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## Foundations Leaders' Guide

### Lesson 6 – Laying on of Hands

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#### Objectives

- Continue to get to know group members
- Understand the Biblical function and importance of laying on of hands

#### Preparation

- Establish a meeting place and time
- Pray for the members of your group, that throughout the semester they would “be filled with a knowledge of God’s will so they may live a life worthy of the Lord” (*Colossians 1.9-12*)
- Print a notes sheet for each student
- If you are co-leading, determine who will lead which parts of the meeting

## Meeting Notes

### 1. Welcome Jesus

*Matthew 18.20:* “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.”

- ✓ Lead the group in prayer by welcoming Jesus as Lord, and asking Him to teach and transform each member of the group **as He desires**.

### 2. Welcome Each Other

- ✓ Lead the group in a personal discussion about how each member is doing, how God is working in the group and lives of each member, or any other topics. It can also be helpful for the group to share a funny story or personal story relevant to the day’s lesson.

### 3. Receive From the Lord

#### 3.1 Review

Spend time reviewing the content from lesson 1, including Standing in the Gap’s mission, the four chairs of discipleship, and the content from any previous lessons.

**Teacher’s Note:** *Group members should already be familiar with this content. To help them remember and memorize it, ask questions. For example, rather than stating “The purpose of Standing in the Gap is to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ,” ask “What is the purpose of Standing in the Gap?”*

#### 3.2 Laying on of Hands

If asked to make a list of the most important beliefs of the Christian faith, many believers would likely include the topics we have already studied: repentance from dead works, faith in God, and instructions about baptisms. Today’s topic, the **laying on of hands**, would probably not make as many lists. However, as one of the Foundational teachings about Christ, it’s vital for any disciple of Jesus to understand this practice.

Early in the Old Testament, we see certain individuals physically placing their hands on others to convey some kind of blessing or commissioning:

📖 *Genesis 48.12-20*

📖 *Deuteronomy 34.9*

📖 *Optional reading: Numbers 27.18-23*

- ? We do not discuss the Old Testament often in Foundations, but it is still an essential part of the Christian faith. What is your experience with reading the Old Testament?

In the New Testament, we see Jesus frequently laying hands on others in order to perform miraculous healings:

📖 *Matthew 9.18-31*

📖 *Mark 8.22-26*

📖 *Optional reading: Mark 6.5-6*

📖 *Optional reading: Luke 4.40-41*

There are many other similar passages throughout the four gospels. Although there are also many instances where Jesus heals **without** physical contact, Jesus’ touch seems to

play an important role in certain healings. We also see this power at work through the other disciples in the New Testament:

📖 Acts 3.1-10

📖 Acts 9.17-19

📖 *Optional reading: Mark 16.14-20*

? Have you experienced or witnessed Christians laying hands on others? What was the purpose?

In cases where a member of the Church is ill, James gives us instructions on how to seek God's healing:

📖 James 5.14-16

In this case, the Christian is responsible for **calling the elders** and **confessing his or her sins**, and the elders are responsible for **anointing with oil** and **praying over the sick person**. Anointing with oil is usually accompanied by the laying on of hands, or at least some physical touch through the anointing process.

? How do you think faith and medicine should be practiced together?

? Why do you think someone could be anointed and prayed over but not immediately healed?

James does not necessarily promise that we will always see an immediate result. True faith will **go on believing** that God will provide healing, even when other sources would tell us otherwise. James indicates that it is also possible for **lack of faith** or **unconfessed sin** to prevent healing.

The laying on of hands is also exercised in many Biblical occurrences of baptism in the Holy Spirit:

📖 *Optional reading: Acts 8.14-19*

📖 *Optional reading: Acts 19.1-7*

Paul also writes about **imparting spiritual gifts** to others believers, including through the laying on of hands:

📖 Romans 1.11-12

📖 2 Timothy 1.6

📖 *Optional reading: 1 Timothy 4.14*

Similarly, believers who were called by God to a specific task or role would have hands laid on them as an **act of commissioning** them:

📖 Acts 6.1-6

📖 Acts 13.1-4

We are also **warned** about our use of the laying on of hands:

📖 1 Timothy 5.22

? In light of the various purposes for the laying on of hands, what exactly do you think Paul is warning against?

We should be cautious in laying hands on others, since God works so powerfully through it. Any disciple can lay hands on another, but should **only** do so through the **leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit**. In addition, the person whom hands are being laid on must be ready to receive whatever it is that God wants to give them.

To conclude:

- ? In light of this study, why do you think the author of Hebrews included the laying on of hands in the Foundational teachings about Christ?
- ? In your experience, does the Church as a whole utilize the laying on of hands in the way God intended? Why or why not?

#### **4. Offer Response to the Lord**

- ✓ Lead the group in prayer by thanking the Lord for his presence, and asking hHim to continue to teach and transform the group through the power of the Holy Spirit.