may not get beyond this step — which in itself isn’t all that bad. Your pray-ee has had the opportunity to receive prayer, to experience the blessing of God, and to feel affirmed. Many times this is all people are really looking for.

If time permits, and the pray-ee desires, move into the next step of the model.

IV. Intercede

Based on the information you retrieved at during the *dipstick* you’ll want to pray in that same trajectory. You have had some conversation. Begin there. If the information provided in the dipstick differs from the request they originally approached you with, do pray for that eventually, but not right away. Go with what God is doing. Make that your priority.

As before, you want to invoke and invite the Spirit, then briefly wait until his Presence is sensed.³⁰ After that feel free to pray into the information attained while *dipsticking*.

Prayer Options

³⁰ This won’t take as long this time.

- *Petition.* This is by far the most commonly used. It's simply praying for the person or situation as led.
- *Intercession.* Usually spontaneous and "heart-felt." Initiated when one spiritually identifies with the needs of the prayee and petitions God on their behalf.
- *Pronouncements, Declarations, and Reassurance.* These are definitive statements, led by the Spirit, wherein the truth of Scripture is reinforced in a deeply spiritual way. They are prophetic in nature, and may be shared in "first Person" from the Lord.

... I declare and assure you that you are mine, bought with a price, I will never leave you nor forsake you ...

- *Confession, Renouncing, Repenting, Receiving Forgiveness.* Prayer is a response to God. In this way it is totally appropriate for the person to confess sin, renounce behavior, repent of attitudes, and receive forgiveness. You might ask them to pray in their own words. Others may need you to guide them along.
- Regarding granting or declaring forgiveness:
 - Scripture is clear: One doesn't need to be ordained to declare God's forgiveness in Jesus' name (Jn. 20:23; James 5:16). You are simply stating that which is true, extending the provision of Jesus' death on the Cross to them.
 - Since forgiveness and absolution is a sacramental Rite of the Church, you may wish to direct them to a Priest as well. Sacramental confession is a powerful, yet seldom used, tool of God.³¹
 - "You are forgiven in the name of Jesus!"
- *Salvation.* Not everyone in the church is a Christian. Not everyone in the church has had the opportunity to receive Christ, either — nor be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - These prayer times provide wonderful opportunities wherein others can embrace Christ as their Saviour, receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, or rededicate their life to his loving ways.

³¹ Regarding confessing and receiving absolution within a sacramental confession it is commonly said, "Some may, none must, all should."

- *Command of Faith.* This is when you use your God-given authority (Gr. *exousia*) and speak directly to the problem, telling it to get in line with God’s will. Jesus often spoke to “entities” without physiological ears ³² and we have that same authority to rebuke the devil, bind, set free, cut curses — as well as to bless.
 - In cases where demonic oppression occurs it is a simple task to rebuke it and send it scurrying away. Sometimes it’s wise to shut ministry down for another time, or seek out a person more experienced in the matter.
- *Soaking prayer.* These are longer, deeper, periods of prayer wherein one can literally “soak” under the prayers of others. Soaking prayer is perhaps best utilized in an appointment setting, not on a Sunday.
- *Resting in the Spirit.* Sometimes while people are receiving prayer they are literally overcome and will wobble. If this happens, the prayers can be relocated to a chair. Sometimes however, the person goes down before you know what’s happening.
 - This is a gift of peace and/or deep healing and refreshment and should not be interrupted. Simply squat down and continue to bless what God is doing.³³
 - There may always be those people who “go down” because it’s either the “religious thing” to do, or they’ve been preprogrammed to think people who are slain in the Spirit are more spiritual. Some fall forwards, some fall backwards, others plop in place like a sac of potatoes. However they go down it doesn’t matter. It’s how they get up that will be the true test of the visitation.

When to Stop Praying

Some indications that ministry has completed include: *visible relief, a profound sense of release, a sense (from the prayee) that s/he needs to move on*³⁴, *the Spirit seemed to be “drying up,” or, nothing is happening.*

Sometimes it’s time just to go home.

³²Exmples include: the fever in Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 1:39), the wind and the waves (Luke 8:24), a fig tree (Mark 11:14), and maybe others (John 21:215).

³³

³⁴ Regardless of what’s going on, if the person you’re praying for is wanting to stop, you stop.

