

**Touch as a Healing Ministry**

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### *Abstract*

Believers follow Jesus Christ's model by recognizing touch as a crucial component of their healing ministry and conveying God's love through touch encounters. Every Christian has access to the Holy Spirit, which makes it possible for everyone to feel a divine touch at specific points in life. Promoting a person's physical, psychological, and social well-being and social and professional well-being depends on touch. Touch has the power to alter the way that believers pray and worship. However, it is crucial to inform the congregation of the value of setting touch boundaries that guarantee each person's privacy and preference considerations. In this paper, the intention is to explore touch as a healing ministry based on Biblical principles as a guide to its introduction into the realm of religious evangelism and evangelical ministries. It will have introduction, exploration of touch as a ministry and a conclusion.

*Key Words: Healthy, Touch, healing, psychological, physical, safe spaces, congregants, worship, Holy Spirit.*

## **Touch as a Healing Ministry**

### **Introduction**

As Spiritual Care Intern who has just completed Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) 1, I feel equipped with sufficient knowledge and experience partnered with my intimate history and work as a Professional Cuddlist, on the consequences of touch as a healing ministry on people. Healthy touches can be used as an extension of the love of Jesus in Ministry. To spread the love of Jesus and promote interpersonal connection, the following paper will examine the benefits of healthy touching when it is done with consent. Throughout past times, contact has played a crucial role in healing. Christ touched people to bring forth both bodily, spiritual, and psychological restoration. Christians may better comprehend the transformational power of touching in the healing ministry by exploring examples of touch in rehabilitation, embracing the divine Touch of the internal Holy Spirit, and offering solutions for incorporating constructive interaction into religious services and different phases of life.

## **Touch as a Healing Ministry**

### **Jesus (The Physical Healing Touch)**

Jesus exhibited the transformational healing power of Touch during His entire mission. His physical contact resulted in incredible recovery and life-changing interactions with His affection and empathy in several cases. These interactions give us essential knowledge about the Ministry of Healing. One renowned instance is the leper, who was cured in Matthew 8:3. In addition to being a physical illness, leprosy was also a societal and theological torment. Leprosy patients were stigmatized as dirty and excluded from the community. Jesus broke the seam of

separation and restored the leper's status and relationship within society, in addition to curing leprosy. In Mark 8:22–25, Jesus restores a blind man's eyesight through touch, making it another powerful healing by Touch (Fox, 2019). Before touching the individual's eyes and giving him his sight back, Jesus seized him by his left hand and walked him beyond the small town. This touching revealed Jesus' direct engagement in the person's recovery, expressed concern, and expressed faith and confidence in Jesus' authority. The woman with a hemorrhaging problem who touched Jesus' garment and was immediately healed is described in Mark 5:25–34 (M'bwangi, 2021). Jesus inquired about the touch after sensing that someone had touched His garment. In addition to emphasizing the importance of physical healing, this encounter demonstrates the value of intimacy and faith. Jesus realized that power had left Him through the sensation of touching, revealing the closeness of touching as a means of connection with God and restoration. Now, the woman who use to have the issue of hemorrhaging was made whole in her body and with Jesus' words was made whole in her mind; liberated, freed, and unfettered.

These instances demonstrate Jesus' expressed love, understanding, and omnipotence through touch. He attended to people's spiritual, psychological, and physical needs. Jesus created a deep relationship with individuals needing healing by dismantling social boundaries through touch, restoring dignity, and breaking down boundaries. By considering these specific instances of the healing power of Jesus' touch, Christian scholars can better comprehend how touch can transform healing ministry (M'bwangi, 2021). Every individual can imitate Jesus and share His compassion via our authority of touch as religious and spiritual caretakers. Nevertheless, handling this contact with reverence, empathy, and authorization is essential, ensuring that it is used within acceptable parameters while continuously considering a person's well-being and ease as an unhealthy touch history can trigger trauma.

