



PLANNING A

Healing Service in Your Congregation

Many faith traditions offer a service of healing that ministers may choose to follow. If you're planning one on your own, here are some elements to consider including to address healing and wholeness of relationships with God, neighbors and self.

1 | **Sensory items for calming and centering.**

You might use a small rock and water fountain, soft music, candles, dim lighting, a basket of hand-sized prayer stones—simple items that signal calming the spirit and preparing for a prayerful experience.

2 | **Intentional gathering thoughts.**

Remind worshipers that you have come together to remember God's goodness, to be mindful of your need for God, to pray for the needs in your midst, to gather hope, and to expect God's presence.

3 | **Purposeful music.**

At some points in the healing service, you will want meditative music and at other times celebrative. Choose hymns or songs that remind worshipers that healthy faith includes healthy relationships with God, others, and self.

4 | **Scripture readings.**

Some suggestions include Psalm 42; Isaiah 61:1–2; Matthew 11:28–30; James 5:13–16.

5 | **Forms of prayer.**

Vary prayer times with spoken congregational prayer, individual intercessory prayers, silent prayers and even written prayers that may be brought forward and offered as a candle is lit or written on stones to be piled as a small monument to the service or taken home as remembrances.

6 | **Homily or brief reflection.**

The purpose is not to answer every question of why we suffer or have troubles in our lives but to affirm that you are a gathering of a faithful community turning your faces toward God to ask for wholeness for yourselves and those you care for.

7 | **Anointing with oil.**

Based on James 5:13–16, anointing with oil when praying for health has been a part of Christian tradition for 2,000 years.

Choose and order the elements that will be most meaningful in your congregation's setting. The following page offers three meditative prayers you may wish to include.

A PRAYER FOR
WHOLENESS WITH GOD

O God, who knows every burden I bear, draw me close to your heart. May every breath I take place me in your arms more securely so that I will know that your love makes my brokenness whole again.

Amen.

A PRAYER FOR
WHOLENESS WITH NEIGHBOR

O God, open my eyes so that I see the people you put in my path with your eyes of love. Slow me down enough to know what it means be the neighbor who stops to help, who listens to the nudge of your Spirit, who offers my hand in generosity of health.

Amen.

A PRAYER FOR
WHOLENESS WITH SELF

O God, fill me with thanks that when I think so little of myself you remind me I am your treasure. Fill me with gladness that you created me and receive me with rejoicing. Fill me confidence to understand myself and find greater health in the path where you lead. Amen.