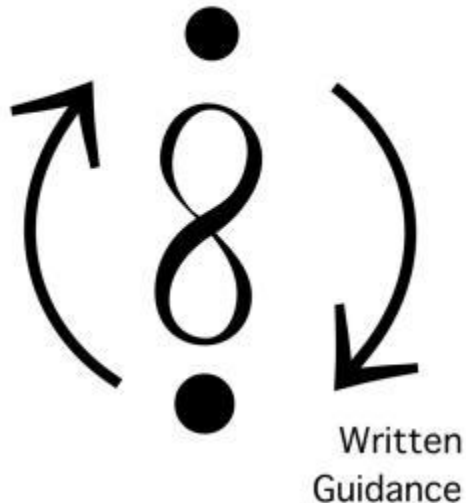


ES&F 2 Way Prayer Format 1-3-2021

Two Way Prayer



Welcome everyone to our Tenth and Eleventh Step Guidance Meeting. My name is _____ and I'll be your leader for this meeting. If you are new to our group, welcome! We are so glad that you are here!

The format of this group is inspired by the Guidance Meetings run by Dr. Bob, Ann Smith and Bill W. during the summer of 1935.

Let's open with a moment of silence, to invite God into our hearts, and to pray for the recovery of everyone in this group, followed by the Serenity Prayer.



Serenity Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Leader: Thy will not mine be done!

This group is committed to helping each other find a deeper and more personal experience of God through an enhanced practice of the last three Steps of the 12-Step program. We do this by following the original program of AA, based on the [Oxford Group](#), which included the principles of the [4 Absolutes](#) and the practice of written guidance or 2 Way Prayer.

The 4 Absolutes were the guiding spiritual principles used to determine if one's decisions, thoughts or actions are in alignment with God-will or motivated by self-will. These ideals called for: Absolute Honesty, Absolute Unselfishness, Absolute Purity, and Absolute Love. Although recognized as impossible to attain, when the 4 standards are maintained faithfully as goals, they become powerful transformers of conduct, character, and consciousness.

Honesty "Is it true or is it false?"	Unselfishness "How will this affect the other fellow?"
Purity "Is it right or is it wrong?"	Love "Is it ugly or is it beautiful?"

I've asked a friend to read the 4 Absolutes:

My name is _____ and these are the 4 Absolutes:

ABSOLUTE HONESTY: Not deceiving others or ourselves in word, deed and thoughts.

ABSOLUTE PURITY (FORGIVENESS): Freedom from being controlled by our desires or our fears and insecurities.

ABSOLUTE UNSELFISHNESS: Seeking what is right and true ahead of what I want in every situation. A commitment to fairness and justice and a willingness to share.

ABSOLUTE LOVE (FAITH): The feeling of affection, benevolence or devotion created through acts of selfless unconditional giving to another person according to one's highest spiritual values. Love is a commitment to be forgiving, compassionate, responsible and accountable for our actions for the purpose of nurturing our own or another's spiritual growth.

[Please note that the 4 Absolutes are not specifically mentioned in the AA Big Book. Bill Wilson obliquely referenced them in their opposite self-will form. Rather than focusing on honesty, unselfishness, purity and love, the AA Big Book, asks us to examine where self-will fails us: where were we selfishness, self-seeking, dishonesty and afraid?]

(DO NOT READ CHART BELOW UNLESS THERE ARE NEWCOMERS WHO ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE 4 ABSOLUTES)

For reference purposes, I find it easier to list and define the 4 Absolutes by using the chart below. Here is the [link](#) to more information posted on the blog.

4 Absolutes & the AA Big Book: God's will vs Self- will

4 Absolutes	AA BB	Definition	Question	Application
Honesty	Dishonesty	Not deceiving others or ourselves in word, deed and thoughts	Is it true or false?	Am I being honest?
Purity OR Forgiveness	Resentment	Freedom from being controlled by our desires or our fears and insecurities.	Before acting, reacting or making a decision: Is it right or wrong?	Are my motives pure?
Unselfishness	Selfishness <i>Other forms of selfishness include: self-importance, self-interest, self-pity, self-seeking, self-consciousness, self-indulgence, self-centeredness, self-sufficiency, self-will.</i>	A commitment to fairness and justice and a willingness to share. Seeking what is right and true ahead of what I want in every situation.	How will this affect the other person?	Am I acting unselfishly? Is this self-serving or to serve others?
Love (Faith)	Fear	The feeling of affection, benevolence or devotion created through acts of selfless unconditional giving to another person according to one's highest spiritual values. Love is a commitment to be forgiving, compassionate, responsible and accountable for our actions for the purpose of nurturing our own or another's spiritual growth.	Is it ugly (fear-based) or beautiful (faith-based)?	Will this strengthen or weaken my spiritual life? Am I seeking meaning, wholeness and purpose?

