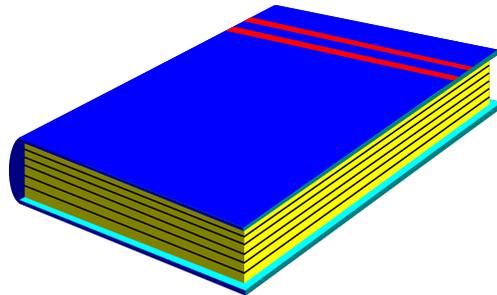


# THEWORD

## BIBLE TRAINING COURSE FOR LEADERS



## FIRM FOUNDATIONS COURSE

## PARTELEVEN

### LAYING ON OF HANDS

Now when the sun was setting, all those who had anyone sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. (Luke 4:40)

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

Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away. (Acts 13:3)

## The object of this study is

### **TO DISCOVER AND PROVE: -**

The Biblical truths and functions of the laying on of hands.

On completion of this study you will have: -

- A foundational knowledge of the practice of laying on of hands
- Discovered the various uses of laying on of hands
- Confidence to minister in this way with knowledge

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### **NOTES**

There are four practical aspects to these courses; exercises, Bible reading, learning and questions. The following notes are for your guidance:-

1. **Exercises** are to be written in your own words and returned to the Course Administrator through whom this course was given to you or returned to the address below.
2. **Bible reading** is to be done at the point of the course where you are asked to read. Do not just read the passage but meditate upon it before continuing.
3. **Learning.** These are usually short passages of the Bible for you to learn so that you are able to speak them without reference to the Bible.
4. **Questions** are listed at the end of each study and are to be answered when you are satisfied that you have completed the study. Your answers can be sent back to your Course Administrator or e-mailed or posted to the address below.

Once you have completed the work you can e-mail it to [stangain@btinternet.com](mailto:stangain@btinternet.com) for assessment. On successful completion of the whole course a certificate will be sent to you.

If you were given this course by your Course Administrator then return your work only to him. If this course came to you direct from London then please post your work to:-

Stan Gain  
The Word Bible Training Course  
285 Montrose Avenue  
Welling  
Kent DA16 2QU  
ENGLAND

## **Laying on of Hands - Foundational Teaching**

You will remember from the earlier studies that this Firm Foundations Course is based on the foundations laid down in Hebrews 6:1-2: -

‘Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.’

You will see from the underlined passage that there are three foundations that we need to cover to conclude this course. The laying on of hands is a practice that was almost lost to the church. Now that this truth has been ‘re-discovered’ it is important to have a Bible based understanding to enable us to go on to perfection (or maturity).

Laying on of hands as it is found in the Bible is simply what it says. There is no ritual setting or procedure that needs to be followed. It is simply one or more persons placing their hands upon another. In the Christian church it is usually accompanied with prayer and/or prophetic utterance.

### **An Old Testament Practice.**

We can see from the Old Testament that the laying on of hands was already an established practice by the time of Jesus and the setting up of the New Testament Church.

**Read** Genesis 48:1-20. In this passage you will see the first Biblical example of blessings being imparted by the laying on of hands. Israel blessed his grandsons by placing his hands upon their heads.

Again, in Numbers 27:18-20 we see Moses followed a similar practice to commission and give authority to Joshua as successor: -

‘And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.’

This was not just a good idea that Moses had. The Lord told Moses to do it. We see the result of this act of obedience in Deuteronomy 34:9: -

‘Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.’

This was an act of great value, because: -

- Joshua received a measure of the wisdom and authority that had been given to Moses
- The people of Israel saw the public act of laying on of hands and knew that Joshua had been commissioned, and they respected him because of it.

## **Exercise 1**

In Leviticus 16: 21-22 and Numbers 8:10-12 we have examples of the laying on of hands in respect of the Old Testament sacrifices. What lessons can we learn about the laying on of hands from these practices?

### **A New Testament Practice**

There are more references to the laying on of hands in the New Testament than in the Old. It would appear to have been a regular and normal part of the life of a Spirit filled church. As we now turn to the New Testament practice we can find five distinct purposes for which the practice of laying on of hands is used.

