
The Presence of God

Training to experience the fullness of the Kingdom when 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.

In the presence of God is all things: a thirst for God, salvation, healing, witness, and resurrection. Again, nothing we need lies outside the presence of God.

A growing model of ministry deals with this. Healing is good. Salvation is better. Deliverance is awesome. But many times the presence of God - the peace of God that transcends all understanding - prayed over a person is all that person really needs to get through the day. Regardless of their need, when a person encounters the presence of God under the hand of a faithful prayer minister, and they get the sense that they are not alone, all becomes right in the world. Even if they don't get healed in the way we had hoped (or believed), they are all the more 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

Seeking the purpose of God's Presence

“**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, and 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* that 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, his 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's often use it a salvific leverage. This trajectory of ministry was also proven faithful 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

It's Really Not All About Us

Initially, the Presence of God revealed through signs and wonders was all about others. They were intended for missional or evangelical purposes - 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 experiential accolades of the Spirit in our life (i.e. healing, deliverance, purpose, comfort, peace, etc.), as these are equally valid in the life of a saint. Yet God's heart for the lost is bigger in the world than in the Church. Indeed, they are gifted to us, for the sake of the outsider, within the context of 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. Like no uncooked pasta sticks to the wall, nothing sticks in the hearts of the yet-to-be-churched without the Holy Spirit's activities, through us, to those around us. This is the normal way God works. It is the continuation of what he's been doing all along.

Simply: We can do nothing outside of us being within with the Holy Spirit.

II. The All-Essential Gift: The Holy Spirit

Rooted in the Spirit

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 wonderful thing happens when we are rooted in the Spirit and about the business of making him known: we get closer to Jesus. We learn what his voice sounds like, how he leads us, and just the everyday thrill 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 real deal. It was for the apostles anyway. He had to call him back to really what's important - their names in heaven, and 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 it up in the first place. Not only is he the provider of the miracles, but he does them in tandem - in an ongoing relationship - with us.

The Assurance of the Call

Jesus imparted the promised gift of the Spirit at the regularly cycled annual Jewish Feast of Pentecost.¹ It was a promise from him to all his followers — which include you and I (see John 14) — given with the awareness that we would continue the ministry of Jesus on a much larger scale (John 14:12).

How can I be sure that this sort of life is his will for me? This Holy Spirit stuff might be good for some people, but how can I be sure it's good for me?

The answer is threefold.

- Christ was filled with the Spirit and was called into a ministry. Look at the contents of the Call:

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

- As we are saved, we become members of his Body (his body, his presence, his revelatory actions to those around us):

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

1 Corinthians 12:27

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.

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 in us (1 John 4:13), and his heart for the world is to reveal the Love of God, that too must be our call as well.

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

Hebrews 3:1

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 in the power of the Holy Spirit, let's look at three ways that the Spirit is given.

Sovereignly

God has a mind of his own. Sometimes he simply decides to fall and fill for no "apparent" reason.

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.

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

Through Others

Other times the Love of God can be poured out through the Spirit through others, intentional and as they place their hands upon you.

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

As We Ask

Our heavenly 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

When we come into Christ we are birthed into new life through the Holy Spirit. Some would suggest that happens at Baptism. Others would suggest that happens as we turn to Christ as Lord and Saviour, surrounding to him body, mind and soul. Still others would suggest that the immersion of the Holy Spirit happens independently of our conversion.

The important thing is that it happens.

Yet it doesn't stop there. Like the priests of old, we must have a continuous relationship with the Spirit.² Daily we need to call out 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 filled³ with the Spirit,

Ephesians 5:8

² The priest in the temple washed in the waters of the laver (symbol of the word of God and the Spirit) before and after they ministered to Yahweh.

³ 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.*

III. The Holy Spirit and in the Life of Jesus

Jesus' absolute dependance on the Spirit

Many believe that Jesus, though he was/is/forever will be God chose to strip away, or lay aside (Philippians 2:6-8), the full privileges of “being God” for a number of reasons. Theologically, he needed to be human to provide an atoning sacrifice for humankind. Above that, 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.

His modeling of ministry is something we'll look at later. In this section we'll take a look at his unique (and dependent) relationship with the Spirit and how he passed that on to his followers.

