

The Healing Ministry LIFE PRAYER

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Maranatha is a movement of Christians in all the churches.
Committed to Christian healing
Christian unity and Christian renewal.
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The Healing Ministry

LIFE PRAYER

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The Healing Ministry - LIFE PRAYER

Introductory notes for those involved in praying for healing within the Maranatha Community

INTRODUCTION

The principles laid out in these notes may be applied to any situation of prayer ministry. However, this document has been produced for training specifically in the ministry of Life Prayer. The Maranatha Community has produced other notes on the general subject of healing and particular aspects of the healing ministry.

Our Belief & Experience

- Healing is at the **centre** of the Gospel and is a fundamental activity of God. (Ex 15.26)
- Healing is a sign of God's Kingdom and a manifestation of His **authority**. (Luke 10.9)
- Christ's mission is to **heal** and to **save** (Matt 8.16-17). He has carried all sickness and the curse of sin through His sacrificial death on the cross. (Is 53.4-5)
- God heals through His **Word** (Ps 107.20) and through the **power** of His Holy Spirit (1Cor 12.9).
- Reconciliation is at the heart of healing. God has given us the power to give and receive **forgiveness** through Jesus (John 20.23). Healing in our relationships with God, with others, with ourselves and with the whole of creation is foundational to wholeness.
- As nations and as individuals we are part of a **fallen**, polluted and corrupted world. We live in a wounded, diseased and **hurting** world which desperately needs the healing touch of Jesus.
- We **all**, without exception, are in need of healing. It is God's desire that we and the **whole** of creation are brought to wholeness (Rom 8.21)
- Healing should be at the **core** of the life of the churches. We are called to be the healing Body of Christ. We are given the authority of His Name.
- As a Community committed to Christian unity and reconciliation we have been shown the **limitless** power which is released when we allow God to heal our wounds and divisions. From the beginning of the Maranatha Community we have constantly **seen** and **experienced** Christ's mighty power to heal.
- Healing is not the same as curing. Healing is a **journey** towards wholeness of body, mind and spirit and may involve a miraculous cure. It is, however, possible to be healed without being cured and to be cured without being healed.
- We believe that **every** prayer for healing is answered, even though this may not be in the way we expect.
- All healing is through the **Grace** of God and is not the result of any technique or formula.
- God is **love** - love is at the root of all healing. Without love we can do nothing. Maranatha is a **Christ-centred** community of love. Through the Holy Spirit this love is **expressed** in our prayers for healing.
- In the Maranatha Community we have prayed for healing in many diverse situations - for individuals, families, communities and nations. In every circumstance we ask the Lord to teach us how to pray. We affirm He is always **present** and trust the Holy Spirit to direct our praying.

LIFE PRAYER - THE CONTEXT

Life Prayer is a great gift from God, for as we listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit we are able to bring an entire life back under His authority to receive His healing.

Life Prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving in which we thank God for a person and their life with all its many facets. Life Prayer is not a technique or therapy, neither does it focus on any specific problem or need for healing.

Life Prayer helps us to grow in our understanding of our complete dependence upon our Creator. It also leads us to recognise that there are aspects of our lives which are beyond our control, such as patterns of behaviour which resist all our efforts to change, or irrational fears or thinking. These can prevent us from enjoying our relationship as children of a loving Father and which also affect our relationships with others. We recognise that such behaviours may be evident in other family members.

Life Prayer depends upon the openness of all who are praying to God's Spirit. It does not depend upon any form of knowledge or understanding about a person's life. At every stage of Life Prayer we allow the Holy Spirit to identify any areas that are in need of His healing by waiting upon Him in silence. There is no routine questioning or probing about any aspect of a person's life.

During Life Prayer, the Holy Spirit identifies events and relationships in our lives which are in need of healing. It is a prayer of trust in God's guidance which can be helpful on our healing journey.

The pattern of Life Prayer is rooted in the assertion of the psalmist: "*O Lord, you have searched me and known me you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.... Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked in me, and lead me in the way of everlasting.*" (Psalm 139) We confirm our belief, according to Scripture, that God has been present throughout every person's life, whether they were aware of Him or not.

Life Prayer is a prayer of **thanksgiving** for a person's life. It begins with the offering of the generational lines of the parents to the Father, thanking him for all that is good and praying for cleansing from all that is not good. We pray for the time of conception, through the months in the womb and the time of the birth of the person, pausing to listen to the Spirit and giving time and space for His action to take place and for the person receiving Life Prayer to make that journey in God's presence. We then move through each stage of the person's life, asking for the healing touch and presence of Jesus throughout, remembering that Jesus is "*the same yesterday, today and forever.*" (Heb 13.8)

This prayer is a time of great healing for all who experience it. We pray Life Prayer for anyone who asks, whatever their level of faith. The only requirement is their acceptance that all our praying is through Jesus.

