



## Laying on of Hands: Reconnecting Spirit, Body, & Mind Through Prayer

The sacrament of Laying on of Hands is rooted in the Bible. The Old Testament uses anointing with oil to sanctify or make holy for God's purposes. II Samuel records in Chapter 5 "...all the elders of Israel came to the king ... and they **anointed** David king

over Israel." The New Testament in Mark 6:13 records Jesus sending out disciples to heal as He did- "*They (Jesus' disciples) drove out evil spirits and **anointed many sick people with oil** and healed them.*"

Community of Christ has used the scripture of James 5 as a guide-<sup>14</sup>*Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and **anoint him with oil** in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.*"

Traditionally, two ordained elders perform the sacrament which includes two prayers while laying their hands upon the individual's head. The first prayer of anointing is said after placing a drop of consecrated oil on the sick person's head. This prayer invites the ministry and presence of the Holy Spirit affirming the sufficiency of God to meet the person's need and our willingness to abide by the manner and timing of the Lord's blessing.

The second prayer is a petition to God allowing for the Lord's will to be done. It may acknowledge our dependence on God, raise the concern for the person's welfare, ask for a blessing, express gratitude for this sacrament, past blessings, and for the faith of the individual. This prayer is to provide assurance of God's love, care, and concern for the person.



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## A Ministry Open to All

The sacrament of Laying on of Hands is available to anyone who asks. One does not need to be a member of the Community of Christ. A brief explanation and understanding of its purpose should always be made to those not familiar with this ministry.

The sacrament of the Laying on of Hands has traditionally been widely utilized for a physical blessing during illness or end-of-life. This special blessing is also appropriate during times of mental, spiritual, or emotional pain. The promises in the scriptures about this sacrament pre-supposes that the sick one, as well as the elders, come before God in a spirit of faithful trust, prepared to yield their lives to God, whatever the outcome.

Many people have wonderful testimonies of blessings they have received resulting from this sacrament. Each person's experience will be unique. Some receive a healing, some receive a beautiful sense of peace, and some receive a deeper insight into their relationship with God. Part of the blessing is the process of learning to trust God's path for us which may not always include a "cure".

**Oil for Anointing** is traditionally virgin olive oil which has been consecrated with a special prayer and used only for this sacrament of prayer for God's blessing. The use of oil is symbolic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit making an individual or item sacred. Healing properties of olive oil were known during Jesus' time. Adding the spiritual aspects of anointing to the special characteristics of olive oil emphasizes the connection between the physical and the spiritual nature of healing.

Additional guidance is recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants section 125:15c- *"Pray over the sick, **anoint them with oil**, as commanded in the law, and leave them in My hands that the Spirit may deal with them according to My wisdom."*

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