V. Impart

Finally, as a minister of the Love of God, you'll always want to end your time with some sense of pastoral care, bestowing affirmation and encouragement to the pray-ee. As they leave, dismiss them with honor.

Recap the wonderful ministry of our Lord

- As an indication of affirmation and worth, converse about how God has met them.
- “How are you doing? What was going on?”
- “I really sensed a lot of heat on your back.”
- "Did you sense how the Spirit's Presence deepened during the prayers?"
- Remember not to bias, or place emphasis on, feelings and experiences. Some “left-brained” people will sense nothing, but receive everything

General Counsel

You may want to share any words given to supplement or reinforce the healing process, or to nurture the ministry that happened.³⁵

- "Now that God has given you new life in Christ, it's important that you get to know Him through the reading of His Word.”
- “Burn your occult stuff. You don’t need that any more.”

Spiritual Resistance and Counterattack

Look at the descriptions of the devil in the following passages:

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:44

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

³⁵ But be careful here. You are not counsellors or priests. You are prayer ministers. If it gets too deep, or if your pray-ee has multiple questions, direct them to your priest.

1 Peter 5:8

The devil hates Christians and the devil seeks to undo everything that God has done. This is especially true in the lives of his children. Whatever God births, the devil wants to kill. ³⁶

An encouragement to “guard the good things of God,” with direction to fight for it, is appropriate and usually all the pray-ee needs to be reminded of the ongoing spiritual warfare that can come as a result of moving closer to Jesus. Warfare is illusive and comes in a variety of ways:

- Negative self-talk
- Increased negative feelings - guilt, shame, condemnation
- Increased temptation and falling into the “same” sin
- Certain surprise maladies - aches, pains, for no good reason
- Increased family stress (i.e. esp. between spouses)
- Mechanical mishaps

Final Instructions

However they leave, you want them to feel honored and valued as a child of God. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you close out the session.

Always invite them to come back for more prayer. It’s a good thing!

Never slime them with a condemnatory remark like telling them they need more faith to be healed.

Always tell them to seek their doctor’s advice and diagnosis before throwing away their medicine. If the healing is real, it will provide medical proof *and* be a witness to the medical field.

Always bless others as they leave:³⁷ Blessings include:

³⁶ The devil tried to kill Moses through Pharaoh’s action to kill all the Israelite babies, he tried to kill Jesus by the slaughter of the innocents, he was there trying to trip up Jesus at the birth of the Last Supper, and he is still seeking to kill thousands of unborn children through abortion. To date 125,000 fetus’ are aborted worldwide per day.

³⁷ John Trent and Gary Smaller’s book, *The Blessing*, has extended chapters on these elements. A great book for blessing others, especially members of your family.

- *Meaningful touch.* A handshake or appropriate hug.
- *Expression of worth* such as, “Jesus loves you for who you are. You are his child.”
- *Prediction of the Lord's favor*, his faith, hope, and love promised to all his children. “I know God will be faithful over you. He has plans for you, he’ll never forsake you.”
- *Commitment.* “Let me know how it turns out. I am praying for you. I’ll be here next Sunday for you as well.”

Take Away

This model of ministry is one where all parties operate within a circle of openness, honesty, and faith — co-discovering what God is doing together. We do, at times, "miss God." However, it is equally true that, at other times, we will "meet God." When we meet God, and understand what God is doing, the honor and glory going to God will far out-shadow our mistakes.

These five steps seem like a lot to remember. Don't get legalistic about this method. It's a working model that has been proven to be effective. Here's a quick rundown:

- Listen
- Welcome and Bless God’s Presence
- Dipstick
- Pray
- Bless

Remember: Nothing but healing the sick will really teach you how to heal the sick. You may never feel entirely confident but as you get more experienced under the Spirit's tutelage you will learn that God will always show up.

God is the One who heals, and He loves to have you on His team!

Go for it ... to the greater glory of God!

About the Author

The Reverend Bill Blomquist serves with his wife as Priest in the Anglican Diocese of New England. He is Biblically orthodox with a wide appreciation for the world-wide Body of Christ, past, present, and future and promotes a "born again" experience (John 3: 5-8) with an invitation to receive an immersion in the Holy Spirit with ministry (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4). Bill came to Christ at the end of the "Jesus Movement" in 1977, was ordained in 1995, and has taught and led worship as a singer/songwriter in various ministries through his life.

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