For many this prayer is motivated by a feeling of wanting 'to be right with the Lord' as they move to a new stage in their life or feel that God is calling them to serve Him in a new vocation or to enter into a deeper relationship with Him, so very often the Life Prayer naturally leads into a Prayer of Abandonment where the whole life, mind, heart, senses and body is dedicated to the Lord.

Life Prayer has been helpful for those who have come from other faiths or for those who have been involved with occult or New Age practices, who have felt pressed down by compulsive behaviour patterns or guilt from past situations.

It is a great privilege to accompany anyone on this journey, and a blessing to us all as we see God at work in all our lives as we come into His presence.

WHO IS LIFE PRAYER FOR?

- Life Prayer is for anyone who wants to embrace God's healing in their life.
- Life Prayer is not usually the starting point for healing ministry but may be helpful for those who have received simple prayer for healing or previous counselling.
- Life Prayer is not suitable for those in acute need or for those with severe emotional or mental instability.

PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

General Principles

- I am never alone. I am part of the Body of Christ. I can consciously unite with other members of the Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit.
- One to one ministry is not advised in the Maranatha Community unless there is a specific reason. In this instance, others should be asked to provide prayer support from a distance.
- I must be sensitive to the various ways in which God is healing the one for whom I am praying, including the ministry of doctors and other professional workers, family and friends, as well as other Christians. I must avoid causing damage or confusion by comments on, or interference with legitimate medical or other advice and treatment.

Preparation for Life Prayer

- A small team of people, recognised as having the gift of discernment, are responsible for co-ordinating Life Prayer ministry.
- Individuals requesting Life Prayer are prayed for by the co-ordinating team and the Holy Spirit's direction is sought for the timing of the ministry and the people to conduct it. Sometimes people have waited for several months for ministry but our experience is that the timing is often significant, though not planned in human terms.
- The co-ordinating team organises a ministry team of three people to pray with the individual. For a female, the team would usually consist of two women and a man and for a male, two men and a woman, though this is not a set rule. The team is compiled with much prayer. One person is asked to be the leader for this particular time of ministry.
- When the Life Prayer has been arranged, the individual to receive ministry is sent notification of those who will be praying together with a small folder on how they can personally prepare for ministry.
- A supporting team of intercessors are asked to pray for the individual and the ministry team before and during this ministry.

Personal preparation for ministry team members

- Ideally there should always be ample time for preparation for prayer ministry, although, clearly there will be occasions when this is not possible.
- I need to affirm that I myself can do little or nothing but to God all things are possible.
- We are all "wounded healers". I need to ask God to give me the assurance that although I myself need healing, He can use even me as an instrument of His healing for others, not through my own power and authority, but through Jesus Christ.

- I must ask God to help me know my true motives in ministering to another and ask Him only to use me if it is His will.
- I need to focus all my attention on God, and not myself and my own needs.
- I ask Him to prepare me by giving me openness of heart and mind, and by emptying me of sin, distraction, all negative feelings and anything, which could prevent Him from using me.
- I ask God to enable me to love Him with all my heart and mind and to fill me with His love both for myself and all others.
- I pray that in this preparation God will give me quietness of body, heart, mind and spirit and complete freedom from tension and anxieties.
- I ask God to give me the gift of His Holy Spirit that I may be filled with hope and faith, expecting Him to manifest His healing grace.
- I surrender to God any preconceived ideas I may have about my brother/sister and pray that God will provide me with any knowledge that I should have before ministering to them, whether it is factual information or spiritual insight.
- I pray that God will prepare my brother/sister to receive what He wants to give to them, that He would remove all doubt, fear and anxiety and give them His protection.
- I pray for those with whom I will be ministering and especially for the one who will be leading the ministry.

ATTITUDE IN MINISTRY - AWARENESS, LISTENING, LOVING

Welcome

- The ministry team should meet beforehand to prepare the venue and to unite in prayer for the one receiving ministry. A simple prayer for the cleansing of the meeting place, affirming the Lordship of Jesus is recommended in addition to a prayer for protection for all involved.
- Practical preparation of the venue and punctuality all reinforce the message that the one coming for ministry is important and highly valued. Ideally, all preparations should have taken place before their arrival.
- The one coming for ministry is likely to be experiencing apprehension, or even anxiety, on their arrival. It is important that they receive a warm reception by brothers and sisters who are pleased to see and serve them. It is important to know their preferred name and use it. A friendly, calm atmosphere will help to reduce anxiety.
- It is essential that all those praying are humble in attitude and approach - we are servants not experts. At all times the attitude should be gentle and unhurried. There may need to be an awareness of time but this should not be made obvious - the Lord is a really good time-keeper!

Physical comfort

- The room where Life Prayer is to take place should be private and free from interruptions. Telephones and door bells should be turned off in advance and, if needed, a 'do not disturb' sign should be placed on the door.
- An informal setting with comfortable chairs will indicate a relaxed environment. Glasses of water should be available and a box of tissues.
- The seating arrangement should ideally place the person receiving ministry between the two supporting members of the ministry team with the one leading ministry near to a facing position.

