

# Growing a Healing Ministry



## Handbook



# Growing a Healing Ministry

*"Becoming a Beacon of Healing and Wholeness  
in your Community"*

**Lord, look upon this work and grant  
to your servants to speak your word  
with all boldness while you stretch out  
your hand to heal and signs and wonders  
are performed in the name of your holy  
servant, Jesus.**

Acorn Prayer, based upon Acts 4:30

It is an absolute joy to welcome you to a re-imagined and revised **Growing a Healing Ministry** course.

We have been thrilled to work in partnership with Dr David Pearson, the Healing Advisor for the Diocese of Portsmouth, in adding to, and updating, the journey that you will be taking. David has brought to the course the unique perspectives of a Christian GP and of one who regularly leads a local church ministry team. Added to that, his role in equipping churches to provide a compassionate, competent and credible ministry, makes him the perfect partner for us.

Together we have sought to put into your hands through teaching, discussion and practice, the tools to begin and develop the healing ministry of Jesus in your church community, as you express the life and embrace of His Kingdom.

We join with you in praying that the time you are investing in this course will be fruitful and life-imparting for you, and for many others.

With much blessing



Revd. Wes Sutton  
**Director**  
**Acorn Christian Healing Foundation**

## *"Becoming a Beacon of Healing and Wholeness in your Community"*

'Growing a Healing Ministry' has been produced by Acorn to help Christians learn about the healing ministry and to apply what they learn in and through their local church. It is designed as an interactive course for large or small church groups, and assumes no prior knowledge or experience in Christian healing. It can however also be used as a refresher training course, and leaders and groups may wish to adopt the material to suit their circumstances. Each session builds on the one before, so it is desirable that group members be committed to the whole course.

'Growing a Healing Ministry' makes no assumptions about how you practise this ministry within your local church setting and so is suitable for churches of every description and churchmanship. It is assumed however that a healing ministry will always be exercised under the authority of the church leadership to whom individuals are accountable. This course is designed to help you decide how best to put what you learn into practice so that healing ministry becomes part of how your church expresses the transforming love of Jesus.

**O loving God who died to save us truly, where there is despair in life, let us bring hope, where there is injury, let us bring your pardon, where there is dark doubt, let us bring true faith in you.**

**Amen.**

(Based on the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.)

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# Session 1. Principles of Healing Ministry

Seeds of faith (Mark 4:1-12)

**Aim:** To understand the breadth of God's healing and be challenged by the fact that God still heals today.

**Dear Heavenly Father,**

**You call us to share the love and healing power of your Son;  
Give us those gifts and graces of the Spirit and the medicine of your Holy  
Gospel that will enable us to meet people at their point of need and bring  
them to wholeness of life in our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Amen**

(Based on the Collect for St. Luke the Evangelist.)

## 1. The Church's Mandate for Healing

Let's begin by considering why we as a church should be concerned about healing.

Read **Matthew 4:23-24**

*This gives us a summary of Jesus' ministry, which is "preaching the Good News of the Kingdom and healing every sickness and disease among the people."*

*What evidence do we have that this ministry was not just confined to the first disciples of Jesus?*

- **Luke** tells us in **9: 1-6** how Jesus authorised and equipped the twelve disciples to share this ministry of proclaiming the Kingdom of God, healing the sick, and releasing those oppressed with evil.  
*In Luke 10:1, 8-9 the commission is extended to others.*

You may also like to consider:

**Mark 16:18** Jesus expected all followers to be involved in healing.

**Matthew 28:20** Jesus exhorts the disciples to teach people to 'obey everything I have commanded you'. The 'everything' includes the command to preach, heal and release.

**James 5:13-16** Indicates that healing was a normal part of Church life.

**1 Corinthians 12:9** Healing is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

(Other references you may like to look up: **John 14:12-14, John 15:5, 7, John 20:21, Acts 2:43, Acts 6:8, Acts 8:4-8**)

*Note that the context for healing and miracles usually accompanies the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and salvation, and Jesus hardly ever commands his followers to preach without adding 'and heal'. This is the primary authority for the Church's healing ministry.*

We will refer to the **Kingdom of God** at various points in the course but it is helpful at this stage to give a simple definition as follows:

*"God's rule on earth and in the heavenly realms and especially in the lives of those who have been delivered from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of his Son" – Colossians 1:13*

The Kingdom was central to the ministry of Jesus and proclaimed by John the Baptist. We are encouraged to pray for the coming of the Kingdom in the Lord's Prayer, and in Jesus the Kingdom of God became a reality in His ministry and, through His death and resurrection, God's active rule on earth has commenced. The Kingdom's values are not those of the world and the signs of the Kingdom reverse the curse of the fall. It exists now – in terms of those who repent and have faith in Jesus with changed lives and values, as well as signs and wonders demonstrated in the ministry of the church - but also not yet. We still see suffering and conflict with evil in the world, but the Kingdom's final fulfilment will be when Jesus returns, evil is defeated and creation is renewed. (Mark 16; Matt 28)

(Note that care is needed in interpreting the words 'heal' or 'healing' in the Old Testament – they may often be used allegorically for restoration of land and relationship to God, particularly following judgement – e.g. the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple after return from exile – also in terms of the final deliverance of God's people and the ministry of God's servant or Messiah.)