### **Holy Spirit (The Spiritual Healing Touch)**

Jesus touched the people he encountered physically. Nevertheless, humans also feel the Holy Spirit's spiritual touch, which often resides inwards. A profound and life-changing interaction with the power of God occurs when the Holy Spirit touches us. The force and reality of the Holy Spirit's contact are not diminished because it is not bodily. The Holy Spirit is inside us, our champion, comforter, and instructor. Humans encounter a magical touch from the Holy Spirit that extends beyond the material world and penetrates the core of all human beings (Fox, 2019). Touching produces a powerful experience of divine presence, spiritual recovery, and rebirth. Several instances of the Holy Spirit's influence in the Bible caused restoration. The Disciples in Acts 2 were touched by the power of God and overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. They had a profound feeling of God's affection and existence, which gave them the confidence to declare the Gospel fearlessly. This mystical encounter sparked a flame inside them that motivated them to disseminate the Good News of deliverance worldwide. The first apostles were not the only ones who felt the influence of the Holy Spirit; Christians nowadays still do. Everyone is capable of experiencing the Holy Spirit's influence in many different ways whenever they allow the Holy Spirit to be present and active in their lives. Anyone can experience the Spirit's influence and work in different ways. It could be through a profound sense of calm and consolation during chaos or an upsurge in the inner being during worship or meditational prayers (Mkandla & Dreyer, 2020). The Holy Spirit can bring about spiritual advances, the healing of old wounds, and even an entirely new sense of orientation. The influence of the Holy Spirit also promotes a strong bond with God the Father and other church members. The Person of the Holy Spirit resides within every Christian, providing a spiritual connection that crosses all geographical bounds.

The privilege of mediating personal contact with the residing Holy Spirit belongs to spiritual caretakers. They can establish settings in which individuals can feel the existence of God and influence in their daily lives during worship, meditation, and guidance in Prayer. It is crucial to foster an environment of transparency and sensitivity so that the Holy Spirit can work and serve the souls and minds of the people they serve. People can better interact with the internal Holy Spirit's presence by integrating mindfulness, prayer, and solitude into their healing ministry (Foster,2019). They foster possibilities for transformative experiences that result in spiritual recovery, rehabilitation, and a strengthening of their connection with Christ through motivating individuals to search for the presence of the Lord and to be willing to listen to His advice and leadership.

### **Healthy Touch: Benefits**

#### **Physical Well-Being**

Healthy touching affects the human physical well-being and healing processes and has emotional and behavioral advantages. Endorphins are created by the human body as natural medications for pain relief and are released in response to touch. This feature may help with chronic diseases like fibromyalgia, osteoarthritis, and headaches by reducing discomfort and offering relief. Touch has also been demonstrated to decrease blood pressure and pulse rate, supporting heart health. Regular, suitable touch may assist with one's immune system working better and support the body's defenses against illness and infections. Enhancing blood flow and encouraging tissue renewal can help facilitate a quicker recovery after diseases, surgical operations, and traumas (M'bwangi, 2021). Physical health advantages may result from including good touch in alternative medical treatments like acupuncture, shiatsu, tough therapy,

or healing through energy. These therapies use touch to reduce muscle tension, increase the range of motion, and promote general well-being. Incorporating touch-based methods throughout the healing ministry allows the professions to assist people on their paths to physical wellness. Understanding that touch has positive effects which work best when applied in a secure, considerate, and expert manner is crucial. A therapeutic setting that fosters confidence divided into convenience and welfare must respect individual restrictions, ensure informed permission, and uphold acceptable touch procedures.

### **Emotional and Psychological Well-Being**

Healthy touch significantly affects both psychological and emotional well-being. Touch has been demonstrated in many research studies that facilitate the release of a hormone called oxytocin, sometimes called the "love hormone." Oxytocin fosters confidence, belonging, and calm emotions to sustain good relationships and psychological health. People's bodies produce oxytocin when they are touched, whether the touch is in the form of a tender hug, a consoling pat on one's shoulder, or a loving handshake and an embrace. This oxytocin production promotes peace and happiness while lowering stress and tension (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Consequently, this encourages emotional resilience and may help with psychological well-being. Touch has also been shown to strengthen social connections. People are fundamentally social creatures, and harmonious connections depend heavily on touching to establish and maintain connections. Healthy touch strengthens the link between two individuals by conveying compassion, encouragement, and appreciation. It decreases emotions of feeling isolated and alone by fostering a sense of stability and connectedness.