- i) There is a direct association with the ministry of healing
- ii) To help those seeking baptism in The Holy Spirit
- iii) For the imparting of spiritual gifts
- iv) For sending out apostles and missionaries from the local church
- v) For appointing elders and deacons in the local church

### **Laying on of Hands for Healing**

We have already seen that this is part of the 'Great Commission' of Jesus to the church in Mark Chapter 16: -

“In My Name ..... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

In James 5:14-15 another very clear reference is made: -

‘Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.’

In both of these examples there is the laying on of hands, one with anointing oil and the other without. The oil, used by elders, has no special qualities, but is an aid to faith and a symbol of The Holy Spirit. It is not the oil that brings healing, but The Holy Spirit represented by the oil. In both of these examples it is required to 'believe' or to have

'faith'. In all of the impartations through the laying on of hands there is required a release of faith that what is being seen outwardly will become a reality spiritually.

**God first!** It seems from these passages and other passages that God would require us to seek Him when we are sick. This is not to say that there is not a place for medicine and doctors in the process of healing. However I believe that we should seek first from Him, even as we are on the way to seek medical assistance. In countries where there is little or no medical provision and knowledge this teaching is easier to receive and practice. Let us also restate from the previous study that laying on of hands in Mark 16 is also an accompaniment to the preaching of the Gospel.

Let us look at a biblical example: -

'Now when the sun was setting, all those who had anyone sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking them, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.'

Notice that in this event in Jesus' life he 'laid hands on every one of them and healed them'. A very effective ministry of healing. Note, however, that this was not the only method that Jesus used. We must be careful that we do not miss what God is doing or saying because we think that we have discovered 'the formula for success'. It is as we listen to the voice of The Holy Spirit that we shall know how to minister.

## **Exercise 2**

In the Gospel of Mark there are several references made to the laying on of hands for healing. Find at least three of them and write in your own words how this event happened (or will happen) and what is the result. This is a longer exercise since it involves a fairly lengthy study in the book of Mark

### **Laying on of Hands to Impart The Holy Spirit**

We have already looked at the baptism in The Holy Spirit in our earlier studies. It can be clearly seen from scripture that one method by which the baptism in and the filling with The Holy Spirit can be imparted is by the laying on of hands. Remember that Jesus is the one who baptises in The Holy Spirit. We are given the privilege of working with Him and helping others to receive.

Once again, as with healing, this is not the only way by which the power of The Holy Spirit is received. In the book of Acts there are three occasions when it happened without the laying on of hands. The obvious example is the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when there was no one around to lay hands on the early disciples except God. The second occasion is when there was an outpouring on the Gentiles when Peter is preaching in the house of

Cornelius. It had not entered the mind of Peter at that time that those who were not Jews could receive The Holy Spirit.

‘While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.’

We read about the third occasion in Acts chapter 4. Here some of the believers were praying together for God to strengthen and empower them. Many, if not all, had been there on the day of Pentecost but were filled again with The Holy Spirit.

We will also look at three occasions where the power of The Holy Spirit comes through the laying on of hands in the book of Acts.

**Read** Acts 8:14-25. Here is a very clear account of receiving The Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. It was very visible. There must have been some outward manifestation that they had received the power of The Holy Spirit since Simon the Sorcerer ‘saw that through the laying on of hands, the Holy Spirit was given’. Perhaps it was speaking in tongues or some other spiritual gift that convinced him.

The second occasion is in Acts 9. The famous story of the conversion of Saul. He had been made blind by his encounter with the Lord. The Lord sent Ananias to minister to Saul and: -

‘Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.’

Many have said that it is only the apostles who are able to impart the power of The Holy Spirit by the laying on of hand, but it is clear from this passage that it was Ananias who laid hands on Saul, and Ananias is not numbered among the apostles.

### **Exercise 3**

The third occasion of the laying on of hands to receive the power of The Holy Spirit is found in Acts 19. Read this whole chapter. It is an account of Paul’s two years ministry in Ephesus. At the beginning of the chapter is an account of the Ephesians receiving The Holy Spirit. Compare the ministry in this account in verses 4 – 7 with the ministry of that recorded in verses 13 – 16. What conclusions can you reach by this comparison?

### **Laying on of Hands to Impart Spiritual Gifts**

As is our practice throughout this Course, we will find the Biblical precedent to the practice of laying on of hands to impart Spiritual gifts. This we find in Romans 1:11-12: -

‘For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established - that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.’