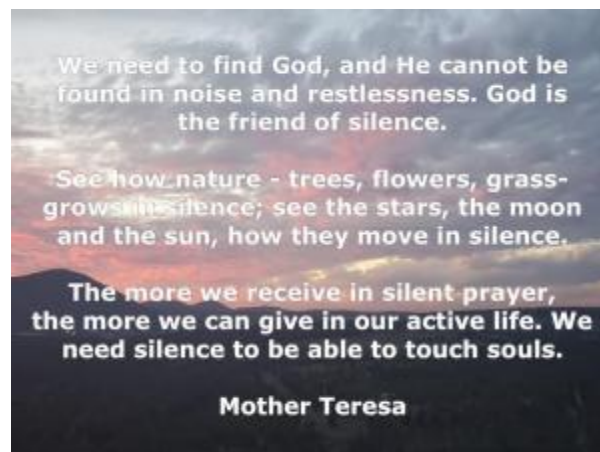
I've asked a friend to read Steps 10, 11 and 12 from the Original Manuscript:

My name is _____ and these are the last three Steps of the 12-Step Program:

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Step 12: Having had a spiritual experience as the result of this course of action, we tried to carry this message to others, especially alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



FOR NEW MEMBERS: INTRODUCTION TO 2 WAY PRAYER/ WRITTEN GUIDANCE

The Oxford Group believed in preparing for one's day by getting quiet and tapping into the intuitive voice that resided in each person in order to make "conscious contact" and receive "guidance."

During quiet time, one spends time in silent contemplation to listen to one's conscience or "inner voice" for direction and correction. Any thoughts, ideas and impressions that come into one's mind are written

down, in order to free one's attention for the next thought. Afterwards, one then "tests" each thought using the 4 Standards to distinguish thoughts from God from the voice of the ego.

In the practice of 2 Way Prayer, one discusses any guidance received with other group members. The "God thoughts" are then acted upon and the "self-thoughts" are discarded.

It was believed that it was important to act on what is revealed though silence, as a voice which is repeatedly ignored eventually becomes silent.

CONTINUE FORMAT HERE:

Meditation, in the language of the Big Book – means concentrated thought, specifically about what happened over the previous 24 hours and what needs correcting, and about what one is going to do over the next 24 hours.

In this group, we will spend time in silence and listen for "the still, small Voice" that is within each of us. Within the silence, we have an opportunity to become closer to God and gain a deeper awareness of His presence within.

If you come as a skeptic, please know that many of us also shared your honest doubts. But we have found that a willingness to live life by the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love along with a sincere effort to practice Quiet Time, has led us into a new, and often transforming, relationship with our Creator.

The God of our understanding has become the God of our experience. The Creator who once seemed distant and detached has become our closest Friend and Guide. We hope it may be so for you as well.

OPTIONAL: SEVENTH TRADITION

In accordance with the Seventh Tradition, our group is self-supporting. Your donation will help us meet our expenses and carry the message. Please send your 7th Tradition contributions through PayPal or Zelle to:

_____. Please contact me directly if you have any questions.)

Our meeting lasts for approximately one hour. We generally share portions of our Two-Way Prayer journals with the group. All sharing is completely voluntary and confidential. We ask for this to be respected by one and all.

Please have a blank sheet of paper and a pencil or pen to write with.

OPTIONAL: I have asked _____ to read today's daily meditation.

OPTIONAL: read How to Listen to God or instructions for how to practice 2 Way Prayer.

THE FORMAT HAS ROOM FOR FLEXIBILITY. FOR INSTANCE, ONE CAN READ THE WHOLE PAMPHLET FROM HOW TO LISTEN TO GOD OR THE INSTRUCTIONS IN WRITTEN GUIDANCE & WESTERN MEDITATION PRIOR TO QUIET TIME. OR, READ THE FIRST 5 INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO 2 WAY PRAYER, AND THEN READ THE REST OF THE INSTRUCTIONS PRIOR TO SHARING WRITTEN GUIDANCE.

OPTIONAL: play quiet and meditative music. Although ideally it is better to sit in silence, when not in a face-to-face group, it is sometimes helpful to have music playing in the background during 2 Way Prayer.

We will now sit in silence for 10 minutes in order to listen to and record our guidance.

10 MINUTES OF SILENCE

If anyone needs more time, please raise your hand.

