

Laying on of hands

This is one of the least acknowledged, least explained doctrine of the church. People don't do it, and are missing out on spiritual gifts.

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.

These are the basic doctrines, foundational, trunk of the tree, heart and core of all other doctrines. Knowing these we can "go on to maturity." We need to fully understand these things including laying on of hands. So, what exactly is it?

It is a symbol that God has set in place, to ask God for special action for an individual. God works through men, but it is God by which it happens. Same with many things. Prophecy for one, God's will be done, it must come from God. God asks us to do these things for a reason. The man is nothing without God. The receiving of the Holy Spirit comes by laying on of hands. (See Article: "The Requirement of Baptism," for a more complete explanation.) But there are many, many other occasions when putting hands on someone, touching them, for spiritual purposes are done. Lets look at some of these.

God symbolically "stretches out" his hand when healing.

Acts 4:29 "Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

A designated man, putting his hands on someone in a formal manner, is an extension of God's power and his will. It's by God's hand something is accomplished. His will and power in many situations is thus conveyed. Example of Israel, (the man Israel, son of Isaac, grandson of Abraham, progenitor of the nation of Israel.)

Geneses 48:13-20 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!'" And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

This was known as a practice in ancient times. Israel blessed Joseph's sons by putting his hands on their heads, and added further to the symbolism, even crossing his hands. Joseph understood the meaning, the meaning of his right hand on the oldest son. Israel, just a man, could not bring this blessing to pass, it had to be God who inspired it. Though a man did it and said it. What is another reason hands were placed on people in a formal ceremony?

An Old Testament example of setting apart someone for a special purpose.

Numbers 27:15-19 Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, "who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." 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.

Moses passes on the leadership of Israel (the nation, the “the congregation of the LORD”) to Joshua. God told him who. And he was to lay (put) his hands on him . Like a shepherd to the nation, Joshua was to be placed in a position of leadership. Joshua already had God’s Spirit. This made it “official.” This is one of the ways that God shows that he works through men, acting on his behalf.

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.

An extra measure of Holy Spirit given to enable him to do his job. “Full” of the spirit of wisdom. God doesn’t leave us without help to do what we are given to do. Moses passed on succession in a recognized way, so the people could see it. Like a formal inauguration. It has already been decided, it just needed to be officiated. God gave him extra help through his Spirit *when* Moses had put his hands on him. But what about in the New Testament? Do we find this practice there also?

Examples in the New Testament.

Acts 13:1-3 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.

These men were set aside for a specific purpose. How exactly the Holy Spirit "said" isn't stated. But, when GOD had revealed who via the Spirit, they formally set them apart for the purpose, by putting their hands on them. Two among several "separated." - Set apart for a holy (specially recognized as or declared sacred by religious use or authority; consecrated:) reason. But not just separated apart from others, but *to* God. They were called on for a specific job God had for them.

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you

Titus' job was to do this, a chain of custody as God has maintained through all time. Don't do it without qualifications and deliberation. (1 Timothy Chapter 3.) Paul then mentions to Timothy just how this was done.

1 Timothy 5:22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

1 Timothy 4:14 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 eldership.

Gifts given by laying on of hands

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

Specifically, Paul also did it. You don't "feel" any different but spiritually things change - just like baptism. And when an elder is properly ordained, certain insight will be given him, enabling him to do the job. Are there other examples?

Acts 6:1-8 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint 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." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.

Deacons were appointed, setting them apart for a purpose. The people set them before the apostles, and the apostles formalized it. It worked better to divide responsibility.

Do we *all* have to have hands laid on us?

Most importantly, the Holy Spirit is given after baptism through the laying on (placing on) of hands. Few churches practice this. If not, there is no Holy Spirit given (which is obvious!) That is how it is to be done. People cannot take it upon themselves to decide to do it some other way, or not at all!

Acts 8:12-22 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through

the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! "You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

This shows it *is* necessary! The Holy Spirit was given only after Peter and John put their hands on them. Even Philip was not authorized to do it. And, it was so obvious that Simon tried to buy it! It came *from* God *through* men. Also the Simon episode shows just anyone cannot lay their hands on someone in God's name. They must be a true follower of God, and someone authorized to do so. Not a control or status seeker. Simon wanted the status and ability, but not for the right reasons. He wanted to be a minister! It was called wickedness. Just because *you* want to do something, doesn't mean God will allow you to do it.

Acts 9:17 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."

Saul, who became known as Paul, was given Spirit this way.

Acts 19:1-6 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had

laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues [other languages] and prophesied [spoke under inspiration].

Proper baptism first. Then hands laid upon them. And the Spirit was given. It happened when Paul laid hands on them. It is primary, you must have hands laid upon you to receive Holy Spirit. Are there even more examples?

Are there other times hands are laid on?

Healing, a formal process asking God to intervene on our behalf and make us well, also involves laying on of hands. Here are some examples, and instruction.

Acts 28:8 And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.

James 5:13-15 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. 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.

Christ paid the penalty for all our sins. It is a process in which we must do on our part. Also associated with healing is anointing with oil. It isn't the man or men, it is God working through men. God the Father is first in respect and authority, (John 14:28) but in the ability to project power, the Father and Jesus Christ are equal.

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Hebrews 1:2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

God the Father initiates what he wants done. The Son carries it out, and God wants us to do certain things in certain ways. (John 12:49)

Luke 4:40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.

He laid his hands on them as an example.

Luke 13:11-13 And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Another example where Jesus had his disciples heal the sick, anointing them with oil.

Mark 6:7 And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two

Verse 13 And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them.

It's even part of the "Great Commission!" The job his disciples were to be doing. Among His very last words were to lay hands on sick.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Verse 18 "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."

What other instances might it be done?

Jesus Christ blessed the little Children, and put His hands on them. God cares for them and all have a protector.

Matthew 18:10 "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 19:13-15 Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.

We ask for God's specific blessing and protection for them. The disciples didn't get it yet. A blessing conveyed by laying on of hands. Marriage is another setting apart. Represents wedding of Christ and church. A blessing is asked for God's purpose. Many other situations. It's a basic doctrine necessary for salvation because we must have the Holy Spirit. It only happens through the laying on of hands. God uses weak humans to project his power through them so others can help and serve. And that is what the laying on of hands is all about.