



healing (Acts 9:12, 17; 28:8). And finally, on two occasions, it is associated with praying for someone at the beginning of their journey with Christ. It is linked to their baptism but is a separate activity:

In Acts 8:12-17, people in the city of Samaria become Christians and are baptised. Then, on a separate occasion, the Apostles come to Samaria to 'lay hands on' (and pray for) these believers.

Similarly, in Acts 19:1—6 we learn that Paul baptised some people who'd received Christ and then laid hands on them in prayer.

The current practise of Confirmation comes from these two examples. It is a helpful opportunity to be prayed for, with the laying on of hands, by an elder (bishop) in the church of which we are part—the Church of England. For that reason it is a helpful step for people to take if it is appropriate for them.

What should I do if I'd like to be Confirmed?

Confirmation services have to be arranged quite a long time in advance and cannot take place at St Mildred's more than once every 18 months or so.

If you'd like to be confirmed speak to one of the leadership team and they will let you know when the next opportunity will be.

Those who wish to be confirmed must participate in a preparation course beforehand. Details of this will be made available in advance.

St Mildred's Church



What is Confirmation?

Introduction

This leaflet is a brief introduction to the Anglican practise of Confirmation. The purpose is to enable individuals to decide if they would like to be confirmed, and to explain the service.

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is a service at which a bishop of a diocese attends in order to lay hands on, and pray for, people. A Confirmation Service happens only once for each person and is not repeated.

In our diocese, the Diocese of Southwark, Confirmation is considered applicable to those 10 years old and over. Those wishing to be confirmed must have been previously baptised, either as a baby or when older.

What is its purpose?

Confirmation can be important and helpful for people for two reasons. Firstly, to give an opportunity for those who have not previously had one to openly and publicly declare their faith in Christ. This is in line with the expectation of the Bible in places such as Romans 10:9.

Secondly, the service is an opportunity to be prayed for by an elder of our church (in this case the Bishop). The Bishop lays hands on each person confirmed and prays, “*Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit. Amen.*” This is a prayer that the Holy Spirit would strengthen us in our walk with Christ.

Do I need to have been confirmed to take Communion?

No. We believe that being baptised is important before taking Communion because baptism is the sign of beginning our journey with Christ. Communion forms part of our experience of continuing that journey begun at baptism. It makes sense that the experience of beginning the journey (Baptism) comes before the experience of continuing that journey (Communion). Jesus commands the Church to baptise people (Matthew 28:19) and to take Communion (Luke 22:19). Baptism and Communion are, therefore, not optional for Christians.

However, Jesus did not give us a similar command to confirm people. Therefore, whilst Confirmation is a helpful practise, drawn from the Bible (see below), it is not required of Christians because there is no direct command about this from Jesus.

Does the Bible teach the practise of Confirmation?

This is an important question. The service of Confirmation comes from the practise of the “laying on of hands” which is described a number of times in the Bible. It is mentioned in Hebrews 6:2 as one of the ‘elementary teachings’ of the faith. “Elementary” means something we learn about at the beginning of our journey with Christ.

When we search the rest of the Bible for the phrase “laying on of hands” used in Hebrews 6:2, we find a number of examples. Sometimes the practise is associated with praying for someone to appoint them to leadership (Acts 6:6, 1 Tim 5:22). Sometimes it is praying for someone to be equipped for ministry (Acts 13:3; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). Sometimes it is praying with someone for