The Spirit and Jesus

The Presence of the God and his activities through the Holy Spirit were deliberate and can be traced, for the most part in the Christian Scriptures.⁴

- 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)

⁴ 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!”⁵

Matthew 3:16

- Jesus understood the Spirit’s anointing and call on his life.
- Jesus ministers 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

- Jesus modeled healing prayer for the disciples. (See Mark 5:22-24, 35-42 and compare how well they learned/copied that incident in Acts 9:36-42.)
- Jesus calls and gives the same authority (gr. *exousia*) as he had to expand 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

⁵ Note the words of our Father to him at this time. Also note (though not quoted) the same Spirit who fell on him here led him into the desert to be tested by Satan (Matthew 4:1).

- Jesus shares his ministry with 72 others, who have the same power as he had to share the good news with others. (See Luke 10:1,2, and 17)
- Jesus promises he will gift us, and all who follow him, with the same Spirit and even mentions they/we would do greater things that he did. (See John 14:11,12 with Acts 1:6-8.)

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

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

Acts 2:1-4

- Finally, 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

The Continuation of his Ministry Today

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.⁶

(Acts 5:12-17)

The Apostle Paul, perhaps one of the most gifted men of his time (“circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin; a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, 6as to zeal, persecuting the church; as to righteousness under the Law, faultless. ...” [Philippians 3:5-6]) intentionally chose to lean away from his natural abilities and into God's supernatural abilities when he shared Christ.⁸

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,

⁶ Read Acts 19 for an amazing account on how God's Presence through the Holy Spirit rocked the world for Christ.

⁷ For an amazing insight to the Spirits 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*.

⁸ 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.

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

We have a call.

It comes in many ways and many behaviors. Regardless of its varied expressions, it's all about spreading the sharing the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ to the world that his hopeless without him. By Jesus's own words, that includes jumping into the living adventure of life in the presence of God - miracles, suffering, the works. (Mathew 16:15-20)

In this day and age where revival is about to crest, it is 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.

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

IV. Essentials

This Ministry in Me

We have been commissioned to bring the loving presence of the Father through the Holy Spirit. We are, in a sense, always on call, to “do the stuff” (a great term John Wimber epitomized in the mid-80’s). But this call is guilt-free. As individuals, we are not responsible to save everyone we see.

While Jesus often overlooked people who needed prayer and healing,⁹ he never turned away anyone who asked him for prayer or healing. Yet he was a man, human like us all. He grew weary, frustrated, hungry, angry, tired, thirsty, and emotional. He only had 24 hours in a day, with more demands on his life than we will ever know.¹⁰ How did he do it?

Jesus had a keen knowledge of his call and who he was in God. And while his desire for all people was to experience the love of God as poured out through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5), and most likely he was acutely aware of the tremendous human need around him, he did not do it all. He did not heal all. He did not offer salvation to all. And we don’t need to either.

Framing My Prayer for Others

Understanding our role in ministry is important as we pray for others. How do you see yourself when people approach you for prayer? What is your prayer posture? These are important questions. Let’s look at a few.

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

⁹ Think of all the people Jesus must have walked passed who needed salvation.

¹⁰ 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.

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. (See Matthew 14:23, Mark. 6:47, and John 6:22.) Jesus knew his limitations. He knew when he had to get away to recharge, and we need to as well.

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.

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, 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.¹¹

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

¹¹ 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.

God's agenda is revealed through a variety of ways:

- Visions
- Dreams
- Memories
- Song Lyrics/Movie clips
- Pains
- Bible verses
- An all-knowing knowing in your Knower
- Others:

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 isn't kidding. God has given you the authority to be him when you minister.¹²

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.

¹² Assuming of course, you are ministering in his Name and (usually) with the blessing of your church's leadership.

This authority 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.

In addition: 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.

On-time Blessing and Flexibility

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.

V. A Model of Ministry

An Effective Way to Cooperate with Presence of God and What's He's Up To

There are a number of ministry models, all of which need to be held on loosely. God never limits himself to a standard way of doing things, yet he does honor frameworks wherein he can work within, be honored, and where his power is un-compromised. This model is just that. I present it with gratefulness to Mike Flynn, John Wimber, Nikki Gumbel, Francis MacNutt, and others - all who have had a hand in forming Jesus' ministry into our contemporary culture.

Why I Will Never Receive Ministry from the Healing Team

If God wants me healed he doesn't have to have someone pray for me to do it.

People will stare at me.

I don't want anyone to know I have problems.

I don't like the people on the team this Sunday.

It's just too far to walk.

What will happen if the prayer ministers sees who I really am.

I am not worthy.

I have a ham in the oven.

I don't believe in healing.

I went up last week and nothing happened.

Remember ... It takes a lot of guts for a person to ask for healing a Sunday Morning. Treat and honor them as a real gift of God. Thank them for asking for prayer, encourage them to come back for more!

