

## **A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES**

### **LET HIM CALL THE ELDERS**

James 5:14” Is anyone among you sick? 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”

The littlest child knows to call 911 when there is a medical emergency. We teach them to do this as soon as practically possible. James 5:14 encourages Christians, when dealing with illness, either their own or someone else, to “call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”

God blesses you, His child, with many gifts. Some you recognize, appreciate and for them give thanks to Him. Others, you may not even be aware of. And, then there are those like the one found here in James 5:14 you may have simply overlooked and therefore not used.

Most all Christian churches have Elders (some have different names.) In many cases Elders form a board and are much more administrative in their service than engaged in the day-to-day ministry. The role of a church elder is spiritual and not just administrative. 1 Timothy and Titus show us that an elder is a spiritually mature person who function as a spiritual leader in a Christian community.

A pastor can only be in one place at a time. The larger the congregation the thinner the pastor is spread. Elders serve to assist the pastor(s) in the spiritual ministry of the congregation. They too can call upon the flock, bring God’s word to those in need, for those struggling/rejoicing pray with them. And, Peter says Elders “can anoint the sick with oil.” Granted, the anointing with oil in the name of the Lord is rarely done today, but here in Peter there is a certainty that this can be done and is efficacious.

Peter was writing to Christians who had dispersed throughout the world, many due to persecution. Pastors were not always readily available. Elders, Peter’s words would indicate, are certainly appointed by God through congregations to also provide spiritual care to His people.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for the office of Elder and for their spiritual service within the church. Bless their ministry so they too can bring the comfort and peace of the Gospel to my life and those of my fellow Christians. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Speak, O Lord, Your servant listens, Let Your Word to me come near;  
Newborn life and spirit give me, Let each promise still my fear.  
Death's dread pow'r its inward strife, Wars against Your Word of Life;  
Fill me, Lord, with love's strong fervor That I cling to You forever!

Oh, what blessing to be near You And to listen to your voice;  
Let me ever love and hear You, Let Your Word be now my choice!  
Many hardened sinners, Lord, Flee in terror at your Word;  
But to all who feel sin's burden You give words of peace and pardon.

Lord, Your words are waters living When my thirsting spirit pleads.  
Lord, Your words are bread life giving; On Your words my spirit feeds.  
Lord, Your words will be my light Through death's cold and dreary night;  
Yes, they are my sword prevailing And my cup of joy unfailing.

As I pray, dear Jesus, hear me; Let Your words in me take root.  
May Your Spirit e'er be near me That I bear abundant fruit.  
May I daily sing Your praise, From my heart glad anthems raise,  
Till my highest praise is given In the endless joy of heaven.  
(LSB 589)