

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Notes*

**Sermon notes for October 7-8, 2000**

**"Let's Pray"**

**Dale Whitehead**

**James 5:13-18**

Prayers that we pray in response to what is happening in our lives (James 5:13).

The prayers that we pray in response to what is happening in our lives fall into two broad categories. The first category would be those prayers that we pray in response to difficult times. And the second category would be those prayers that we pray in response to good times.

Prayers that others pray in response to what is happening in our lives (James 5:14-18).

Prayer of the elders for the sick (James 5:14-15).

### The Problem

James, beginning in verse 14, moves from the general to the specific and focuses on one particular problem in respect to suffering and that is physical sickness.

In the time of Christ and the apostles physical sickness was a major problem. So it is not surprising that people would turn to prayer for physical healing

### The Response

As we consider the Biblical response to the problem of physical illness among readers of this epistle there were two groups impacted. The first group that is impacted among the readers of this epistle was of course the sick.

When the readers of this epistle were suffering physical illness they were not only to personally pray for their healing but they were also to enlist the elders of the church to pray.

James exhortation to the sick in verse 14 appears to be directed exclusively to the seriously ill.

The severity of the illness is implied when the sick were told to call for the elders rather than to go to the elders (Mark 5:21-24; Luke 7:2-10; John 11).

The severity of the illness is implied when the elders are told to pray over him rather than pray for him.

The second group that was impacted among the readers were the elders.

When the elders received a call from someone in their congregation who was seriously ill the responsibility of the elders was to go and to pray over them.

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I do not believe that the oil was medicinal for the simple reason the oil is not identified as the means of healing. I do not believe that it was for refreshment because I do not believe that there would be any need for refreshment beyond the actual healing which was expected. Rather I believe that the oil was simply a symbol of the healing power and presence of God as the elders prayed in the name of the Lord.

In Peter David's commentary on this epistle he said the following concerning this phrase, "The anointing is 'In the name of the Lord.' The calling out of Christ's name in baptism (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; Mt. 28:19)...and in the rites of healing and exorcism was normal in the early church (Mark 9:38; Luke 10:17; Acts 36:6,16; 4:7, 10; 9:34); this practice indicates that in calling out the name the baptizer/healer/exorcist was acting as the representative of God calling upon the power of God.

The basic responsibility of elders is the general pastoral oversight of the local church which I believe includes not only the spiritual well-being of the people but also the practical care of the people as well (Acts 11:27-30).

Christ who is the good shepherd out of a heart of compassion responded to the physical needs of those who called to him for help and the elders of the church need to share that same heart of compassion. And the elders need to respond to those who ask for help to the level of their ability and in accordance with the teachings of the Word of God.