



Dear Friends,

Several people asked me for a copy of the 'hands prayer' we prayed last Sunday.

It was not an original, I hasten to say, but the work of Carolyn Brown who produces wonderful resources for all-age worship. I've included it at the bottom of this email.

Over the last two weeks we've been thinking about our shared Christian calling, as 1 Timothy 4:14 says, *"Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands..."*

"Ultimately," Rachel Held Evans says in Searching for Sunday, "all are commissioned. All are called. All belong to the holy order of God's beloved. That hands that pass the peace can pass a meal to the man on the street. The hands that cup together to receive Christ in the bread will extend to receive Christ in the immigrant, the refugee, the lovely or the sick....Hands sanctify all sorts of things and make them holy."

I really like what David Deal's colleague said, on entering ministry (Dave mentioned this in his sermon on the 1st March), that his ambition as a pastor, was to abolish the laity! He wanted to dedicate his ministry to facilitating others in ministry – to facilitating the idea of the priesthood of all believers.

Sometimes, however, people are not that excited about the priesthood of all believers. To some it sounds like work, and they have more than enough work to do. Or it sounds like more responsibility, and they already feel burdened by the responsibilities they have.

Anglican priest and author, Barbara Brown Taylor, writes, *"I will never forget the woman who listened to my speech on the ministry of the laity as God's best hope for the world and said, "I'm sorry, but I don't want to be that important." Like many who sit beside her at*

church, she hears the invitation to ministry as an invitation to do more. Or she hears the invitation to ministry as an invitation to be more – to be more generous, more loving, more religious. No one has ever introduced her to the idea that her ministry might involve being just who she already is and doing just what she already does, with one difference: namely, that she understands herself to be God’s person in and for the world.”

That is what it means to be priests together! Being who we already are, doing what we already do, with one difference - that we do it together for God!

Grace and peace, fellow priests!

Belinda

Intergenerational Prayer of Confession: Hands

God, you created our hands beautiful and capable but...

Too often we use them to grab what we want

We ball them up into fists to hit.

We use them to hug only ourselves.

We hide them behind our backs

pretending there is nothing we could do to help when we know there is.

So, we turn our hands up to you asking for forgiveness.

Forgive all the bad we have done with our hands.

Wash our hands and make them clean.

Lead us to use our hands well.

Teach us to open our hands to share with others.

Give us the power to shake hands with our neighbours.

Show us how to join hands with neighbours to build your kingdom of love.

We pray in Jesus’ name and remembering his loving hands.

Amen

— written by Carolyn Brown, from her excellent **Worshipping with Children** website. <http://www.worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com/>