- If possible there should be a small table with a cross, lighted candle and Bible in the room, as at Maranatha gatherings.

Emotional comfort

- After introductions, an explanation of the general process of Life Prayer is given.
- The person receiving ministry is assured of confidentiality; that nothing they share or say will cause shock; and that nothing will alter the love and respect in which they are held by the ministry team.
- During the ministry it is important to be aware of non-verbal signs of discomfort or distress such as a repeated shifting of position, a closed posture, agitation, withdrawal or weeping and to offer reassurance that this is totally normal and acceptable.
- Sensitivity must be exercised, especially by members of the opposite sex, in the use of physical touch, when offering reassurance or comfort. It may be advisable to seek permission first.

Listening

- It is important that all those ministering are attentive listeners, listening to what God is saying directly or indirectly throughout the time of ministry. We ask the Lord to enable us to 'listen' to Him and to the one receiving ministry, through His Holy Spirit, with all of our senses.
- We ask the Lord to give us the eyes of Christ, that we may be observant physically and spiritually. We pray that in looking at our brother/sister God will reveal to us His truth. There will be times when we pray with our eyes closed - often when focusing totally on the Lord, but there is need to be aware that God will often show us how to pray through **visible** expressions and reactions in our brother/sister, and that He can only do this if our eyes are open.
- We pray that the Lord will give us the ears of Christ, that we may be able to listen physically and spiritually, to what God is telling us through the one for whom we are praying.
- We ask the Lord to give us the mind of Christ, especially the one leading the ministry, and we ask for the gift of discernment.
- We ask the Lord to give each of us the heart of Christ, that we may love the one for whom we are praying unconditionally and that we may be able to listen with our hearts as well as our minds.
- The one leading the ministry should explain simply about the ways in which God speaks i.e in images or in words. Those who believe they have been given words or pictures should be encouraged to share these for confirmation by the others. If they are not understood, they are simply placed before God. Any discernment is offered humbly, not superimposed or forced upon the one receiving prayer.
- If listening to the Lord is difficult it is worth considering whether it may be due to spiritual oppression in the one being prayed for. A prayer of authority, in the Name of Jesus, over any spiritual obstruction is usually effective.

Difficulties

- There may, on occasion, be conscious or unconscious **untruthfulness** on the part of the one for whom we are praying. We simply ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Truth.
- **Awkwardness** of temperament or difficulty in establishing the truth should not in any way diminish our respect and love for the person for whom we are praying.
- There may often be a need to gently **subdue** the over-talkative person or to positively **encourage** the reticent and shy. Similarly, expressions of emotional distress i.e. weeping,

bitterness, anger, should not cause concern but should be responded to with a strong, calm, loving attitude.

- In any situation of extreme difficulty there is the need to take **authority** in the Name of Jesus and to seek the **guidance** of the Holy Spirit who is Truth.

LIFE PRAYER MINISTRY

Prayer for Peace

- After acknowledging the presence and the Lordship of Jesus, we praise Him and thank Him for our brother/sister and each other. In particular, we thank Him for bringing us together. With assurance, we thank the Lord for what He is going to do and for what He is going to give. This opening prayer is often said with our hands joined together to affirm our oneness in Christ.
- We ask God to send His Holy Spirit to bring stillness - in mind, body and spirit. We pause in silence to allow His peace to come upon us. We ask for cleansing and, in the name of Jesus, we expel all that interferes with our prayers, e.g. confusion, distraction, fear, anger, anxiety.
- Our breathing can be used to pray, that as we breathe in we inhale God's love, goodness and peace and as we breathe out we exhale our pain, our sinfulness and all tension. We remember that Jesus said to the stormy sea "Peace be still".
- We ask Jesus to breathe upon us as He did upon His disciples when He appeared to them in His resurrection glory and we hear His Words "Peace be with you". We pray that we would be able to allow the Lord to come to us, so close that He can breathe upon our lives and we can receive His Spirit. In receiving the Holy Spirit we recognise that He is both Truth and Love.

Prayer for Openness

- We acknowledge that God knows all about us - from the moment of our creation to the years of our future. He knows everything that is on our heart at that moment, everything we are thinking - all our hopes and fears. We remind ourselves in His presence that He knows us intimately.
- It is often helpful to read Psalm 139 (omitting verses 19-22), or Psalm 23, or any other scripture that is 'given' or part of the Shalom Prayer - allowing God to speak to us personally.
- We ask the Lord to remove from us any preconceived ideas about the way in which He will heal and ask that our brother/sister will be given the desire to be healed. We simply lay ourselves open to Him to speak to us, touch us, hold us in His arms and heal us.

