

The Laying on of Hands

The Laying on of Hands is in the first book of the bible and referenced throughout the story of the people of God in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Touch and human contact are mostly through the hands and is a natural means of greeting, embrace, affection and introduction.

In Scripture the Laying on of Hands is used for:

1. Blessing
2. Bestowing Authority
3. Imparting Wisdom
4. Imparting the Holy Spirit
5. Imparting Spiritual Gifts
6. Healing
7. Empowerment for Ministry

We will look at these through some examples in both the OT and NT

Commissioning for a Place of Service in the Body of Christ

- We recognize God's appointment of the person
- Not a matter of a democratic vote system
- Remember God chooses – Jesus said in John 15:16
*"You did not **choose** me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."*
- God makes the choice, and we recognize His choosing
- We are answering the question, "who has God chosen" vs "who do we want?"
- Setting Apart for a Task or Ministry
- Endorsing Publicly a Position of Authority
- Equipping With Spiritual Gifts that are Needed

Genesis 48:8-19 Generational Blessing

⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" ⁹ Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them." ¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see. So Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. ¹¹ And Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face; and behold, God has let me see your offspring also." ¹² Then Joseph removed them from his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. ¹³ And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand and brought them near him. ¹⁴ And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his hands (for Manasseh was the firstborn). ¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph and said,

*“The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day,
16 the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the boys;
and in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and
let them grow into a multitude^[c] in the midst of the earth.”*

17 When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him, and he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, “Not this way, my father; since this one is the firstborn, put your right hand on his head.” 19 But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great. Nevertheless, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his offspring shall become a multitude^[d] of nations.

Through the Laying on of Hands a generational blessing was given from the grandfather to the grandchildren. Outside the blessing of God there is no greater blessing than that of a father or a grandfather.

Numbers 27:18-23 Commissioning and Public Transmission of Authority

So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him. 19 Make him stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. 20 You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the people of Israel may obey. 21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the people of Israel with him, the whole congregation.” 22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and made him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole congregation, 23 and he laid his hands on him and commissioned him as the LORD directed through Moses.

We also learn in Duet 34:9 that there was an impartation of the Spirit of Wisdom given.

II Kings 13:14-19 Prophetic Anointing Given to a King by a Prophet

14 Now when Elisha had fallen sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash king of Israel went down to him and wept before him, crying, “My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” 15 And Elisha said to him, “Take a bow and arrows.” So he took a bow and arrows. 16 Then he said to the king of Israel, “Draw the bow,” and he drew it. And Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. 17 And he said, “Open the window eastward,” and he opened it. Then Elisha said, “Shoot,” and he shot. And he said, “The LORD's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria! For you shall fight the Syrians in Aphek until you have made an end of them.” 18 And he said, “Take the arrows,” and he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground with them.” And he struck three times and stopped. 19 Then the man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck down Syria until you had made an end of it, but now you will strike down Syria only three times.”

Through the Laying on of Hands Joash was anointed to defeat Syria and did so in three battles.

New Testament Examples

Healing of the Sick – Sacrament of Unction (which includes the laity

- Mark 16:16
- James 5:14-15

Imparting the Gift of the Holy Spirit - Confirmation

- Acts 8:14-19 Philip in Samaria
- Acts 19:10-19 Paul in Ephesus
- Note – In Acts 10 and Acts 2 – Holy Spirit fell sovereignly; Acts 8,9,19 through Laying on of Hands

Ordaining Servants of the Church – Priests and Deacons

- Acts 6:1-6

Sending Out Apostles – Consecration of a Bishop

- Acts 13:1-4 – Antioch
- Acts 14:14 – Paul and Barnabas (neither were of the original 12)

Appoint Elders – Ordination for Priests

- Acts 14:23 – Apostles appointing elders in the church
- I Timothy 5:17 – qualifications for elders
- Set Apart
- Endorse Publicly
- Equip and Bestow Authority
- Titus 1:5-9
- *This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— ⁶if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife,^[d] and his children are believers^[e] and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷For an overseer,^[f] as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound^[g] doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.*

Impart Spiritual Gifts

- II Timothy 1:6 – from Paul to Timothy
- I Thess 1:1 – Three named Apostles, Paul, Timothy Silas
- I Tim 4:14 – Timothy fulfills prophetic word through Laying on of Hands – Apostleship

Laying on of Hands for Continuity

The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1888

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God.
2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.
3. The two Sacraments, --Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, --ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.
4. The **Historic Episcopate**, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

Continuity from one generation to the next

Continuity from one leader to the next

Continuity from one pastor to the next