

Laying on of Hands

A. A foundational doctrine.

Hebrews 6:1-2

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

B. Old Testament examples of impartation through the laying on of hands.

In Jewish practice, the laying on of hands was significant in three ways. (a) It was the sign of the transference of guilt. Those making the sacrifice laid their hands upon the head of the victim to symbolize the fact that they transferred their guilt to the animals being offered. (b) It was the sign of the transference of blessing. When a father blessed his son, he laid his hands on the son's head as a token of that blessing. (c) It was the sign of setting apart to some special office. Individuals were ordained to office by the laying on of hands.

2 Chronicles 29:23

“Then they brought out the male goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their hands on them.”

Gen.48:14 - Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.

Num.27:18-20 - And the LORD said to Moses: “Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

Deut.34:9 - Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

New Testament examples of impartation through the laying on of hands:

1. Impartation of the of the Spirit:

Acts 19:5,6 - When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

2. Impartation of gifts.

Timothy 4:14 - Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

Timothy 1:6 - Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

3. Impartation of healing power.

Mark 16:18 - they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Luke 13:13 - And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Luke 4:40 - When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.

4. For blessing the children.

Mk.10:13-16 - And they were bringing children to Him so that He would touch them; but the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, “Allow the children to come to Me; do not forbid them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.” And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.

5. Placing into ministry.

Acts 6:5-7 - And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Acts 13:1-4 - Now there were prophets and teachers at Antioch, in the church that was there: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit

said, “Set Barnabas and Saul apart for Me for the work to which I have called them.” Then, when they had fasted, prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

6. To be taken seriously.

1 Timothy 5:22 - Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.