Healing

*“Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” (James 5:16)*

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The ministry of healing (Ministry to the Sick) is closely connected with forgiveness. It addresses the whole life of the person asking for healing: physical, mental, social and spiritual. The teaching comes from the New Testament Epistle of James: those who are sick should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14).

*“Spiritual healing is God’s work of offering persons balance, harmony and wholeness of body, mind, spirit and relationships through confession, forgiveness and reconciliation…between God and humanity, among individuals and communities, within each person, and between humanity and the rest of creation.” (Discipleship Ministries, United Methodist Church,* [*www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/healing-services-and-prayers*](http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/healing-services-and-prayers)*)*

The Anglican liturgy, found on pages 554 to 558 of the Book of Alternative Services, includes prayers of approach to God, scripture readings specifically chosen for their words of healing, a prayer of confession, the laying on of hands (because Jesus touched those who came to him for healing) and anointing with holy oil (blessed by the Bishop), prayers asking for the forgiveness of sins, release from suffering, restoration to wholeness and strength, deliverance from evil, preservation in goodness and everlasting life. The service continues with Holy Communion, inviting all who are gathered to share in the Church’s deepest expression of healing and wholeness.

*“All healing is of God. The Church’s healing ministry in no way detracts from the gifts God gives through medicine and psychotherapy….God does not promise that we shall be spared suffering but does promise to be with us in our suffering. Trusting that promise, we are enabled to recognize God’s sustaining presence in pain, sickness, injury and estrangement.”*

*“Likewise, God does not promise that we will be cured of all illnesses; and we all must face the inevitability of death. A Service of Healing is not necessarily a service of curing, but it provides an atmosphere in which healing can happen. The greatest healing of all is the reunion or reconciliation of a human being with God. When this happens, physical healing sometimes occurs, mental and emotional balance is often restored, spiritual health is enhanced, and relationships are healed.” (United Methodist Church, ibid.)*

*“Healing prayer is perhaps best summarized in the statement: Christian healing is Jesus Christ meeting a person at his/her point of greatest need….The ‘gift of healing’ is given to those for whom we pray, not to those who do the praying.” (Healing Prayer: a How-To Guide for Prayer Ministry Teams, Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Canada, Pamphlet P/G-41 [Apr. 2006])*

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