

“She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors” Mark chapter 5 verse 26

More than that, she had spent all her money on treatment to no avail and her problem had even got worse. What had she suffered for twelve years?

She had an issue of blood from the womb. Can you imagine how mortifying multiple visits to the the doctor for such a complaint would have been for a first century Jewish woman? She would have had to submit to embarrassing examinations and procedures that may have caused considerable pain and discomfort and evidently exacerbated her condition. We might even speculate on the social and religious stigma she might have suffered.

She didn't even want to approach Jesus directly, but came up behind him, reached through the crowd and simply touched the hem of his garment (it takes some courage, doesn't it, when asked to go for prayer for healing, to tell the person praying for you what is wrong when it is something very personal?)

When she touched Jesus's garment, she was healed. Jesus knew something had happened. He could have left it at that and let her remain safely anonymous. But Jesus wanted to know who she was. He wasn't just interested in healing her, he was interested in her as a person. Perhaps he was deliberately calling her to an eternal ministry in the pages of the gospel, encouraging people with embarrassing, personal and stigmatising complaints the world over to reach out to God in faith

In any case, after suffering for twelve years, she went away whole.

But suffering under the care of doctors is something that many people still do today. Doctors, for all their compassion and medical skills are still just human beings with limited resources and knowledge. They begin with a set of symptoms, not always well articulated, and they have to discover what the underlying cause of those symptoms is and then treat it, if they are able. We, driven by a culture and expectation of rights and entitlement, often behave as though they ought to be able to provide a cure as easily as we might go and choose a tube of toothpaste from the ludicrous array of the same stuff in different tubes on the supermarket shelves (excuse the little rant there).

When that doesn't happen we say (and you'd be amazed how often Christians do this) “Well, all we can do now is pray”, and then half heartedly and with an air of resignation, offer up a few despairing words to God , concluding in the end “Well, that didn't work, either.”

Let's spend a few days looking at the people who sought Jesus for healing. That might encourage us to be a little more immediate, forthright and confident in our approach to God when we are suffering.

## Prayer

Father, pleas forgive me that I so often appeal to you as a last resort when all else has failed, and that, when I do, my prayers are less than faithful and expectant. Please help me, as we consider people who have come to you for healing, to be built up in faith so that we make you our first port of call when we are in need. Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*