

A BIBLICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MINISTRY

The key to any ministry is total submission to God & the Holy Spirit's empowerment - in fact, doing what Jesus did. JOHN 12:49-50

A. INITIAL DIAGNOSIS: Obtaining A Case History

The first task is to obtain as much information as possible about the problem. This includes - *both* natural diagnostic techniques *and* supernatural knowledge in the form of words of knowledge & wisdom from the Spirit

B. DISCERNING THE REAL PROBLEM: Seeing Beneath The Surface

The apparent (or presenting) problem is frequently a smokescreen hiding the real, underlying issues. This is particularly true where the illness is linked to, or caused by, an underlying emotional or spiritual problem.

a. Example: A boy with physical problems (deaf-mutism) in MARK 9 suffered from demonic spirits

b. Example: The case of the paralytic in MARK 10 demonstrates

both the faith & perseverance of friends *and* the importance of forgiveness in healing.

Sources of problems include -

- the results of living in a fallen world of pain and suffering
- suffering the effects of sin committed against me by others
- suffering as a result of my sin against God or others
- affliction by demonic spirits as a result of involvement in the occult or idolatry

C. CONFESSION, REPENTANCE & ESTABLISHING THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

Satan is a legalist and will continue to harass us if we allow him legal authority to do so. In order to remove all such authority we may have given him, we need to -

- Confess & repent of known sins as the Holy Spirit reveals them to us (REPENTANCE)
- Renounce any involvement in the occult and/or satan's works (DELIVERANCE)
- Establish the LORDship of Jesus Christ in every area of our lives (LORDSHIP)

This may seem unnecessary where a person has been a Christian for many years, but pastoral experience shows it to be crucial to healing and deliverance.

D. PRAYING FOR GUIDANCE: Lord, Teach Us To Pray

After seeking to ascertain as much information as possible and discerning the underlying nature of the problem, the next task is to ask God to show us how to pray for the person seeking healing (For example JOHN 12:49-50) This involves listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying.

eg In praying for a person complaining of headaches, but who also shared her grief at the death of a favourite aunt, a minister sensed the Holy Spirit saying "Don't pray for her head; pray for her heart." When he was obedient, the woman said: "The headache's away!" What the LORD had shown him was that her headaches were associated with her heartache at the death of her beloved aunt.

Another situation where listening to what God is saying is especially important is when praying for someone who is reported to be dying. The question here is: "LORD, is this sickness to life or to death?"

Death is the ultimate 'healing' since it brings God's complete *shalom* and the end of all pain, suffering & sorrow. The examples of the raising of Jairus' daughter (MARK 5:21-43), the raising of Tabitha (ACTS 9:36-40) and of Jesus' friend Lazarus (JOHN 11:1-45) show how important it can be to ask this question and seek God's guidance.

E. PRAYING FOR HEALING: Types of Prayers

Several types of prayer for healing and/or deliverance are mentioned in the New Testament, including -

- Asking God to heal the person in Jesus' name
- Declaring a person healed in the name of Jesus Christ
- Rebuking a demonic spirit & ordering it to leave a person
- Laying hands on the person & praying for healing
- Laying on hands & anointing the person with oil while praying for healing
- Confession of sins before prayer for healing & anointing by the elders

The key, as in any form of ministry, is to listen to what the Holy Spirit says and then follow his instructions.

As Mary said to the servants at the wedding in Cana "Do whatever he tells you." (JOHN 2:1-11)

F. RESPONSES TO PRAYER

After praying as the Holy Spirit leads it is important to note any response by the person being prayed for. These may include -

- Reports of pain or heat in a particular part of the body
- Visible signs of activity in the person's body
eg uncontrolled movement of limbs or muscles
- Evidence of demonic manifestations
eg foaming at the mouth, writhing around on the floor
- Report by the person the pain has disappeared or a faculty has been restored

Paradoxically, evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in the person may be *either* positive *or* negative. For example, in some cases the person may report a sudden increase in pain when being prayed for. This is sometimes apparent with individuals who have been involved in the occult or are suffering from some form of demonic affliction.

The Importance Of Feedback

It is often useful to ask the person you are praying for to give you feedback on what is happening. For example, "*Were you aware of anything as we prayed just now?*" "*How are you feeling now?*" "*What's happening?*"

From experience it is clear that people often do not realise the significance of what is going on inside them and need to provide feedback to aid the healing process.

We see Jesus doing this during the healing of a blind man in **MARK 8:22-26** After making a poultice of clay and spittle and laying hands on him, Jesus asks the blind man: "*Do you see anything?*" The man replies: "*I see people; they look like trees walking*" This prompts Jesus to continue to minister until the man's sight is completely restored.

G. THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOW UP

Follow up is very important after prayer for healing. In some cases, the prayer may just be the start of a process that may take many weeks or even months to complete. In other cases help may be needed to deal with specific, deep-level emotional and/or spiritual problems.

At the very least it is a good idea to schedule a follow-up meeting to assess progress and identify any outstanding problems. It is also important to provide follow up for people who do not appear to have been healed and who might otherwise feel abandoned by their brothers and sisters in Christ and even by God.

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