

Prayer, Confession, & Healing | James 5:14–16a

Summary: Christians should respond to serious illness with prayer and, when necessary, confess their sins to one another.

1. **The situation:** serious illness. (v. 14a)

2. **The response of the sick person:** call for the elders. (v. 14b)

3. **The response of the elders:** anoint with oil and pray in the name of the Lord. (v. 14c)
 - There are three prominent views on why the elders are to anoint the sick person with oil:
 - **Sacramental view**
 - Oil conveys certain healing power.
 - The problem with this view: In James 5 it is the prayer of faith that heals, not the oil.
 - **Medicinal view**
 - The oil serves a medical purpose. For example, in Luke 10:34 the good Samaritan bandaged the injured man and *poured* oil and wine on his wounds.
 - The problem with this view: the word for anoint is never used in the Bible in medical situations. In Luke he *poured* oil on the wound. He did not anoint the man with oil.
 - **Symbolic view**
 - Anointing a person symbolizes being set apart. In the Old Testament, the priests or the kings were anointed with oil. It symbolized that they had been set apart for service to God.
 - In this view, the oil symbolizes that the sick person is being set apart for God's special attention in prayer.

4. **The promise:** The prayer of faith will save the sick person (v. 15a) and if they have committed sins, they will be forgiven. (v. 15b)

5. **The general application:** Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed. (v. 16a)