



The Local Church as a Center for Health and Healing

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CENTER is a term we periodically use in our modern day world to describe a place that has developed a level of expertise in the provision of some type of service. Often such centers are well known for their work in the communities or geographic areas they serve.

But how does the term CENTER apply as we think about the health and healing role of the local church? Matthew 4:23-25 (NCV) may be a good place to start.

Jesus went everywhere in Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the kingdom of heaven, and healing all the people's diseases and sicknesses. The news about Jesus spread all over Syria, and people brought all the sick to him. They were suffering from different kinds of diseases. Some were in great pain, some had demons, some were epileptics, and some were paralyzed. Jesus healed all of them. Many people from Galilee, the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and the land across the Jordan River followed him.

From this passage we can conclude that in addition to teaching and preaching, healing was a big part of what Jesus did. He healed ALL KINDS of diseases and He was effective. News of His healing work was spreading and people were flocking to Him. While the historic Christ was "on the road" and did not operate out of a single location, one could consider Him a Center for Health and Healing.

So if the Christ was (and is) a Center for Health and Healing, is not the local church, one of the clearest embodiments of the living Christ, also to be a Center for Health and Healing? The current reality is that while most churches would be considered Centers for Teaching (i.e. the principles of faith) and Preaching (i.e. the Good News of Jesus Christ) it is unlikely most churches would be considered Centers for Health and Healing. But for all kinds of diseases and illnesses, *there is* something meaningful the local church can offer and needs to offer. Despite the wonderful services as offered by our modern day health care industry, significant gaps in several areas continue to exist for the rich and poor, and the insured or uninsured. Examples of these wide gaps exist in mental health, addiction, obesity, and dental care.

Most local churches are already doing some very important work in health, and the road to becoming a Center for Health and Healing may not be as long as it may seem. Please consider contacting Church Health Services. We can tailor a program for your church that meets you where you are, can help you achieve your intended result, and is consistent with your specific faith tradition.