Thanksgiving for Life

- After the prayer for peace and openness we thank God for the whole of our brother/sister's life. We offer thanksgiving for the moment of their creation by God, affirming that he has created them in love and for love and that they are truly made in His image. We thank Him for the gift of life and affirm that He alone is the giver and sustainer of our brother/sister's life.
- We then give thanks for every period of our brother/sister's life in chronological order.
- We encourage the one receiving ministry to pray with open hands, which may be supported when appropriate by those sitting on either side.

Thanksgiving for Generational Inheritance

- We then thank God for our brother/sister's generational inheritance, affirming that they are a part of their family tree.
- This part of the Life Prayer concerns the part of a person's life that they usually know least about. It is very important for those who have been adopted or who know nothing of their

family background. Ample time is allowed to wait for God's promptings, not moving on until everyone agrees that specific roots have been identified and offered to God.

- We acknowledge that our brother/sister has inherited both good and bad qualities. We thank God, our Father, for all inheritance that is good and pray that these qualities will be strengthened in their life. Similarly, we offer to God all inherited traits or characteristics that are tainted and ask Him to cleanse and purify our brother/sister of these.
- We offer to God all the relationships of the family tree, acknowledging that they have had a foundational influence upon our brother/sister, whether they knew their forebears or not. We ask the Lord to strengthen those bonds with their forebears that are good and to break any bonds that are negative or destructive. We do this in the name of Jesus.
- After this initial prayer, time is spent waiting for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for specific aspects of generational inheritance that need to be brought to the Lord for healing or liberation.
- Sometimes an individual may be affected by generational occultic activity, including membership of secret societies such as the freemasons. In this situation, the individual is led to ask God's forgiveness for the sin of idolatry committed by his/her ancestors and to renounce this allegiance in the name of Jesus. Those praying will then pray for our brother/sister's deliverance from this influence.
- It is also possible for an individual to come under a generational curse. This can be broken in the authority of the name of Jesus and the power of His blood,

Thanksgiving for the time in the womb

- We thank God again that our brother/sister is created by Him and give thanks for the moment of their conception in their mother's womb. We acknowledge that God knew our brother/sister before their parents knew of their existence.
- We thank God for our brother/sister's parents and offer their relationship to Him. We offer to God the circumstances around the moment of conception, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal any need for healing in the earliest moments of our brother/sister's life.
- We thank God for every month of our brother/sister's development within the womb. We thank Him for the security of the womb and recognise that every experience of the mother was shared by the child she carried. We ask the Lord to heal any trauma our brother/sister may have experienced through any shock or other negative experience of their mother.
- We thank God for the relationship between our brother/sister and their mother and father during this period of their life. We recognise that the child in the womb senses the feelings and reactions of both mother and father, and responds to many outside influences. We offer to God all the relationships during this period and all the words spoken. We ask the Lord to identify and heal anything which has caused damaging feelings eg. rejection, pain, fear or insecurity.
- We thank God especially for the moment of our brother/sister's birth, affirming the uniqueness and importance of this event. We offer to God the events surrounding our brother/sister's birth and the early weeks of life, acknowledging the change from life in the womb and the importance of all formative relationships.

Thanksgiving for all the years of life

- As the prayer continues we thank God for each period of our brother/sister's life - infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, giving to God each year of life. For some, prayer may be focussed over the first few months or years, for others prayer may span many years at a time. We ask the Holy Spirit to direct attention to the points of His choosing.
- During this period of prayer we recognise in particular times of change such as starting, changing and leaving school or the birth of siblings. We are also sensitive to various key relationships within and external to the family.
- In addition to asking God to identify specific events in our brother/sister's life which point to a

need for healing, we ask Him to highlight any patterns of response to trauma or stress eg. rejection or withdrawal.

- Both before birth and in all the subsequent years we recognise that there are things which need to be healed – attitudes inherited from parents and family, words which have been spoken, actions which have been hurtful. We also recognise and thank God for all the good influences that have contributed to personal development and protection.

Healing life's wounds

- Much of the healing needed in our lives is the putting right of wrong relationships. During Life Prayer, most of the events identified by God point to a damaged relationship that He wants to heal.
- For each event that God identifies, we support our brother/sister in offering the pain of the memory and the broken relationship to God. We pray that their woundedness would be united with the wounds of Jesus.
- The starting point for the healing of relationships is forgiveness. This is usually in the context of the specific event/events identified by God.
- There are 2 stages to forgiving another person. In human terms this is often impossible where the hurt has been deep or repeated over many years. We ask for the help of Jesus who has shown us the way of forgiveness through the cross and who has forgiven each of us.
- The first stage is to ask God that our brother/sister would be given the desire to forgive the one who has caused hurt.
- The second stage is to ask that our brother/sister be given the power to forgive. We ask them to speak the words, as if directly to the person who caused hurt, "I forgive you, (name of the person), for what you did/said, in the name of Jesus".
- In praying for healing through forgiveness we affirm that this can only take place through the power of the name of Jesus, not through any capacity that we have to forgive.
- If our brother/sister is unable to forgive, we simply pray that God would give them the desire and power to forgive in His time and continue with the Life Prayer. It is very important that no coercion is applied and that our brother/sister is not made to feel guilty if they are unable to take this step at that time.
- Having prayed forgiveness, we ask that God would complete the healing of the relationship identified by releasing the love of Christ into our brother/sister for the one who hurt them. This also involves 2 stages.
- We firstly ask that our brother/sister be given the desire to love the person who hurt them.
- The second stage is to pray that our brother/sister be given the power of God's Spirit to speak the words, "I love you, (name) in the name of Jesus". This step is often not possible during the time of prayer but we encourage our brother/sister to ask God for this love in the ensuing weeks.

