

# **The Laying On Of Hands**

Explore Your Faith Teaching Series - Explo-11 ©  
With Pastor Joseph Rodrigues

## **OUTLINE**

### **Introduction**

The doctrine of the laying on of hands is associated with the aspect of ‘touching’, but is not simply a symbolic gesture.

Both in the Old and the New Testaments, we find the use of ‘laying on of hands’.

This action has always conveyed something more than mere symbolism. In this study, we will examine its legitimate use and the safeguards that must be in place.

In Hebrew thought, both the arm and the hand were used as symbols of might and power. But in the case of the hand, the figurative meaning actually developed further than with the arm.

There are many common phrases in Scripture where the hand is used *as a symbol of power*, e.g., in or out of the ‘hand of one’s enemies’ (**Ps.3: 15; Mark 14:41**). Similarly, the dropping of one’s hands has been *indicative of weakness or lack of resolution* and to strengthen them is to remedy that lack. (**Isaiah 35:3**)

Other symbolism of the hand:

**Lifting** the hand has been regarded as indicative of an attitude E.g., as a symbolic of violence (**1 Kings 11:26 RSV**); of supplication (**Ex. 9:33**), where the open palm is indicated in the accompanying action.

**Clasping** (*another’s*) hands indicated giving assurance or ratifying an agreement; raising one’s hand is indicative of taking an oath, as in a law court (**Gen.14:22**); also of appeal (**Ex. 17:16**).

**Touching with** the hand (i.e., *laying hands on someone*) was held *to communicate authority, power, or blessing*. In this respect, the right hand was always considered more significant, though both hands were often used (Gen. 48:13-14; Dt. 34:9). Note in this connection in the NT, the communication of the Holy Spirit or the performance of miracles by the laying on of hands (**Mk. 6:5; Acts 8:17-19**).

**The significance of the doctrine of the laying on of hands is associated with the aspect of ‘touching’, as distinct from any other symbolism. However, the laying on of hands is something that is very real; it is not simply a symbolic or a formal gesture. There are very real results or repercussions that flow from the laying on of hands.**

### **Examples in the Old Testament**

Jacob laid hands on the sons of Joseph (**Gen. 48:8-19**) - he *imparted* a blessing and *determined* their destiny.

Moses laid hands on Joshua (**Num. 27: 18-23; Deut. 34:9**) - to *set apart*, to *endorse* his leadership, to *equip* him.

Elisha laid hands on King Joash (**2 Kings 13:14-17**), to *endorse* him, to *impart supernatural spiritual authority*

### **Jesus and ‘the laying on of hands’**

That this is not simply symbolic is seen from the results that happened when Jesus practiced it. In fact, it is one of the principles of ministry that Jesus taught. When he laid hands on people then there was *an actual transfer* of the anointing present upon him, such that people received healing, blessing, etc.

He imparted blessing (**Matt. 19:13-15**)

He laid hands on the sick and healed them (**Luke 4:40**). Deliverance was associated with the healing.

As a *general* rule, we see from Jesus' ministry that faith is to be exercised on both sides (the one ministering and the one receiving). ***People at various levels of faith placed a demand on the anointing that was on Jesus and received their healing. We will consider the aspect of 'anointing' and its appropriateness for different works of God in another lesson.***

As a result of the laying on of hands, we can expect that many will be healed and evil spirits that are tormenting them will come out of them. There is transference. Either the anointing is there or it isn't there. When it is there the minister must flow with it, cooperate with the anointing. This means he must mix faith with the fact that God has anointed him. *This is the principle of the laying on of hands!* There is transference; there is an impartation. . The anointing is taken and the anointing is given.

**Consider this:** Jesus knew he was anointed! Jesus walked in his anointing. What were its ramifications on his ministry, especially that of healing by "touching"?

**We looked earlier at some general purpose for the laying on of hands. The following are specific purposes indicated in the New Testament.**

1. To impart healing to the unsaved sick (**Mark 16:17-18; Luke 4:40-41**)
2. To impart healing to believers (church members), accompanied with anointing with oil (**James 5:14-15**)
3. To impart the gift of the Holy Spirit and perform miracles (**see Acts 8:14-20; 9: 17-18; 19:1-6**).
4. To commission church servants (**Acts 6:1-7**) note this includes transmitting authority and endorsing/equipping). Also to send out apostles (**Acts 13:1-4**) and to appoint elders (**Acts 14:23; 1 Tim.5: 17-22; Titus 1:5**).
5. To impart a spiritual gift (charismata) (**Rom. 1:11-12; 2 Tim. 1:6**)

**The appropriate use of the laying on of hands.**

As with all supernatural things we need to ensure that administration of the laying on of hands is not done indiscriminately or in an ungodly (though 'spiritual') manner. We need therefore to be aware of the dangers, and consequently the safeguards that need to be in place, *both for the minister and the one being ministered to* by the laying on of hands. It should never be taken lightly.

For example we should *never* endorse someone who is unfit or unworthy by the laying on of hands. (**See 1 Tim. 5:22**).

As a flow on from this, we need to be mindful of spiritual contamination by the laying on of hands by 'spiritual' but ungodly men.

To be safe, it is absolutely essential to

- 1) Ensure our proper prayer life and humility before God.
- 2) Be under the protection of the blood of Jesus (**Heb. 13:12**) Think about what this means! It is not just symbolic. Many pagan religions cults and sects employ the laying on of hands.
- 3) Be empowered against the forces of evil (**Luke 10:9**)
- 4) Remain always under the direction of the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 8:14**). This involves submission of our will to God's will (Consider this: Jesus only did what he saw the father doing).

**Conclusion**