

GROWING A HEALING MINISTRY - NOTES FOR LEADERS

“Becoming a Beacon of Healing and Wholeness in your Community”

COURSE OUTLINE:

Introduction and Guidelines for Leaders

Page 3

Session One Principles of Healing Ministry *Seeds of Faith*

Page 6

- The Church’s Mandate for Healing.
- Defining Health & Healing.
- Foundations of Christian Healing.
- Practising Prayers for Healing (1).

Session Two Attitudes & Approaches to Christian Healing *Rooted in the Vine*

Page 17

- A ‘RICH’ Ministry – attitudes & approaches.
- Listening as an Essential Component of Christian Healing Ministry.
- Listening like Jesus.
- Listening to Each Other
- Practising Prayers for Healing (2).

Session Three Key Areas in Ministry *Leaves for Healing*

Page 27

- Healing Damaged Relationships.
- Healing Damaged Emotions.
- Forgiveness & Emotional Healing.
- Practising Prayers for Healing (3).

Session Four Fruitful Ministry

Fruit Abundant

Page 34

- Opportunity for Questions and Discussion.
- Why we may not see the healing we wish for.
- Case Studies.
- Practising Prayers for Healing (4).

Session Five **Ministry as a Team** *Oaks of Righteousness*

Page 41

- Why have a Prayer Ministry Team?
- Qualities of Members of a Prayer Team.
- Some Challenges in Prayer Ministry.
- Gifts of the Spirit in Prayer Ministry.
- Practising Prayers for Healing (5).

Session Six **Growing a Healing Church** *A Planting of the Lord*

Page 49

- Resources for Healing.
- The Marks of a Healthy and Healing Church.
- Developing a Healing Ministry within the Church.
- Practising Prayers for Healing (6).

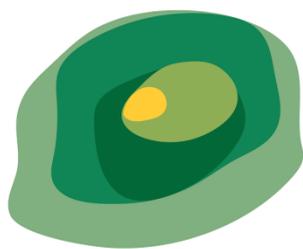
Appendices

Page 54

1. References to Healing in the Bible & the History of the Church.
2. Some Descriptions of Emotions.
3. 'Healing in The Local Church' by Stephen Sidebotham.
4. 'Good Practice in the Christian Healing Ministry' (From 'A Time to Heal').
5. Resources for Healing Services
6. Further Reading and Bibliography.

© Acorn Christian Foundation 2018. All rights reserved.

WARNING: This publication is protected by copyright. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission from the publisher.



acorn
wholeness for all

Introduction

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
Growing a Healing Ministry ~ Revised 2018

Course Guidelines

'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, so 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 is therefore 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.

Please read these notes carefully before you run this course.

1. **Number of Sessions:** The course consists of six sessions. Each session provides teaching on aspects of healing, based on Biblical foundation, together with developing the practical ministry through praying for one another. The final session will include consideration of how the healing ministry can be developed within the local church. Although the course is designed as six stand-alone sessions, it is quite possible to adapt it so as to be covered over, for example, two or three days.
2. **Timing:** You will need to go through the notes for each session and tailor them to suit your group or church situation. We suggest each session to be approximately two hours long, but the timing depends greatly on how much people want to discuss and participate. It is quite possible that your group may wish to pursue an area of discussion, and you will need to use your discretion about when to bring it to a close. You may wish to decide in advance to allow one or two extra sessions, so that people have a really good chance to talk through the important issues that are raised during the course. Whichever way you wish to run the course, it is advisable to go through the material and anticipate your expected timings, so that you can cover all the material you plan to and end the meeting on time.
3. **Shared Leadership:** If possible, share the leadership with another person. Shared leadership gives a variety of presentation styles, is less stressful, and gives an opportunity for joint reflection on the meeting.
4. **Communicating:** Guidance is given in the notes about how to communicate the teaching content of the course. The ethos of Acorn courses is to encourage learning by dialogue and exploration together.
5. **How to use the notes:** In general, where instructions are being given to you as the leader, the words will appear in normal type. Words in italic represent you as leader addressing the group. These sentences are designed to cover the points you need to raise but can of course be expressed in your own words.
6. **Course Handbook:** Each participant will require their own copy of the 'Growing a Healing Ministry' Handbook in which they can add their own notes.
7. **Learning Activities:** Some activities will require the group to subdivide. You may need to bear this in mind when you are choosing the venue, as a venue that can provide more than one room or a larger room with sufficient space will be an advantage.

8. **Equipment:** You will need a suitable projector or large monitor/tv which is compatible with your computer for the PowerPoint presentation and a flipchart to take down contributions from the interactive parts of the course.
9. **Preparation for Participants:** It may be helpful to communicate with participants prior to the course. Inform them that handbooks will be available and encourage them to commit the six sessions and to bring a Bible to each session.
10. **Safeguarding:** The course assumes that participants will have the support of their church leadership and that they will comply with the **Safeguarding Guidelines** and **DBS checks** set by their church for this ministry.
11. **Prayer:** It is helpful to start each session with prayer and, if time permits, a short time of worship.