Duration and continuation of Life Prayer

- Life Prayer usually lasts around 2 hours. For some people Life Prayer will take place over a period of time in several sessions. We ask the Lord to show us when to close our prayers for this particular session and to make clear when it is time for another stage.
- Often it is appropriate to offer a Prayer of Abandonment at the end of a session of Life Prayer.

Finally

- Throughout the history of the Church Christians have been led to anoint the sick and others in need with oil and this simple act can be a profound blessing after prayers for healing.
- At the close of a session we always thank and praise God for the healing that has taken place. We advise our brother/sister that they will not necessarily notice any difference immediately but that the evidence of healing will usually be manifest over the following months.

- The one for whom we have been praying may care to rest for a little while after the prayers. This is always a time of great peace and blessing and it is important that there is not a distracting discussion on what has happened.
- When the prayers are over it is important for the one for whom we have been praying to leave quietly, perhaps after a cup of tea. They should be encouraged to hold on to the healing they have received. We also advise against talking in detail or analysing the nature of the prayer with other people.
- After the departure of our brother/sister prayers for cleansing and protection are said for all who have been involved.

Follow up of Life Prayer

- Immediately after Life Prayer ministry our brother/sister is given a card with simple advice on how to pray for themselves, allowing God to continue His healing work. The card also has the names and telephone numbers of those who have ministered in case of any questions or need for support.
- For those whose Life Prayer is incomplete it is explained that the next stage may take place very soon or it may be felt that a longer period of waiting is needed. We simply pray that God will make it clear when the next time of ministry should take place and encourage our brother/sister to join in this prayer.

PRAYER OF ABANDONMENT

- The prayer of abandonment is an act of total surrender to God in which we make ourselves totally vulnerable to Him.
- Our brother/sister lies down - preferably on the floor with cushions under the head and in a comfortable, relaxed position. The palms are open, facing upward and the limbs are supported by the floor reminding ourselves that "underneath are the everlasting arms".
- We commence by affirming with our brother/sister their desire to give themselves totally to the Lord - all our moments and our days. We pray that they will make themselves vulnerable to His gaze and to His love.
- We then offer up to the Lord the five senses of our brother/sister. We gently pray for God's cleansing and blessing upon their **eyes** and all they have ever **seen**; upon their **ears** and all that they have ever **heard**; upon their **mouth** and all that they have ever **spoken** or **tasted**; upon their **nose** and all that they have ever **smelt** and upon their **hands** and all that they have ever **touched**. This is done reverently and lovingly. As we pray we ask that God will remove any memory of senses that has been damaging and that He would transform each sense, enabling them to see beauty, to hear good things, to smell sweetness, to taste and see that God is good, to touch Him and be touched by Him.
- We then offer to God the thoughts and intellect of our brother/sister placing our hands upon their forehead, asking God to bring them His truth and His peace. We ask the Lord to cleanse and to bless all their thoughts, dreams and memories. We ask the Lord to bring His healing and to give our brother/sister the mind of Christ.
- We then offer the Lord the feelings and emotions of our brother/sister as our hand is placed on their chest (over their heart). We ask the Lord to heal any pain in the life of our brother/sister and ask that He will give to them the heart of Christ.
- We then place our hands on the abdomen of our brother/sister - the point where 'gut' fear is felt and we give God all the fears and tensions. We pray that the perfect love of God will cast out all fear and that He will bring our brother/sister a deep peace and security.
- We should try to ensure that the one who is laying hands on our brother/sister during the

prayer of abandonment is of the same sex as them as a mark of our loving respect for their dignity.

WHY IS LIFE PRAYER SO EFFECTIVE?

We believe that all prayer in the Name of Jesus is effective. We claim no credit for the answers to prayer. All glory belongs to the Lord who alone is our Healer. The following are some thoughts about why Life Prayer ministry is particularly effective:

- It is not prayed according to human planning but according to the Lord's timing.
- It is not prayed as a response to any situation or perceived need but rather from a desire for the Lord's healing of the whole person.
- It is a prayer of thanksgiving for the whole of a person's life, not focussed on problems or a particular area of need. This seems to bring a deeper level of openness to the Lord's direction for healing.
- By starting with thanksgiving and prayer for generational influences, the Lord seems to identify 'seeds' which have been sown into a person's life even before they were conceived. In this way, the roots of patterns and behaviours are identified and dealt with at their origins.
- As the prayer progresses and patterns emanating from the identified roots become evident, these patterns are broken in prayer in addition to the root being destroyed.

