

THE INTERNATIONAL  
**ORDER of ST. LUKE**  
— THE PHYSICIAN —



## Running a Chapter

### Introduction

Members of the Order of St. Luke believe healing to be an essential part of the teaching of our Lord Jesus as set out in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. They desire to bring this teaching to its rightful place within Christian churches through teaching and through co-operation with those Clergy and Ministers and members of the Medical Profession who trust in the mercy and love of God.

Since the beginnings of the Church small groups have repeatedly been instrumental in times of spiritual renewal. The Order of St. Luke recognises this God-given means and uses one of its ancient and exciting formats — the Chapter meeting! But first, a word about our 'vision'.



## A Vision of Healing

For any Chapter to get off the ground, it needs to have a clear and exciting reason for its existence. This is nothing less than the renewal of our journey into Christian living, of life as God intended it to be!

Healing is about restoring and establishing harmonious relationships with all: with God, with ourselves, with others and with the physical world. The Bible has a word for it — 'shalom'. Although the word (Hb: *shalom*, Gk: *eirene*) appears hundreds of times in

scripture (a great deal of which is in the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch or *Torah*), it has been largely overlooked. The Hebrew word 'shalom' is understood around the world to mean 'peace'. However, peace is only one small part of its full meaning. According to Strong's Concordance 7965, Shalom means completeness, soundness, welfare, peace. It is an overall state of good welfare for the body, mind and spirit. We need to express our desire for shalom in each other and ourselves as often and as strongly as possible.

Our physical and spiritual life is based on the life, teaching, death and rising again of the Messiah (Christ) Jesus. His sacrificial death is the perfect sacrifice for the atonement of sin and the salvation of men. Jesus is "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). His cruel death opened the way for reconciliation with God and the reconciliation of all broken relationships.

So shalom is a vision of life as God always wanted it to be. THE ORDER OF ST. LUKE THE PHYSICIAN consists of Christians who feel driven to make the ministry of healing a regular part of their life, their vocation and to desire to restore it to a place of importance in every church's ministry.

Purpose driven small groups or Chapters are the ideal grass roots catalysts for such change.

## The Origin of 'Chapters'

The word is said to be derived from the chapter of a rule book. It is a custom under the Rule of Saint Benedict that monks or nuns gather daily for a meeting to discuss monastery business, hear a sermon or lecture, or receive instructions from the abbot/



abess, and as the meeting begins with a reading of a chapter from the Rule, the meeting itself acquired the name "chapter", and the place where it is held, "chapter house" or "chapter room".

The chapter-house was a focal point of monastic life. It was here that the monks gathered for an hour each day to attune themselves to their common life and purpose and to receive instructions for the day's work and ministry.

The Chapter has stood the test of time for 1,500 years so it should be no surprise to find that the Order of St Luke has adopted it to help define its way of working.

## Running a Chapter

When Benedictines attended Chapter their focus was on 'The Rule', a basic guide for Christian community life which continues to be followed by every Benedictine monastery and convent in the world today.

The Order of St. Luke also has a Rule that members live by, a plan for living a life of healing ministry. As Chapters gather the Rule is affirmed and lived out with the encouragement and support of other members.

Let's see how this can look, taking the Rule as our pattern for meeting and gleaning Shared Wisdom From Around The Order.

## The Rule of the Order

this may be ordered from our UK Director. If you would like to provide your own studies a list of Healings in the Bible and a set of Discussion Questions to help guide the group can be found near the end of this booklet.

### 1. **I WILL SEEK such health of mind and body as will make me capable of maximum vocation.**

Our focus on healing should not forget that we are to be examples of wholeness ourselves. However this does not mean that we are completely physically well at all times. The reason we gather is that we are all imperfect learners striving to help each other to experience life. We

should therefore pray for one another to be healed spiritually, emotionally, bodily, and in our relationships with others. Developing this together will be an exciting journey and in turn will inform our ministry to others.

So minister to each other! You can use a formal healing service from the Order's Manual, your denomination's material or you can grow your own style. All good practice for outside ministry later on!