Listen

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

- Body language
Look for common experience, knowledge, or situations in your own life - fosters compassion
- Maintain focus - 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*¹³

- Be attentive to "whispers," revelatory things God may be speaking as you listen. Illnesses are complex and can stem from a number of dynamics. Much healing has to do with repentance, renunciation, and extending/receiving forgiveness.
- Be listening for red flags, or discernment in how to pray, as they speak:
 - Sin. Their own sin (intentional or otherwise), or another's sin toward them.¹⁴
 - Natural: disease, accident, addictions, poor habits, emotional stress, etc.

¹³ Remember you are seeking God's agenda which is *revealed* through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ This includes issues of un-forgiveness, resentment, bitterness, 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

Welcome and Bless the Presence of God

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

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.

Framing

Be pastoral and 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.

- Be chilled and know he is God.
 - Direct them to relax, and be open to what God will do, rather than to pray.
 - "Lave 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.

- Silence. There will be periods of silence. That's okay. Silence is needed to hear God.
- Conversational. There may be times when we speak to each other. It won't "break the spell" or make the prayers go away. It's all a part of the prayer. Above all, we want to know what God is doing. We may ask you if you sense anything is happening.
- Lean into God. People most always experience the peace of God during prayer. Invite your pray-ee to recognize it and, if so, spiritual lean into it, open-hearted and embracing of the goodness of God.

The Invocation

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 verbally. 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 dependance, or even a blessing/consecration/ordination).

- A verbal invitation.
 - "Come Holy Spirit," or "Holy Spirit minister to your child" or "Father, release your love over N."
- Wait
 - 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.
- 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
- Bless the Presence of the Lord
 - As the Spirit “lands” or is “released”¹⁵ onto the person you’re praying for, you will want to verbally 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.
 - This serves to:
 - Magnify and deepen the his ministry
 - Serves as a pastoral affirmation that all is well

Words of Knowledge

As you wait in silence, it is not uncommon for the Lord to guide you into his ministry. These revelations can be happening while you are blessing the Presence, and waiting in silence as God is blessing the person you’re praying for. Indeed, his words can be given anytime before, during, or after the ministry session.

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

¹⁵ 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).

- 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:

These words are crucial in discerning God's agenda for ministry. I believe God usually reveals what he's doing. 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!

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

Dipstick

It's important to note that up to this time no one has prayed specifically or interceded for anything. They have only blessed the Presence of God on the person. Nothing else, which is in itself significant.

Yet it's always a good thing to actually pray. How to pray is the big question. That is why we dipstick.

Not unlike the tides in the sea, the ministry of the Holy Spirit will seem to ebb and flow in a "wavelike fashion" as you pray. This is normal and depends entirely on his will. This space between the waves, in the lulls, provide appropriate times to check in to see what the Lord is doing. Lipsticking can be done with your team member, or with the person you're praying for. Again, the goal of the conversation is to discern what God is doing and get tighter onto that.

You want to answer the question, *What's going on?*

*Ask: What's going on? How are you doing? Or, What are you thinking? What are you feeling?*¹⁶

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.

A Good time to Share Words

If you feel it's appropriate, you may share any words or revelations you received previously for the purpose of leveraging ministry in the right direction.

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.

Pray

Based on the information you retrieved at during the dipstick you'll want to get before the Lord and pray. Now that you have had some conversation, you can begin there. If the

¹⁶ 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.

information provided in the dipstick differs from the request they originally approached you with, do pray for that also!

As before, welcome and bless the Presence of God. and briefly wait until his Presence is sensed.¹⁷ After that feel free to pray into the information attained while dipsticking.

Prayer Options

- **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.¹⁸

... 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.

¹⁷ This won't take as long this time.

¹⁸ Regarding confessing and receiving absolution within a sacramental confession it is commonly said, "Some may, none must, all should."

- "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.
- *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 ears¹⁹ 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.²⁰

¹⁹Exmples 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).

²⁰ There will 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. Indications that ministry may be complete include: visible relief, a profound sense of release, a sense (from the prayee) that s/he needs to move on²¹, the Spirit seemed to be “drying up,” or, nothing is happening. Sometimes it’s time just to go home.

Bless

As a minister of the Love of God, you'll always want to close your session with pastoral care, showing affirmation and encouragement. 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
- "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.

- "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:

²¹ Regardless of what’s going on, if the person you’re praying for is wanting to stop, you stop.

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.

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 births, the devil wants to kill²².

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!

²² 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.

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:²³ Blessings include:

- *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**

²³ 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.

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. Remember 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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