LIFE PRAYER AT A DISTANCE

There are times when it is not possible for a person to be present at their life prayer, maybe because of incapacity, illness, vulnerability, and problems of distance or perhaps as a result of guidance from the Holy Spirit. Some individuals are so broken that they are unable to participate in prayer ministry. Similarly, this method of prayer is helpful for children in need of deep healing.

It is important to remind ourselves that all Life Prayer is an act of faith where we remember that Jesus, moved with pity, chose to heal (Mark 1:40-42) that he chose to restore Jairus' daughter out of time when she had died (Matt. 9:18-26), that he healed the centurion's slave at a distance (Luke 7:1-10).

- The team involved with Life Prayer at a distance can be slightly larger than that in an ordinary Life Prayer. The prayerful preparation is the same, as is the need for a quiet place with no interruptions.
- A similar pattern of prayer is followed as in Life Prayer. It is a prayer of thanksgiving for the person's life: of listening to the prompting of the Holy Spirit; of allowing space and time as each stage of life is prayed through until each member of the team feels at peace before moving on to the next stage.
- There are some differences in Life Prayer at a Distance as the person cannot contribute in any way or affirm or question the direction the prayer is taking, but we can pray into the root causes of hurt, division and broken relationships; to release people from bondage or curses if guided to do so by the Holy Spirit in the power of the name of Jesus. We can pray for cleansing and healing as the love of Jesus is released into each situation and relationship.

TESTIMONIES OF LIFE PRAYER

H's testimony:

"I had heard about life prayer from a friend and knew it was about helping people move forward in their lives, particularly if they had ties with the past that needed breaking, all of which applied to me. I was also trying to seek God's future for me and my daughter, as a newly single parent, and I think to try and deal with some of that guilt and shame.

The preliminary meeting took place in a "safe-feeling" house, where we could talk through what my expectations were, and how the life prayer took place; at this stage there was no other information given apart from basic things and also where I was with God at that time.

After this the team prayed about me over a period of weeks to see what God's will would be in terms of who should pray with me; I was not part of this at all, and feel very humbled that people were already praying about me when they hadn't even met me!

Soon I received a call to say that a group of 3 people had been brought together for me, and to arrange the meeting place.

The actual life prayer was incredibly peaceful and not intimidating at all. The three people-2 ladies and 1 man- prayed over me listening to God and waiting to be prompted to speak.

I had given virtually no information about myself, yet the words they spoke were directly from God and spoke about aspects of my life which were from my past which was astonishing as it was so applicable to me. They identified the areas of my life which needed healing specifically-still no words from me! - and proceeded to pray cutting the chains of my life which had held me down for so long.

Again none of this was threatening, judgemental nor embarrassing; the way in which the Spirit leads is not to shame us, but simply to help us be the people God intended us to be.

Afterwards I didn't feel like I was "coming apart" which had worried me beforehand-what if all this stuff came out and I fell apart?-but even this was covered by the prayers, being prompted by the Spirit. I felt incredibly calm and peaceful, as though the plug had been pulled on the negativity in my life. It was also recommended that I didn't discuss any of it with anyone, but actually I didn't feel the need to, anyway. As time went on the impact of the life prayer became more apparent as I found I reacted differently to situations which at one time I would have found difficult, particularly where family were concerned. This gave us a basis upon which to build afresh, and for healing to take place.

Life prayer is not a "fix"; it is simply a starting point for God to change things in your life permanently if you will let Him. Things don't magically become easy, as healing can sometimes be lifelong; however it does give you a tremendous sense of a fresh start, an acute awareness of the presence and knowledge of God, and an inherent sense that God really cares about you as an individual, with your specific needs and the power and love to meet them.

I am enormously grateful to the wonderful people who facilitate this, and continue to feel humbled and in awe of them -and also our mighty and amazing God!"

N's testimony:

"I have had life prayer on three separate occasions during the journey of my life, each one distinctly different and relevant to the place I was in at the time.

I had my own idea of what it would be like having been told that prayer would take place with three people and that they would be praying through the various stages of my life and allowing God to bring up and heal issues which He needed to deal with or to bring release in.

On the first occasion I was at the early stages of my first pregnancy and for some reason had a strong sense that I needed God to break any family ties which were not Godly, ie any generational curses if I can use that expression as I had a real awareness of how these could affect my unborn child. I had not shared this burden with anyone involved in life prayer at that time.