From this we can see that a spiritual gift can be imparted from one person to another. Paul, writing to the Roman church says that his desire is to impart such gifts among them so that they might be mutually encouraged.

The clearest example that such gifts may be imparted by the laying on of hands is found in the letters that Paul wrote to Timothy. In encouraging Timothy to be diligent in all aspects of his Christian life he says: -

‘Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the elders.’ (1 Timothy 4:14)

In the introduction to his second letter he writes: -

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

It is apparent here that people had laid hands on Timothy on more than one occasion. Firstly it was by the elders of the church and in the second reference it was by Paul. Notice also that on the first occasion the laying on of hands was also accompanied by prophecy. It is possible that after receiving a prophecy, the elders laid hands upon him to confirm the words of that prophecy.

### **Laying on of Hands to Send out Apostles or Missionaries**

With the three instances above – laying on of hands for healing, baptism in The Holy Spirit and impartation of spiritual gifts – there are circumstances when it happens both with and without the laying on of hands. With the sending out of apostles or missionaries, it appears from scripture that this is always done with the laying on of hands.

The word ‘apostle’ comes from the Greek word APOSTOLOS. The meaning of this word is ‘a special messenger, one commissioned with a special task or role, one who is sent forth with a message’. In the New Testament the word is used for the original twelve disciples and prominent leaders outside the Twelve. It has been suggested that there are four features that mark an apostle: -

- i) He is one who is sent from his home church
- ii) He is one who has had a special encounter with God
- iii) He is one who plants and/or builds up churches
- iv) He is one who functions in his ministry with signs, wonders and miracles

The modern Spirit filled missionary who is sent by his church probably fulfils this role more clearly than one who oversees many churches. Whilst church planting is a clear role of the apostle and missionary the prime quality as can be seen from the meaning of the root word is that they are 'sent ones' for the purposes of the Gospel. Their home church sends them with the laying on of hands.

Let us study together Acts 13:1-4.

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

From this we can learn the following about this aspect of the laying on of hands: -

1. **It was a Spirit filled church.** In the church there were certain prophets and teachers who ministered unto the Lord. They did not act to please men, but to minister to and listen to the Lord.
2. **The leaders of the church prayed and fasted.** They did not hold an election to decide who they thought was best suited for the work. Rather, they listened to God.
3. **As a result The Holy Spirit spoke to them.** "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them"
4. **Paul and Barnabas were called by The Holy Spirit.** He told the church to separate them. They had a church based ministry.
5. **The leaders fasted and prayed again.** Everything they did was backed with prayer and fasting. Jesus said, "I only do what I see My Father doing"!
6. **The leaders laid hands on Barnabas and Paul.** This was to confirm in them and to impart to them that which The Holy Spirit had spoken over them.
7. **The leaders sent them.**
8. **Barnabas and Paul went.**

The Biblical pattern is that apostles and missionaries are not just sent by the church, but are called and sent by God. A close study will show that it was not the leaders who were responsible for sending Barnabas and Paul, but The Holy Spirit Himself. Behind the human hands, there was the hand of God with all His wisdom, gifts and direction.

As a result we read in chapter 14 verse 26 that when they returned to their home church from where they had been commended, they had completed the work that God had given them to do.

**(FOR YOUR OWN REFLECTION AND NOT FOR SUBMISSION TO YOUR COURSE ADMINISTRATOR.) Consider the eight points made above and reflect on the nature of your own call. As leaders it is important that we are confident of our own calling. Many leaders in today's church are self-appointed and not God appointed. To be certain that you are not responsible for appointing self-appointed leaders, make up your mind that you will follow the above points in reaching decisions about leadership in your own church.**

### **Laying on of Hands for Appointing Elders and Deacons**

This is the last New Testament function of the laying on of hands. In the bible we find only two 'classes' of appointment in the church. These are elder and deacon. That does not mean that there are not other ministries, offices, jobs, callings etc. In Ephesians 4 we find five ministry gifts given by Jesus to the church. These are apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. I was surprised when I discovered that this is the only one New Testament reference to 'pastors'.

