

The mere fact that this doctrine is numbered amongst the Foundational Principle of Scripture should make us realise how vitally important it is to the daily life of the Church.

- It may be defined as “an act whereby a person or persons lay their hands on the head or body of another person, with some **definite spiritual purpose in mind**”. It is also important to note that it is **normally accompanied by either a prayer or prophetic utterance**.
- The doctrine of laying on of Hands could signify one of three possible things:-
 1. Transmitting spiritual blessing or authority,
 2. Acknowledging publicly some spiritual blessing or authority that has already been received from God by the one upon whom hands are laid
 3. Publicly committing to God for some special ministry or task the one upon who hands are laid.

God laid Hands

God spoke things into being, but man He touched with His hands (formed) & breathed life into him.

- **Gen 2:7** Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.
 - Touch is personal, intimate
 - Creates connection
 - Speaks

Old Testament incidences.

a/. The transference of sin. **Lev 1 vs 1-4:** The act of laying on the hands was to indicate the transference of sin from the person onto the animal.

b/. The impartation of blessing. **Gen 48 vs 12-16:** Here Jacob lays his hand upon Ephraim and Menasseh and pronounces a blessing over them. Indicating the transference of the blessing by the act of laying on hands. Along with the blessing Jacob speaks a prophetic word over them.

c/. The impartation of wisdom. **Duet 34 vs 9:** Here the spirit of wisdom was imparted to Joshua as Moses laid his hand upon him.

d/. The commissioning of Joshua. **Num 27 vs 18-20:** Moses commissions Joshua in the sight of the people under the command of God.

NEW TESTAMENT

- In the New Testament we find six distinctive purposes for the practice of laying on of hands

1. IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALING

- **Mark 16:17,18** “And these signs will follow those who believe (margin – “have believed –

Note Verse 16). In my name ... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover!!

- **James 5:14** "Is anyone of you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up".

- It is generally accepted that anointing with oil (a type of the Holy Spirit) will involve the laying on of hands. Note God's instruction for Christians who need healing. **By calling we exercise our faith.** This is God's method of releasing the healing ministry of Jesus in the Church. God expects us to seek healing from Him first!
 - **Exhausting every other means first and then coming to God is direct disobedience to His Word and will do very little towards developing our faith.**

2. IN HELPING PEOPLE TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Of the five instances where people were prayed for, for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, in three of them it was through the laying on of hands.
 - **Acts 8:17** "Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit".
 - **Acts 9:17** "And Annanias went his way and entered the house, and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."
 - **Acts 19:6** "And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied".

3. THE IMPARTING OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

- We must understand that **God intends the Church to function at a certain level of power and efficiency.**
 - **Supernatural gifts are not an optional extra but are essential to the revelation of Jesus' presence and ministry in the Church.**
 - **Q:** How do we know that His Word is true, except if "He confirms it with signs following"?
 - **Q:** How can we "see" the Holy Spirit if He does not manifest Himself through the miraculous?
 - Romans 1:11-12 "For I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established. That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith of you and me".
 - The Corinthians were commended for "coming short in no gift", but had been "enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge". 1 Cor 1:4-8.
 - This was Timothy's experience in receiving a spiritual gift and his responsibility for its care.
 - 1 Tim 4:14 "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the **laying on of the hands** of the Presbytery".
 - 2 Tim 1:6 "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the **laying on of hands**".

- 1 Tim 1:18 "This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare".

- *Points to Consider*

- It was God's gift to Timothy revealed through a number of prophecies.
- The gift was made effective through the public laying on of hands.
- The gift was to equip him for the ministry. It was Timothy's responsibility to nurture the gift ("Don't neglect" – "Stir up (rekindle)").

4. THE COMMISSIONING OF MINISTERS

- Acts 13:1-4 "Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers...as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said (through prophecy) 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then, having fasted and prayed and **laid hands on them**, they sent them away".
- Points to consider
 - It is the work of the Holy Spirit to raise up and call into ministry in the Church.
 - Laying on of hands was the public acknowledgement and consummation of God's call.
 - Laying on of hands was also an act of faith whereby they claimed the special grace, wisdom and power that Paul and Barnabas would need for their ministry.

5. THE ORDAINING OF ELDERS (SHEPHERDS)

- There are two levels of administrative office in the Church -
 - ELDERS who are responsible for the spiritual direction and instruction
 - 1 Tim 5:17 "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine".
 - DEACONS who are responsible for the practical caring for the material needs and well being of the congregation. Acts 6:1-7 The laying on of hands was:
 - A public acknowledgement of their acceptability.
 - A public commitment of these men/women to God for the work.
 - An impartation to them of a measure of spiritual grace and wisdom that was necessary for the work.

** Praying in of our elders, by an apostolic gift...(H&L, Deacons)

6. THE DEDICATION OF BABIES

- Matt 19:13-15 "Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.
- Mark 10:13-16 "People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the

disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

Warning concerning laying on of hands.

- 1 Tim 5 vs 22 Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.
 - Timothy has been given charge of setting up a strong leadership structure within the church at Ephesus. Choosing elders and deacons etc. The setting apart of leaders **would normally be done through the laying on of hands** as Paul would have taught Timothy this principle. **Paul is warning Timothy not to be hasty laying hands on anyone, but to seek God prayerfully before releasing people into leadership roles.**
 - **Jesus prayed all night before he called the disciples
 - As praying for the sick is not something we are to spend time seeking God over, I believe it would be safe to conclude that this verse does not apply to praying for the sick.
 - **It would also be wise to take care who we allow to lay hands on us. As there is power to impart spiritually from one person to another.**
 - Then it would be wise to be **discerning about the character**
 - (E.G: Couple when I preach at 3D) / the one laying on hands. If that person is not walking closely with God or is defiled in some way we may receive unwanted baggage from them. Especially if we ourselves are not walking right with God or are weak in areas of our lives. Therefore, as long as we are living at the centre of Gods will for our lives, having committed ourselves to serving the Lord in the local church, we can expect His protection over us and discernment to keep us from making unwise decisions.
 - **As we submit ourselves** to Godly leadership in our local church, we can also expect God to equip us with all the things we need to fulfil our calling and become what He wants us to be.
 - turmoil allowed through lack of submission (Heath - accountable)
 - Truly lay hands on and pray = submission and desire to be equipped
 - **Heb 13: 17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.**18** Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. **19** I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.**20** Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, **21** equip you with everything good that you may do his

will, working in us[b] that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.