

Laying on of Hands

One of the practices is the laying-on of hands. At the time of baptism (Acts 19:5-6), or when a person is being anointed (James 5:14), or when one is being initiated into a church office (1 Timothy 4: 14)- the elders place their hands on the head of the person involved and offer prayer that he might be a yielded child of God and conscious of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In Acts 8:17, the apostles laid hands on the new converts, symbolizing the receiving of the Holy Spirit. When the deacons were selected (in Acts 6), the apostles laid hands on them. When Paul and Barnabas were set aside for missionary service, hands were laid upon them. Acts 13:3 says, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on (Barnabas and Paul), they sent them away." The laying-on of hands is a symbol of restoration of health, reception of the Holy Spirit at baptism, and the conveying of the gifts and rights of a church office. The laying-on of hands symbolizes a fresh coming of the Holy Spirit in new power to help meet a task at hand. Man is utterly dependent upon God. And so the laying-on of hands is not a mere empty form, but a symbol that aids God's people in depending more completely upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Brethren do not believe that something magical will occur just because of the use of the hands. However, this symbolic act represents the gift of the Holy Spirit which is the common property of God's people. Those who lay on hands are the agents of God and represent the bestowing of God's love, blessing and Power.