Healthy touch helps people in controlling their feelings. According to study results, touch can assist in easing psychological suffering, offer solace in situations of loss or tragedy, and encourage feelings of emotion and understanding. The caregivers allow people to gain emotional rehabilitation, affirmation, and a relationship with others by embracing healthy touch. To actively encourage holistic treatment and mental health, the Ministry can proactively integrate healthy touch into its activities by embracing its emotional and physiological advantages (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Deliberate courteous touch, mainly through soft embraces, encouraging hugs, or consoling gestures, can transform encounters within and outside church organizations.

### **Incorporation of Healthy Touch in Worship**

People congregate in worship within a holy setting to establish connections with God and their fellow humans. Healthy connections can promote deeper relationships, promote an understanding of society as a whole and build an atmosphere of affection and assistance in Christian worship settings (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). To make a guarantee that everybody is at ease and secure, it is crucial that one approach contact in worshipping with kindness, reverence, and open conversation. The following are some doable recommendations for including therapeutic touch in congregational worship:

#### **Setting Consent and Boundaries (Communication)**

Building a culture of tolerance and acknowledgment of individual boundaries is critical while integrating contact into devotional events (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). This fate can be accomplished by having open communication lines and educating congregation members. Consider putting these procedures into practice:

### Preparing the Congregation

Educating everyone in the congregation regarding the value of permission and the advantages of healthy contact through touch as part of the preparation process (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Share the purpose for including contact in devotion and stress the need to maintain one's boundaries.

### Intent Communication

Before engaging in touch-based activities, it is essential to express the goal and specifics of the touch at hand (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Emphasize that people's comfort and consent come first when you explain that they can choose to participate or decline.

### Alternatives

Offer alternates to those who want to avoid participating in touch-based pursuits. This can entail recommending substitute movements that express solidarity and encouragement absent touching one another, which include an acknowledgment, a giggle, or an extended hand placed over a person's heart. Educate the congregation about the value of consent and the advantages of healthy contact as part of the preparation process (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Share the purpose for including contact in worship and stress the need to maintain personal limits.

### Non-Verbal Cues

Create non-verbal indications or signs that people can utilize to show if they are comfortable with being touched (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). For instance, a hand raised or placed across the heart might indicate approval or denial of touch.

### Introduction of Touch (Expressions and Gestures)

It may prove a valuable method to improve worship experiences to include touching through expressions and gestures, avoiding exhausting others who might be averse to being touched;

#### Encourage Handshake or Variation

Urge everyone in attendance to extend their hands and shake them among each other during periods set aside for fellowship (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Advise people to uphold their limits and be respectful and considerate of other people's comfort preferences. In our post-COVID society, this may also be done with the gesture of a head nod and accompanying smile versus physically holding another person's hand.

#### Holding hands in Prayer

Encourage worshippers to gather in small groups to pray collectively while holding hands (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). This action promotes awareness of cohesion, assistance, and communal spirituality.

#### Touch on Shoulders

Ministers or other congregants can gently touch a fellow member's shoulder as a symbol of friendship and assistance during affirmations or inspiration (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). This uncomplicated action might imply friendliness and connectedness.

### Touch as Blessing

Include times when people are encouraged to stand to receive an offer of blessing by placing their hands on them or gently touching their forehead (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Speaking good fortune, affirming statements, or petitions can be used with this technique.

### Respect for Limits and Spaces

While including touch in worship, it is essential to safeguard and acknowledge each person's privacy and bounds. Physical contact will only be pleasant for some believers (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Therefore, fostering an atmosphere where individual choices are respected is essential. They can be done by;

#### Open Dialogue and No-touch Option

Provide non-contact options for people who want to avoid contacting each other. This might be saying a prayer without making eye contact, giving an offer of blessing with no physical contact, or giving them the option of accepting a distant prayer or benediction if they so choose. The minister must encourage open discussion regarding touching during worshipping sessions among the congregation (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Motivate people to express their choices, worries, and degrees of satisfaction with touch. This fosters a climate of tolerance and inclusivity and enables collaboration.