### 2. **I WILL CULTIVATE whatever gifts or talents God has given me for the work of Healing, by study and service.**

Chapters should strive to create an atmosphere of love that is conducive to individuals growing a healing ministry. This means providing an environment that is safe, steady, and secure, where those who believe they are called to this kind of work can feel free to launch out with hope and humour!

It would be wise to invite and welcome all people who come. Chapters should seek members from a variety of church congregations in order to have an understanding of a range of Christian traditions.

### **3. I WILL TAKE communion regularly.**

Taking Communion can take the Chapter to the heart of healing - Christ's love and his work of salvation for all.

Where this is not possible the Chapter can still remember it's meaning together with each member a communicant within his or her own tradition.

We should indulge in a spiritual communion, a plain acknowledgement of God's love for us all and an act of worship which demonstrates clearly our love for him as well.

### **4. I WILL SHARE the healings in the Gospels with others by personal witness, by circulating healing literature and by contribution to the work of the Order according to my ability.**

Chapters are not an end in themselves. Instead, Chapters should put into practice what is learned and embrace all situations where God calls us out to minister His healing love to others. Their purpose is to drive change in the wider Church and to return it to the ministry of salvation that includes spirit, mind and body - healing.

Chapters can work for an increased awareness of the healing ministry within the Church by providing:

- ❖ Teaching from Scripture, books, the Order's 'Healing Ways', personal testimony and Healing missions.
- ❖ Workshops or seminars.
- ❖ Healing/prayer retreat weekends,

Reach out to other churches, and healing groups in your community and to other OLS chapters through any means God makes available to you, such as word of mouth, telephone, mailings, email, church bulletins, newspapers and newsletters.

### **7. I WILL ATTEMPT all this so far as I am able with the help of God.**

We are co-workers with God, and at the end of a Chapter meeting there should be tangible 'actions' we should undertake. It may be worth taking a note of these, gently encouraging each other between meetings to carry them through, sharing results at the next meeting and giving thanks to God. What a way to start the next meeting!

## **Into Practice**

Putting all this together, a typical Chapter meeting that corresponds to our Rule will look like this...

- a) Prayer time, listening for God
- b) Read Scripture and study healing together

- c) Ministering Shalom wholeness to each other
- d) Encourage and develop each other's ministry of healing
- e) Worship time that remembers God's love for us
- f) Plan strategy for promoting healing in local area
- g) Commitment to actions!

This pattern of meeting is common to mainstream Christianity. Looking back, this is not so far from the simple formula of the Benedictines themselves: prayer, study and work! Its threads can be found among Franciscans, in modern house groups and cell groups, and are common elements in church worship itself. What makes the Chapters of the Order of St Luke distinct is its insistence on making the ministry of healing an important part of their Christian life, their desire to bring it into the mainstream of churches who have let it slip and to live the life of the Kingdom of God as given to us by Jesus.

## Starting a New Chapter

The purpose of the OSL is to work within the Church to grow and develop a healing ministry. This is done by extending an invitation to members and others who are interested in the healing ministry of Jesus to join together in a small Study Group or Chapter.

If you don't belong to a large church and are having difficulty getting a Chapter started, you can start an OSL Study Group. Many Chapters have started this way. At the end of the study, the members will know if they are called to a ministry of healing.

Any new Chapter must find its call from God. It may begin with one person or with a group of individuals whom God has touched and urged into healing ministry. It is birthed in prayer as that person or group seeks God's will about the shape of the healing ministry to be established. It continues with a commitment to meet together regularly for prayer, study and work. The group does not need to be large in number, but its members must be committed to God and his will, and to each other.

**If you believe God has called you to form a Chapter of the Order of St. Luke the Physician, you should contact OSL's UK Director.**

Find a chaplain for your group. Chapters are led by a chaplain who shall be responsible for the spiritual leadership of the group. If you don't already have an ordained clergy person committed to the group, pray for God to raise up a chaplain from the clergy in your area. It is best to have someone who is committed to conducting a regular healing service for your chapter. In certain areas where there are no ordained Chaplains, it shall be open to the Council to approve and appoint suitably qualified lay people to act as a Chaplain, either men or women.