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.)

Session 1. Principles of Healing Ministry *Seeds of Faith (Mark 4: 1-12)*

Aim: To enable participants to understand what is meant by Christian Healing and the reasons why the church is called to exercise this ministry, and to be excited that God still heals today.

Preparation: PowerPoint and prepare flipchart; Handbook: Session 1

Introduction

Once people are settled and opportunity is given for the group to get to know each other, give a brief introduction to the course. If you are intending to extend the course by giving more time to each session, then discuss this with the group.

You may like to include, as appropriate, some of the following comments in your introduction:

- *This course aims to provide an essential introduction and foundation for the Christian healing ministry, with the hope that at the end of the course you will be prepared for participation in healing ministry in your church and will be able to grow through experience and the guidance of others. It is helpful therefore if, on completion of the course, you are able to be part of a team and can be alongside those already engaged in praying for others in this way.*
- *The course is designed to be focused on local church ministry, but the way we provide opportunities for healing prayer within our churches will vary, and this course makes no assumptions about churchmanship or the way the ministry will be exercised within your own church setting.*
- *It is assumed that you are attending with the full support and approval of your church leadership, and that you will need to ensure you comply with the Safeguarding Policy of your church, including the need for DBS checks. (If you are uncertain of your church's policy, this should be discussed with your church leader or Safeguarding Officer.)*
- *For each session it would be helpful if you can bring a Bible as we will be looking at Scriptures together.*
- *We shall be spending part of our sessions in small group work and there will also be times of praying for one another, usually towards the end of the session. The course is arranged so that we shall become more confident in this as it progresses.*
- *Try to find some time after each session to look over what is covered and bring back any questions, reflections, encouragements that may arise. There is an opportunity at the start of Session 4 to reflect and discuss any issues and concerns.*
- *Have a look at the suggested reading list in the appendix.*
- *Being involved in praying for healing is a journey of faith and privilege as we are called to be co-workers with our Lord Jesus in the extension of His Kingdom. This course will provide you with information and hopefully improve your confidence and understanding; but the aim is also that you will grow in your sense of call to this ministry, allowing Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit to grow in you the character, attitude and compassion which this ministry requires.*

Remind everyone that there is a summary of the teaching and a record of the Bible references in the notes contained within the handbook.

You may wish to follow this with the prayer on page 4 of the handbook said together:

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

(Handbook Page 4)

*Let's begin by considering why as Christians we should be concerned about healing:
Could someone read **Matthew 4:23-24**?*

Then ask the group to say what they think are the important elements of this passage?

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."

Then ask the question:

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

Allow for contributions from the group then say:

- **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 refer to:

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.

(You might like to invite participants to read the above passages.)

You may wish to include other references for participants to look at in their own time e.g.:

John 14:12-14; John 15:5,7; John 20:21; Acts 2:43; Acts 6:8; Acts 8:4-8.

End this section by pointing out:

Note that the context for healing and miracles usually accompanies the proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and salvation. 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” – see 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 the ministry of Jesus the Kingdom of God became a reality: In His death and resurrection God’s active rule on earth 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 renewed. (Mark 16; Matt 28)

In the appendix you will find references to healing in the Old Testament, the Gospels, in Acts and in the epistles:

(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.)

Show PowerPoint Slide 2 “The Church’s Mandate for Healing”

And summarise as follows:

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 also find a historical outline of the exercising of healing ministry in the church and a list of some biblical references to healing.

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

2. Defining Health and Healing

(Handbook Page 5)

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

Ask for suggestions and write on flipchart.

Then show PowerPoint slide 3. **What Do We Mean By Health?**

- Do we agree with the **WHO definition**: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”?
Is this ever obtainable, or realistic, as a goal? There can be very few for whom this is ever totally true! But there is a sense in which we recognise that there is a wholeness for which we strive and hold on to as an ideal.
- Is it just **physical, mental, social**?
- **How does it affect our relationships** – with one another, our communities? We often see how bitterness and unforgiveness cause hurt and even physical illness; we can maybe think of examples of that.
- **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

At this point we should note that a number of things can affect our health, some of which depend on the choices we make.

What makes us healthy and what makes us unhealthy?

Show PowerPoint Slide 4

Invite your group to make suggestions as to what things contribute to our health and ill-health: (You could if you have time ask participants to share ideas with their neighbour before sharing with the group.)

Summarise the discussion by concluding that:

- 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?

Invite people to give single word definitions of what they understand by Christian Healing and write them up on a flipchart.

(Single Word Definitions of Christian Healing:
Wholeness, Forgiveness, Peace, Salvation, Cure)

After this show **PowerPoint slide 5**

- *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”.*