When we gathered for prayer, the first thing I was told was that instead of doing a conventional life prayer, there was a feeling that God wanted to deal with generational curses. This blew me away from the start. There was prayer through various stages of my life relating to both my father's side of the family but more so my mother's side. God revealed several significant patterns which could be broken. During the session one of the ladies had a picture of a baby in a womb which was tied up with several

strands of various colours and while we were praying she saw God pull each strand off. None of the people praying for me knew that I was pregnant. I was also told that there were two significant things that God wanted to do in my life dealing with two important issues in my life and again these were very accurate. Since that time I have experienced God working in both these areas. I now have 2 very lovely boys of 9 and 12 yrs.

I have had two other more conventional life prayers since that time over the years, each one being very specific about certain key facts in my life and each one being followed by Gods hand at work in my life.

Personally I feel that for some people life prayer is an opportunity for God to put a spotlight on areas of our lives that we may not realise are disabling us from growing into all that God has for us. It gives God the opportunity to break in and cut us free from things that bind us.

12 years on I have to say that God is still fulfilling the words He has given me through life prayer and bringing to completion the work begun through this.

Each life prayer that I have experienced has been done in an atmosphere of stillness and reverence to God, which has felt very comfortable.

I feel privileged to have been able to experience life prayer and greatly appreciate and respect the people who commit their time to serve in this way."

C's testimony:

"I was in my mid 70's when I felt drawn to go forward for Life Prayer.

I was not sure what to expect but having carried some pain in me due to a difficult marriage which ended in divorce and losing all contact with one of my children I was just trusting God to see what he wanted to do.

As the people with me gently and quietly prayed in to various parts of my life the Lord gently brought healing. One of the things that came up was that as a child I had felt unloved by my father who always seemed very authoritarian which had left me even all these years later angry with him. As we prayed through this time I was given a picture and words that helped me to forgive him.

I left the Life Prayer feeling free, happy and tired.

A strange thing then happened over the next few weeks. The Lord kept bringing to mind all the times my father had picked me up and cuddled, comforted and nursed me. Due to my previous anger with him I had totally pushed all these times away. Once free from the pain and anger I am now able to remember him very differently. Yes he was authoritarian, but this was due to his upbringing. Nevertheless he did also love me."

P's testimony:

"I had been on the Life prayer list for over 12 months and thought they had forgotten about me. When following a time of prayer with my own church elders the lord healed me of a very painful experience at a significant time in my life. I then prayed and asked the Lord if I really needed to have Life Prayer. I would wait one week more to hear then I would cancel it. 3 days later I had a call to say sorry for the delay but they had lost my contact details and did I still want to go ahead. The answer was of course yes. Looking back now at the time I waited for Life Prayer I realise God had been clearing the way of many things and bringing healing into my Life so that at Life prayer he could deal with the deep things he wanted to put right in my and my families life.

During my life prayer it became apparent that there was a strong female domination through the family. Even to the point of every first child born through the generations was a girl with boys following later. Following a time of quiet and listening to the Lord A word was given that this had come about due to sexual harassment and as some men had control in this area the women had taken over being domineering in every area except sexuality.

I was able to confirm a little of this in my life but not any further back. I was led gently through a time of forgiveness for all the men in the family who had been involved in this in any way, even the ones I did not know about we just trusted in the Lords leading.

Following Life Prayer I discovered from an Aunt that there had been this problem in the family for a few generations, and indeed the oldest woman in the family was always looked on as a Matriarchal figure.

One year later my daughter was pregnant with her first child (this was the first pregnancy in the family since my life prayer) and was told it was a girl but the baby turned out to be a boy. Matthew was to be his name then completely out of the blue my daughter rang to say they had changed their minds and he was to be called **Adam**. My daughter had not known of my Life Prayer."

Now approx 12 years later all first babies born even to cousins are Male. (Except one girl to a great niece) and since the death of my great grandmother there has been no replacement of the Matriarchal figure.

For me Life Prayer is a time of allowing God to bring healing in my family and put right all things that have become distorted over the years bringing them back to what God had intended them to be.

"If we pray, we will believe
If we believe, we will love
If we love, we will serve."

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

APPENDIX

The following prayers may be helpful in ministry:

A prayer affirming my unique value

You gave me value
You fashioned me
in your own image.
The imprint of Your nature
is upon my soul.
All that is pure within me
comes from You.
All generosity and kindness,
all goodness and mercy.
Embedded, deep in my heart
planted by You
is the seed of Your life
within me.
It is there for me
to nurture,
it is precious, beyond gold.
The breath of Almighty God
has been breathed into me,
it is life, of limitless cost.
Yet tainted and disfigured,
polluted and corrupted
by a cruel world
I have allowed myself
to be devalued,
robbed of the divine spark,
seemingly lost,
broken and worthless.
But You see the hidden riches
of my humanity
and what You see, You love
You do not hate,
and your love for me
is shown upon Your cross.
Here You paid the highest price -
for me.
Here Your costly blood is shed -
for me.
Here I discover
my real worth
and your amazing Grace.
(Dennis Wrigley)

