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A CALL FOR HEALING HELPERS

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A complaint was made at our church that it is not enough to be inspired by a great sermon or beautiful music. There needs to be a time somehow tucked into the service or immediately afterward when the needs of the individual can be addressed. . . in a personal, caring manner.

I suggested a solution, and it has worked out so well that I am passing it along to anyone else who might be interested. Form a group of Healing Helpers.

Healing Helpers are people who volunteer to remain after the service for about twenty minutes. They pair off, one-on-one, with whomever comes forward to request healing prayer for a situation in his or her life. Each Healing Helper listens to the individual's request, joins or touches hands, and then takes the lead in a positive, uplifting prayer, affirming that Divine Order is present, and that whatever is right for that person's highest good and the highest good of all concerned is coming together right now, and will be available for as long as needed.

This program is unlike any other activity involving prayer that the church may already provide, for it honors the emotions we all feel and the desire we all have to help one another. The only talent necessary to become a Healing Helper is the ability to listen, touch, and share with a loving heart. There are no meetings to attend, no committee members, no leadership other than what it took to get the program instituted and listed on the Sunday bulletin. Participation grows as demand increases and announcements are made. Compassion is the secret of success. Simplicity and immediacy, its strength.

Here are some thoughts about the program to consider:

Healing Helpers are anyone willing to listen with an open heart and lead with affirmative prayer, who are able to stay twenty minutes after the church service is over.

Healing Helpers are not counselors. In case extra help might be needed, each one should have the name and phone number of the proper church member to call. The individual's permission must be obtained for such follow-ups, along with his or her contact information. Utmost privacy must be

maintained.

Healing Helpers have no central leadership or meeting requirements. They show up when they can, walk to the front of the room after church services conclude, and pair off with individuals as these people come forward. They remain in the sanctuary space, small groups here and there, with voices low. It is amazing how quickly sincere intent creates the privacy needed, regardless of anyone else's presence nearby.

Healing Helpers are on the forefront of issues and concerns in the congregation. Their's is the privilege of providing a personal touch at the moment of need. Whether the sermon brought up something the individual wants addressed, or a friend or relative is ill, a job is lost, or guidance of somekind is sought, there is someone there right now who cares. The spin-offs from having Healing Helpers are amazing. More people in the congregation get to know each other. This simple yet effective way to serve one's fellows provides a deep sense of satisfaction, and enhances the concept of a spiritual life. It is growth oriented, enabling the volunteers to take on more responsibility while deepening their faith. And it builds a stronger church body of active and committed individuals.

If your church, religious or spiritual gathering, does not have a program like Healing Helpers in place, I urge you to start one. It only takes one person with the willingness to say, "Let's do this."

Where two or more are gathered in God's Name, the power of prayer becomes even more powerful. Worship is incomplete without "worthship" honoring the value of humanness, our frailties and our gifts, as we affirm the divinity within.

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