### Anointing /Healing Services

People may have the chance to engage in a profound and transforming way with the church's Ministry by including touch in healing and anointing. People may be requested to step in front throughout these ceremonies and get prayers, anointing, and tender touches. Ensuring people are at ease and confident to engage according to their preparedness and willingness for

interaction is crucial (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Support open discussion regarding any particular requirements, sensitivity, or personal choices, and offer substitutes for people who would rather have non-contact solutions.

### **Training and Sensitivity/Establishing Safe Spaces**

Deliver instruction and foster sensibility amongst church leaders, employees, and individuals volunteering to successfully integrate therapeutic touch throughout religious worship. Appropriate training, considerate touching techniques, knowledge of one's limits, and the ability to spot discomfort or indicators of withdrawal are all topics that can be covered in workshops. To ensure everybody feels valued and appreciated in worship encounters, it is essential to be sensitive to socioeconomic and personal variances in people's levels of intimacy with interaction (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Although touch may be a potent ministerial tool, it is critical to upholding conditions that create secure spaces that allow individuals to be acknowledged and comfortable. Adopt regulations and rules that cover permission, good touch customs, and communication processes for any breaches of boundaries or complaints. The ministers should ensure that the congregation's touch policies are consistently reviewed and evaluated to determine whether they support the values of security and reverence.



*Fig1: Incorporation of Healthy Touch in Healing Ministry.*

### **Implementing Healing Touch Across Various Stages in Life**

It is crucial to spread such customs of healing touch throughout many life phases inside the congregation and include healthy touching in religious worship (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). The minister may design inclusive spaces that foster everyone's connectedness and happiness by considering their particular requirements and preferences at different stages of life.

#### **Among Young Children/Infants**

Establishing and sustaining touch as a form of healing is beneficial for young children's or babies' physical and emotional development. The concerned professionals should consider providing workshops on child massage for first-time or expectant parents (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). These workshops offer instruction and direction in caring touch methods that foster attachment, tranquility, and healthy growth. A sense of solidarity and

encouragement can be promoted by designating areas for families to interact with young ones in therapeutic touch practices.

### Adolescents

Positive and healthy touch interactions that foster community, mental wellness, and ties to role models and colleagues can benefit young people and their parents. This can be done by encouraging children and youth to engage in endeavors that entail healthy touch, including holding hands in groups, collaborative activities and games, or devotional sessions where people can use their hands (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). When these behaviors are implemented, these professionals ensure clear information regarding participation and reverence for individual limits.

### Adults/The Aging (in Family Setups)

Physical healthy touch can promote stronger bonds and psychological well-being for individuals and families throughout the framework of the church society. Professionals in the Ministry should suggest setting up seminars or gatherings that feature partner therapies facilitated relaxation methods or collaborative endeavors that encourage intimate relationships, like dancing or shared meals. Through these initiatives, people may have the chance to personally witness the therapeutic benefits of touch while at the same time fostering closer bonds among the church body (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). Furthermore, conscious contact activities are much more beneficial for elderly adults, who may frequently feel lonely or isolated. Professionals in the Ministry should ensure that touching activities are done respectfully and with the person's agreement while paying visits to sick people or senior citizens in nursing homes (Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, 2019). They should give people a choice of

noninvasive alternatives, such as locking hands, putting a gentle hand on their neck or shoulder, or giving them an embrace or a mild massaging. Older people, who can considerably profit from good touch encounters, can receive relaxation, psychological support, and an impression of belonging.

### **Conclusion**

The recognition of touch as an essential aspect of the Christian healing Ministry, the Christians are emulating Jesus Christ as an example of extending the love of God through touch experiences. The Holy Spirit, which exists in the lives of every Christian, allows every person to experience a divine touch in varying stages of life. Touch is essential in promoting psychological and mental wellness and physical and social well-being. In the Christian circle, touch can transform prayers and worship among the congregants. It is, however, important to educate the congregants on the importance of establishing touch boundaries to ensure that every individual's privacy and preference are considered.



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