A prayer to help me to intercede

*You are teaching me to love others,
first of all for what they are,
as personal and unique as I am,
equally loved by you as I am
sharing the same humanity,
with a seed of eternity
which may not yet have germinated
in them or in me,
something that knows what is good,
something that can love and needs love
and can call out love.
You tell me that I must recognize
you in them,
You warn me that I must not wait
until I judge them worthy,
Reminding me that you loved me
in my raw unloving state
and by loving drew out of me
an answering love
which must include
all whom you love.*

(St John of the Cross)

Two Prayers of Abandonment

I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

(From the Methodist Covenant Service)

*Father,
I surrender myself into your hands;
do with me hat you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you;
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures.
This is all I want, O Lord.
Into your hands I commit my spirit:
I offer it to you
with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord,
and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands
without reserve
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.*

(Charles de Foucauld)

Prayers for personal use before prayers for healing

*Lord make me an instrument of your peace
Where there is hate may I bring love,
Where there is offence may I bring pardon,
Where there is discord may I bring union,
Where there is error may I bring truth,
Where there is doubt may I bring faith,
Where there is despair may I bring hope,
Where there is darkness may I bring light,
Where there is sadness may I bring joy,
O Master, make me not so much to be consoled as to
console; not so much to be loved as to love;
not so much to be understood as to understand;
for it is in giving that we receive; it is in
self-forgetfulness that we find; it is in pardoning
that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life.
(Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi)*

"God be in my head, and in my understanding,
God be in my eyes, and in my looking,
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking,
God be in my heart, and in my thinking,
God be at my end, and at my departing."
(The Book of Hours)

O Risen Lord. Let the healing grace of your love so transform us that we may play our part in the transfiguration of the world from a place of suffering, death and corruption, to a realm of infinite light, joy, love and peace. Make us obedient to your Spirit that our lives may become a living prayer and a witness to your unfailing presence. We ask this to the glory of your Name. Amen

Prayers for stillness

*I sit in your presence
Stilled and quiet, lifting my heart to You,
I let go all worries, anxieties and plans:
I place them in your hands,
I wait on you, passive and expectant.
I let you come into the inmost core of my being,
into the deep centre of my life
Where You are already there.
You are within me, You are here now
as You are with everyone
who is willing to welcome you.
I let go, I sink and merge into You,
I let You take over,
I let You carry me.
(John Dalrymple)*

In the Presence of God most high, I adore, invoke and meditate on the Lord Jesus Christ as True God and True Man; and I place myself within his Risen and Glorified Life, so that through participation in that life, I may be made one with him.

A Shalom Prayer

*I come as myself.
Just as I am.
This moment.
My feelings, my fears
My joys, my sadnesses.
You see me as I really am
You know me
Through and through
You see all
All that I am
Or ever have been.
Every experience in my life is laid before you.
Lord pour your cleansing streams of living water all over me.
Make the parched deserts of my being spring to life
Refresh me, renew me.
Lord breathe on me afresh now
And I will receive your life.
Lord reach out and touch me and I will receive your healing.
Bring me now into the deep silence of Your presence.
This moment may every part of my being be at peace.
Let my heartbeat
Be in harmony with Your heartbeat.
Fill me now
With Your stillness
With the reality of Your living presence.*

(Extract from Shalom Prayer - Dennis Wrigley)

A prayer of giving

Lord Jesus, I give you my hands to do your work.
I give you my feet to go your way.
I give you my eyes to see as you do.
I give you my tongue to speak your words.
I give you my mind that you may think in me.
I give you my spirit that you may pray in me.
Above all, I give you my heart that you may love
in me your Father and all mankind.
I give you my whole self that you may grow in me
so that it is you, Lord Jesus, who live and work and pray in me.

(The Grail Prayer)

A prayer in situations of pain

Father, the world is full of pain; each of us has a share; for some it is a slight burden, for others it is crushing. But every Christian can turn it into a blessing if he will seek the companionship of Christ in his suffering; then the pain becomes a new point of fellowship with Christ; and even our suffering becomes part of the price of the world's redemption as we fill up what is left over the suffering of Christ.

Pain does not then cease to be pain; but it ceases to be barren pain; and with fellowship with Christ upon the cross we find new strength for bearing it and even making it the means by which our hearts are more fully cleansed of selfishness and grow towards perfect love. Accomplish this in us through Christ our Lord.

(William Temple)

The Maranatha Prayer

*God has created me to do Him some definite service:
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.
I have my mission - I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.
I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between person. He has not created
me for naught. I shall do good: I shall do His work. I shall
be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it - if I do
but keep His commandments.
Therefore, I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can
never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my
perplexity, may serve Him. He does nothing in vain.
He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends;
He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel
desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me-
still He knows what He is about.*

(John Henry Newman)