The language of the New Testament suggests that elders or overseers are to shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:1-2) with the help of the deacons in a serving role (Acts 6:1-4). The various titles taken by church leaders of Vicar, Minister, The Pastor, Priest etc are not titles found in the New Testament Church. The man who is traditionally called The Pastor is probably functioning as the 'Leading Elder' in what should be a team of elders. **The title is not the most important issue so long as the Biblical function is being fulfilled.**

It would appear that apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are all valid ministries within the church and of equal position. These men, working together under the eldership of the church are to 'equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ' (Ephesians 4:12). The New Testament shows that elders are those with spiritual responsibility for the ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6:4). They are also to direct in matters of life and godliness in the church, ruling and labouring in the Word and in doctrine. (1 Timothy 5:17)

The work of a deacon in the church is for 'serving at tables' or, to give a more up to date interpretation, to minister to the practical and material needs of the church. We can see again that they were to be appointed for service before the whole church by the laying on of hands. In Acts 6:1-4 we read: -

‘Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."’

The apostles delegated to the congregation the responsibility for choosing from among themselves men suited to fill the office of deacon and when they were chosen they were set before the apostles, and when they had prayed they laid hands on them. (verse 6).

There are three reasons why hands were laid upon them.

1. It was a public acknowledgement that these men had been accepted as suitable to serve as deacons
2. They were committed to God for the task for which they were chosen
3. The apostles imparted a measure of their own giftings so that they could take up the responsibilities delegated to them

Note that among them were chosen Stephen and Philip, both men full of The Holy Spirit and wisdom who also developed outstanding powerful ministries of their own.

The appointment of elders is similarly recorded in Acts 14:21-23: -

And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

The process of ministry here is very similar to that of the appointment of deacons that we can be confident that although it is not specifically mentioned, they would have laid hands upon the elders that were appointed. Again note: -

- The appointing of elders is again accompanied by prayer and fasting
- The apostles did not make their own appointments but listened to the voice of The Holy Spirit

## **Exercise 4**

Read the book the letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus. Make a list of the necessary qualifications for a man to be appointed a) an elder and b) a deacon.

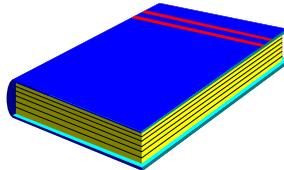
# Questions

## Part 11

1. What are the six elementary principles for foundational truth in Hebrews 6:1-2?
2. What is the first occasion that the practice of laying on of hand is found in the Bible?
3. In the Old Testament sacrifice system what was the purpose of laying hands on the animals to be sacrificed?
4. What are the five purposes in the New Testament for laying on of hands?
5. Complete this verse: "In my name they will lay hands on the sick and ..."
6. What is the purpose of the anointing oil when praying for the sick?
7. Is the laying on of hands the only way that a person may receive The Holy Spirit?
8. Give one example from the book of Acts when the power of The Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of hands and one example where it was given without the laying on of hands.
9. Is it only apostles who are able to pray for baptism in The Holy Spirit?
10. Is there any limit to the number of times that a person may be filled with The Holy Spirit?
11. What do you understand by the Greek word APOSTOLOS?
12. What are the four features that mark an apostle?
13. Is it necessary for all ministers of the kingdom of God, whatever their ministry, to have a home church at which they are based?
14. What can we learn about spiritual leadership from the church in Antioch?
15. Are you a member of a local church? If not, why not?
16. What are the two 'classes' of appointment in the church found in the New Testament?
17. What are the biblical qualities necessary for an elder?
18. What are the biblical qualities necessary for a deacon?

# THEWORD

## BIBLE TRAINING COURSE FOR LEADERS



There is only one more part of this foundational course for leaders. Before you move on to the last part, take a time to review those things that you have learned in all parts of the course. There is no examination, but it would be good at this stage to revise the lessons that have been learned and to go over the personal reflections in each course to see how they have changed you. On completion of this course you will receive a certificate from your Course Administrator or from the address on Page 2

If you have any testimonies or questions concerning this course or about 'The Word' you may write to the address shown on Page 2 of each study.

Also if you have any suggestions about the content of future Courses we would be pleased to hear from you.

Your Word is a lamp to my  
feet and a light to my path.  
Psalm 119:105