### **So we can sum up the authority that we have by the following:**

- Jesus exercised a ministry of healing alongside preaching the good news of the Kingdom, as a demonstration of who he was and the nature of the Kingdom.
- Jesus expected and authorised his apostles, and then other disciples, to exercise this ministry.
- The early church in Acts and the epistles continues this twofold ministry.
- The history of the church demonstrates the continuous experience of healing and miracles throughout the ages.

(Included in the appendix you will find references to healing in the Old Testament, the Gospels and in Acts and the epistles. You will also find a historical outline of the exercising of healing ministry in the church.)

We will now consider the meaning of 'health' and 'healing' in the Christian context:

## **2. Defining Health and Healing?**

### **What do we think it means to be well, healthy?**

- **WHO definition:** "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"?
- Is it just **physical, mental, social?**
- **How does it affect our relationships** – with one another, our communities?
- **What about our relationship with the world and our environment?**
- **What about our relationship with God?** – Before we start to think about healing of our minds and bodies we should consider our deepest need for meaning and forgiveness through restored relationship with our creator God - that we are loved and that He has purposes for us.

## **Helps and Hindrances to a Healthy Life**

What makes us healthy and what makes us unhealthy?



### **In Summary:**

- Many things influence our health.
- Ill-health is not just about our physical state.
- We have some choices as to what influences our health.

### **What is Christian Healing?**

- *The Old Testament idea of **Shalom** encompassed more than just what we might think of as 'peace'; it conveys the idea of harmony not just within our mind and body, but with God, one-another, and our world. It gives a sense of total wellbeing. It is similar to what Jesus meant when He said "my peace I give you, not as the world gives do I give to you".*
- *In the New Testament the Greek word (**sozo**) used for salvation or being saved means the same as being healed or whole. Jesus gave us a fresh understanding of what God desires for us in the way that he often sought not just people's physical healing but to restore people's relationship with God and others those regarded as outcasts of Jewish society – the prostitutes, the tax collectors, the woman at the well in Samaria and the woman caught in adultery.*
- *We also recognise that we can know 'Shalom' even when we face physical illness or disability.*

### **Some definitions of Christian Healing:**

*Many people have been used by God in the healing ministry, and they have produced statements and definitions about healing that many have found helpful:*

- Christian healing is Jesus Christ meeting you at your point of need. (Morris Maddocks,)
- The Kingdom of God is creation healed. (Hans Kung)
- Reconciliation is the most radical form of healing. (Michael Buckley)
- Christian healing is that touch of God upon my life which empowers me to walk in newness of life. (Russ Parker)
- The focus is really us meeting with Jesus (John Ryeland)

- Christian Healing is defined in the Church of England document 'A Time to Heal' as: "*progress towards health and wholeness. The process through which the individual develops a physical, mental, spiritual, economic, political and social state of well-being, in harmony with God, with others and with the environment.*"

**In Summary:** Christian Healing encompasses:

- ◆ *Reconciliation, forgiveness, restoration of relationship with God – Jesus meeting our deepest human need through the cross.*
- ◆ *Restoring that which is broken through the fall, bringing us back to wholeness of body, mind and spirit.*
- ◆ *Ultimate healing of all creation and realisation of the Kingdom of God.*

### 3. The Foundations of Christian Healing

(A Basic Theology of Christian Healing)

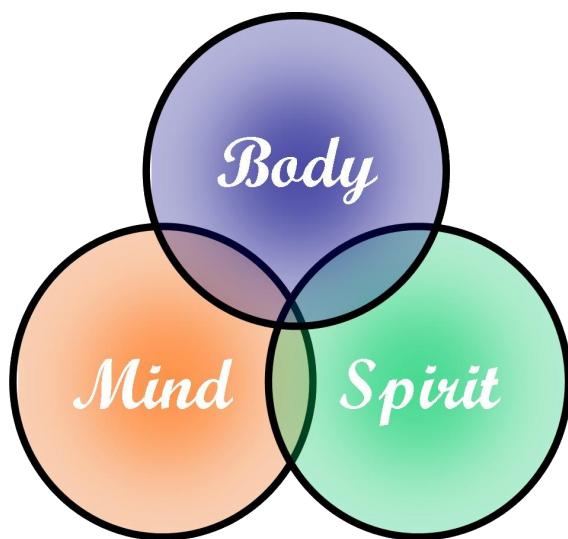
*It is helpful to think of five essential foundations to Christian Healing:*

1. *There are different aspects to our humanity.*
2. *We are made for relationships.*
3. *God designed us for health.*
4. *Though made in the image of God we are fallen human beings.*
5. *God's desire is our healing and wholeness.*

#### **FOUNDATION 1: There are several different aspects to our humanity.**

The New Testament refers to three aspects within every individual: body, mind (or soul) and spirit. (See for example, 1 Thessalonians 5:23) In each individual, the different aspects of body, mind and spirit together make up the whole person. These are not separate parts of us but an integrated whole.

The following diagram is one way of summing this up:



- a) We have **bodies** – we are physical beings consisting of all the physical and material aspects that constitute our bodies. These will include our genetic inheritance and all the cells and chemical components that enable our bodies to function.