

HEALTHY DELIVERANCE MINISTRY

BY PASTOR AUTUMNE KIRKPATRICK JULY 15, 2015



What constitutes a healthy deliverance ministry from an unhealthy one? Does Hollywood media accurately represent the loving practices of a healthy church? Because of little exposure to healthy deliverance ministry, some conclude that all deliverance has either passed away with the first Apostles or is somehow not for us today, and yet many people have received freedom, health and life through the practice of healthy deliverance ministry, along with preaching the gospel, teaching and healing ministry. This quick article is a first draft aimed at encouraging those who minister deliverance or who want to learn about deliverance. Pastor Autumnne discusses aspects of a healthy vs. unhealthy deliverance ministry. These comparisons are meant as a guide, as you study the word of God and God's love. The main purpose is not to defend or debate the ministry of deliverance, but to encourage you to discern healthy and unhealthy ministry practices as you minister or receive ministry in the body of Christ. We do believe deliverance is part of the ministry in the body of Christ today.

The body of Christ is made up of many members, each with spiritual gifts, and

each person being vitally important. We are one body of people under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are not to be lording it over each other, nor seeking places of honor, nor preaching the gospel to build our own towers of babel or monuments to ourselves. This is obvious. Some churches get out of balance when they operate in pride or greed of gain or when the insecurities of individuals lead them to climb upon their fellow members of the body of Christ, and play power games in order to maintain positions of superiority, influence and control. Because of this, any type of ministry can be misused and misapplied. Actually this can be the case for any doctrine, and even good sound doctrine can be practiced in an abusive fashion.

The essential doctrines of Christ remain the same today as they were in the early church, but people also look to man made rules or legislation or to influential people as their point of reference for faith and practice.

Modern day Pharisee-ism exists, so we pay a penalty when we bypass vital living relationship with God and rely too heavily on standards and rules. We also have doctrines that are not always part of every

denomination's practice and theology in the present, and differences of opinion as to what was just cultural in the 1st century church and what is applicable to us today. One reason we have so many different denominations is that issues of doctrine and practice were hotly debated and people differed as they codified their own modern laws of faith and practice. Whether they are called standards, guidelines, suggestions or by another name, this is true.

We commonly believe our salvation is in Jesus and what Jesus accomplished on the cross, through his death and resurrection, and our belief and profession of the same. Beyond that, how to live as a believer today before God is a matter of your heart and mine, though many people will happily tell us what we need to do or not do to get saved and stay saved and live pleasing God.

My first encouragement to you is to know the Bible for yourself and have a personal relationship with God, so that you can, in context and in God's love, check out any possible hogwash someone is trying to sell you. But don't rule out the possibility that legalism or human influence has

not already caused you to come to some conclusions that may need some updating when examined from God's word and His love.

Jesus and the New Testament Church practiced what today is commonly termed "deliverance ministry," but generations of people have been raised on media mythology about the spiritual world, which is a grave distortion of the truth in God's word.

Even though the world is intensely attracted to spiritual and supernatural things because they have a type of power, most people live in this "twilight zone" of on the one hand not really believing such things exist, and on the other hand, having such a poor reference from all the TV programming, that they have mixed feelings about the verity of phenomena that they can't see with their eyes, or measure with a scientific instrument. Some do believe in the spiritual world and deem everything spiritual benevolent, and this is just not so. So when the Bible mentions the natural and the spiritual man, many people just don't know what to think.

Rather than get wrapped up in what is sometimes hotly debated, we discuss how to identify healthy vs. unhealthy ministry. Our goal is to encourage you toward healthy deliverance ministry. At a later date, perhaps we can go through the Bible and look at the examples where Jesus or

others did deliverance, and share how this ministry is relevant in the Church today.

For those that accept that God's kingdom is not of this world, let's ask who supplies our understanding of this spiritual world that cannot be seen with the naked eye? In most cases, TV media, Hollywood and word of mouth do. The word of mouth comes from people who may not have taken an objective view of the numerous Bible examples of legitimate deliverance ministry. Our first impressions are often these associations of science fiction, aliens, new age fantasies and other fabricated distortions. These can influence the believer's impression of what spiritual and supernatural things are. And they have often made the legitimate ministry of deliverance seem like a farce or some type of freak show. Even believers sometimes take their cues from these misrepresentations.

