

RAMPUP GUIDELINES REGARDING HEALING IN THE CONTEXT OF DISABILITY



In its research on the experiences of people with disabilities in churches, RampUp did become aware of the difficulties that people with disabilities have regarding healing practices, e.g. being blamed for sin in their lives and having a lack of faith when not being freed of a disability. See the many story lines in the [Church for Everyone](#) document on www.rampup.co.za . RampUp would not want to pretend that it has all the answers to this debate, but would rather want to support people with disabilities in their spiritual journey. The aim of this document is to give some guidance that will contribute to an experience of spiritual /emotional liberation whether being healed from a disability or not.

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HEALING

An understanding of healing that RampUp feels comfortable with is a wider perspective namely emotional and spiritual healing as well as physical healing of a disease or disability.

To people focussed on physical healing, healing may mean being freed of the disability. However many people with disabilities do not experience being cured of their disability, but being emotionally and spiritually healed.

Many people with disabilities do not view their disabilities as an illness and do not regard themselves as being continuously in need of healing. They indeed have many other needs which they request prayer for.

SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES FOR A MINISTRY OF HEALING

1. The focus of a ministry of healing is the encounter between God who heals and those people who bring their requests to God. Intercessors facilitate that encounter.
2. God heals and cures as an expression of his radical freedom to do as He wishes. Paul was not healed of his 'disability' in spite of praying for this several times
3. Healing is not a matter of success or failure. Praying for somebody shows our solidarity with them, that they are cared for and included in the family of God. No pressure should be put on a person who asks for prayer, by any means, to state that they have been healed. Neither those who pray, nor those being prayed for should carry this additional burden.

4. It may be extremely harmful to be told that one is not healed because of sin (either one's own or that of previous generations), or because of lack of faith. In the majority of instances the person who is praying for healing cannot possibly know that this is true. It may be true that a person is struggling morally or with their faith. Such a person needs support, encouragement and care rather than accusation. If there are problems, these should be dealt with privately in the context of pastoral care.

PRACTICES IN A MINISTRY OF HEALING

5. Every person who asks for prayer for healing should be treated with respect and dignity. They should not be embarrassed or exploited, nor should their wishes be ignored. This is particularly important when the ministry of healing takes place in a public place. A good suggestion is to ask the person "How can we pray for you?" as Jesus did with the man of Mark 10:51, even though He could see the man was blind.
6. If an intercessor uses a particular symbol in prayer (such as laying-on of hands or anointing with oil) the significance of this should be explained to the person being prayed for and his/her consent obtained. The person who asked for prayer should at any point, have the freedom to stop whatever is going on.
7. Where testimonies are given, people should be able to deliver their testimonies in their own words, and from their own perspectives. No pressure should be brought to bear on them.

SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO DISABILITY

8. Where someone with an overt impairment comes forward in a service asking for prayer, it should not be assumed they have come for prayer for that impairment. Such persons may not perceive their impairment to be a problem that needs cure. They may be dealing with any other need that they need prayer for, which has to be listened to carefully.
9. People with disabilities who feel they are coerced into prayer practices, should not allow this. They are advised to seek guidance from spiritual leaders with whom they feel comfortable. The question of being healed or not is complex, but it is possible for persons with disability to find peace in this regard.
10. People with a disabilities also have spiritual gifts and may also participate as intercessors in ministries of healing. The church betrays its calling if it conducts its healing ministry in a way that is not accessible to people with a disabilities. The integrity of the healing ministry cannot be separated from people with disabilities having access to that ministry.

Adapted from R. McCloughry and W. Morris, *Making a World of Difference*