The attributes of a Chaplain are a sense of calling, love and concern for people, commitment to God's healing ministry, a capacity to exercise the authority of Jesus to enable and encourage others to minister, patience with those who are over exuberant, experience of God's healing power in their own life, and a sense of humour.

*Elect group officers:* You may need to elect a convener, a secretary and a treasurer to meet for the purpose of planning and business. Other people may be added to the team, as need arises.

*Frequency:* Once a month is a common meeting schedule, although the healthiest chapters seem to be those who meet weekly, which keeps members in closer contact with their support group.

*Venue:* Because the order is interdenominational, the chapter may meet in a church, other public place or a member's home. Chapters are not necessarily managed by the churches that sponsor them.

## Study Questions

There are many forms of study of the Bible. One that comes to us from centuries ago is '*Lectio Divina*' or Divine Reading. It is a tried and tested approach to meditating on passages from the Bible. It's a way to take a reading deep into our hearts and lives. As well as using this method on our own it can take on a new dimension when used in a group setting like a Bible Study or Chapter.

*Lectio:* Notice the theme of the Bible passage. What title, for instance, would you give to this text?

*Meditatio:* Listen to the Holy Spirit minister God's Word to you. What is the one word or phrase that especially touches your heart?

*Oratio:* Enter the passage and offer a prayer. What emotions, personal struggle, or longing in your life is stirred by the Scripture? What do you need share with God in prayer? Be specific.

*Contemplatio:* Receive from the Lord. Simply "be with" God's presence as you open yourself to a deeper hearing of the Word of God. What personal invitation does Christ have for you?

The form of study is very much up to you. '*Lectio Divina*' is offered as an alternative to start with until you develop your own style and method. '

## Healings in the Gospels

You will find here a list of healings from the gospels with a reference to the first verse of each passage. The first table covers the healings encounters with Jesus. The second table lists healings in group settings. The third table presents general statements concerning Jesus as healer.

### Healing Encounters with Jesus

No	Description	Matt	Mark	Luke	John
1	Nobleman's son				4:46
2	Man with unclean spirit		1:21	4:31	
3	Leper	8:1	1:40	5:12	
4	Man at the pool of Bethesda				5:2
5	Centurion's servant	8:5		7:2	
6	Widow's deceased son			7:11	
7	Demoniac(s) at Gadara	8:28	5:1	8:26	

8	Jairus' deceased daughter	9:18	5:21	8:40	
9	Woman with a haemorrhage	9:20	5:25	8:43	
10	Two blind men	9:27			
11	Possessed mute	9:32			
12	Man with the withered hand	12:9	3:1	6:6	
13	Man blind, dumb and possessed	12:22		11:14	
14	Daughter of Cannanite	15:21	7:24		
15	Deaf man with impediment		7:32		
16	Simon Peter's mother-in-law		8:14	1:29	4:38
17	Mary Magdalene & others		8:2		
18	Blind man at Bethsaida		8:22		
29	Paralytic, the man with palsy		9:1	2:1	5:17
20	Epileptic boy	17:14	9:14	9:37	
21	Man born blind				9:1
22	Woman bent double			13:10	
23	Man with dropsy			14:1	
24	Lazarus				11:1
25	Ten Lepers			17:11	
26	Blind Bartimaeus	20:29	10:46	18:35	
27	Malchus			22:50	

### Healings in Group Settings

No.	Description	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John
1	At Simon Peter's	8:16	1:34	4:40	
2	After healing the leper			5:15	
3	Following John's inquiry	11:4		7:21	
4	Near Capernaum	12:15	3:10	6:18	
5	At Nazareth	13:58	6:5		
6	Before feeding the 5,000	14:14		9:11	
7	At Geneseret	14:35	6:53		
8	Before feeding 4,000	15:30			
9	Beyond Jordan	19:2			
10	In the Temple	21:14			

### General Statements Concerning Jesus as Healer

No.	Description	Matt.	Mark	Luke	John	Acts
1	All kinds of sickness	4:23				
2	Every sickness and disease	9:35				
3	All who touched him		6:56			
4	All who were oppressed					10:38