



THE SPIRIT'S HEALING POWER

By Ward Serig

“And whosoever among you are sick...the elders of the church...shall be called, and shall pray for, and lay their hands upon them, in my name...” —Doctrine and Covenants 42:12

During my nearly fifty years as an elder in the church, I could not begin to count the number of times I have

been called on to anoint and pray for those who have asked for the sacrament of administration to the sick. Some received immediate blessings; others were cured over time and with the help of medical professionals; and a few were literally on their deathbeds and soon passed from this life to the next. I believe that all were blessed

because of the faith expressed in asking for and receiving this sacrament of the church.

Through all those years I can probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of times when I personally have asked the elders to pray for me in this manner. For one thing, I have been richly blessed with

good physical health over the years, for which I am truly grateful. For what I considered to be minor ailments, my choice was often to “be nourished with all tenderness and mild food” (D. and C. 42:12).

Those times when I have received the sacrament of administration have been very special and meaningful to

me, however. My most recent experience of this nature was while preparing for surgery to repair a hernia. I had to wait three and a half weeks for an appointment with the surgeon and another six days after that for the surgery. The pain I was experiencing, while not unbearable, was getting more and more frequent and lasting longer.

On the Wednesday before the surgery, which was scheduled for the following Monday, I had asked Joyce and Claire Weddle if they would prepare to administer to me after Sunday worship at church. By Sunday morning the pain was almost constant, and I was really looking forward to getting past the surgery the next day.

I wish I could put into words what I experienced as the Weddles anointed my head and presented me for the Lord's watchcare and blessing. The power of the Holy Spirit touched me in a very tangible way. My pain was immediately relieved and did not return until the next morning as I was being prepped to go into the operating room. I

sensed that same sweet Spirit during my recuperation.

Generally speaking, I am not a person who likes to sit around “doing nothing,” but I was quite content to follow orders from the doctor (and nurse Joyce Weddle) and allow the healing process a full six weeks, to

have time to repair and prepare me for my normal activities.

I feel a deep-seated desire to serve my God and to be a blessing to God's people. I want to continue doing so to the best of my abilities. I realize that I can never repay the Lord's goodness to me, but I can share with others what a difference it

makes when Christ is invited to become an ever-present part of one's life.

The counsel found in the New Testament letter of James is just as valid today as it was to its original hearers: “Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him,

anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord...and pray for one another, that ye may be healed” (James 5:14, 16).

I would encourage anyone who needs the prayers of the elders for physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual concerns to call upon them for this sacramental experience.