Like the fish in the bowl, you need to know what has influenced the water you've been in so, that you can step back and learn and thank and evaluate for yourself. So once you understand that there is a legitimate deliverance ministry apart from all the "freak show" blockbuster antics or one line statements that some religious leaders make, then how do we address healthy vs abusive or unhealthy deliverance ministry?

True, loving deliverance was a part of Jesus' ministry, the disciples ministry, the

ministry of the 70, part of the early New Testament church and is part of the ministry of the body of Christ today, as are healing and preaching the gospel. Our purpose in writing about this is to help you to examine the distinction between healthy and unhealthy deliverance practices, so that we can further clarify:

Healthy Deliverance Ministry

1. Is voluntary, cooperative teamwork
2. Is done with the motive of love
3. Does not label people, but sees spiritual issues as lovingly separate from the person
4. Includes patience, kindness, teaching
5. Does not require angry language or verbal forcefulness towards people
6. Does not require coercion or manipulation
7. Is supported by more than just theological "proof text," but by the Bible and by the positive fruit that comes as a result of its practice.
8. The minister considers themselves an equal member of the body of Christ with the person being ministered to. (i.e. no abuses of authority)
9. Does not include any hype, pushing or drama. Does not even require any physical touch.
10. True "discernment of spirits" takes place in that words people believe they hear from God are checked out, and no one is backed against a wall. If the person

receiving ministry thinks this might be an issue, deliverance takes place in a spirit of love and mutual cooperation. If the person does not, there is no pressure.

11. God gets the credit for the good things that happen.
12. Your ability to hear from God is seen as on the same level as other members of the body of Christ ability to hear from God.
13. You are validated, listened to and encouraged as a person.
14. You are welcome to ask questions and are not made to feel bad for having them.
15. There is an ongoing environment of mutual respect and care.
16. You are valued and seen as a vital, essential member of the body of Christ.
17. Is done as part of other ministry, with your cooperation and at your request because you would like deliverance ministry, as part of the other ministry you are wanting for changes in your own life.
18. Your contributions are welcomed and appreciated.
19. Even if there is valid and truthful insight on the part of the minister that you do not see, there is no forceful pressure for you to comply or agree.
20. Trusts that God and the Holy Spirit are working in your life, and that you do not need someone to act as a substitute Holy Spirit on your behalf.
21. Is done with love and by the leading of the Holy Spirit.
22. Genuine care and love for you as a person is part of this, not just lip service.

Unhealthy Abusive Deliverance Ministry Or Exorcism

1. May take place without the consent or agreement of the individual
2. May involve restraint or undue pressure or influence
3. Can include blaming the individual
4. Can be used to label people, and is used sometimes to control people.
5. Can involve shame or manipulation
6. May involve divination (wrongly reading people's minds)
7. May involve unwelcome physical contact (shaking, pushing...etc)
8. Uses Hype and drama
9. Uses verbal force (yelling, loud voice)
10. Abuses in authority take place often (i.e. someone steps on your toe, then tells you "you have a spirit of bitterness" and that is used against you)
11. Abuses in gender often take place (i.e. women labeled "Jezebel" or men labeled "Passive")
12. You are required to submit to another person's "discernment of spirits" without veto power of saying "no" to what does not fit for you.
13. The minister may have an agenda to be "the only one" or "one of the few" that knows how to help you.
14. Human power and control, oneupmanship, domination, creation of dependency and other unhealthy dynamics are at play.
15. You may be labeled, discredited, degraded, manipulated or pressured.



16. Your ability to think and see the issues in your life may be judged as wanting.
17. Questions are perceived as lack of respect or honor to the one ministering.
18. You are judged, condemned, blamed.
19. Is often done with the express purpose in mind to elicit behavior change in you to meet another person's desires for how you should feel or act.
20. Is done for motives of gain or power or some other wrong motive.
21. Does not allow you time to consider and weigh the validity of insights shared.
22. You are placed in a position of disadvantage and being beneath the one ministering to you, so your opinion and input is valued less.
23. The ministry is more about the minister, ministry, doctrine, reputation or "being right" more than about loving and respecting you as a person, and as a child of God.

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Possible Resources for further study:

Holy Bible

[Others to be added soon]