NEXT IS OUR TIME FOR SHARING THE GUIDANCE WE RECEIVED.

We will now go around the room. I ask that you share only what you have written without embellishment or explanation. This is called “two-way prayer.”

Before sharing, please test each thought using the Four Standards of HONESTY, PURITY, UNSELFISHNESS and LOVE to separate God thoughts from self-thoughts. Share only those thoughts that pass this test. If you haven’t written anything down, please pass.

Crosstalk is permitted during our meetings. However, please listen attentively to the other person. Set your intension to focus on supporting their spiritual growth and development.

While one member is sharing, we invite you to write down any thoughts or guidance you may receive while listening to that person’s share. We have found that one person’s guidance may hold important meaning for others as well.

[SUGGESTIONS FOR PROVIDING SPIRITUAL FEEDBACK, ONLY WITH THE PERSON’S CONSENT:

Approach listening with a spirit of reverence. Ask God for His guidance to speak through you for the person who is sharing.

As you listen to other people’s Guidance, visualize being in God’s Presence and for example, you could silently ask yourself: “Please God, what do I say to Your child in front of me?” Then, write down whatever comes to mind after that.

OR, try using the feedback method using in the [Steel on Steel Group](#): “When you said _____, I noticed/ was struck by/ felt/ got an image of: _____.” Followed by input in the form of “**is it possible that...?**” Or, “**would you consider...?**” questions.

These questions are used to softly address our natural resistance to change and our tendency to respond defensively when challenged.]

WE DO NOT INTERPRET ONE ANOTHER’S GUIDANCE.

Who would like to start?

SHARE “TWO-WAY PRAYER” First person shares guidance / members then share how they may relate to that / anyone is free to pass

3-WAY PRAYER:

Did anyone hear something during the sharing session that he or she feels was directed toward them in addition to the person who shared it? If so, please tell the group what you heard. This is called “three-way prayer”—the “Spirit of the Universe” speaking to us through others. If this has happened to you, please raise your hand.

SHARE “THREE-WAY PRAYER”

OPTIONAL: SHARING GUIDANCE: The leader (or another person) now shares some of his/her guidance selected from their last week’s writings. Then, go around the circle inviting other or all members to share

CLOSING:

Our time is almost up. Are there any announcements?

If you didn’t have a chance to share or if you have any questions, some of us will remain after the meeting to answer them.

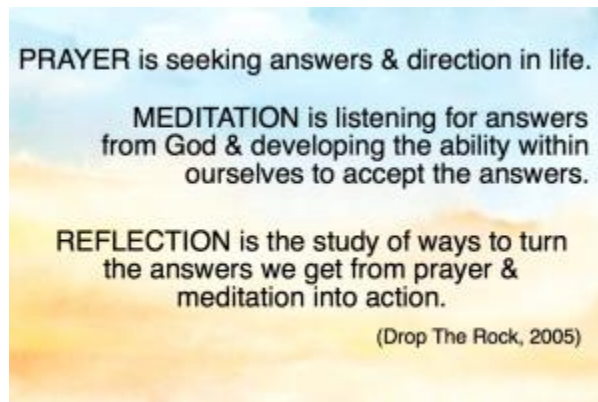
Thank you all for participating today either by sharing or by listening and for the opportunity to lead our meeting today. I am so grateful that we had this opportunity to pray, meditate and “check each other’s guidance as we each trudge our own “road of happy destiny.” If you found it helpful, please come back next week and bring a friend!

As we close this meeting, let’s all take a few deep breaths and then close with the Third and Seventh Step Prayers.

Third Step Prayer: “God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may

bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always.” (AA BB: 63)

Seventh Step Prayer: “My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen” (AA BB: 76)



OPTIONAL READINGS DEPENDING ON LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE OF THE GROUP.

Written Guidance & Western Meditation

Meditation, in the language of the Big Book – means concentrated thought, specifically about what happened over the previous 24 hours and what needs correcting and about what I am going to do over the next 24 hours.

Directions:

Choose a quiet place. Take this time to silently connect to God and feel His presence. Breathe naturally and be with what is.

Meditate or repeat an inspirational phrase or word of your choice, which could include the serenity prayer, the 3rd step or 7th step prayers.

Take a moment to be grateful for all of the good that was done for you and for all of the blessings that you have received.

Create a positive visualization — Imagine God’s Goodness, blessings, kindness, and compassion flowing into you like fresh water from a spring.

Set your intension by writing a question that you would like intuitive guidance on. OR, another way is to just set your intension is to ask: “God, please show me what I need to know so that I can be free from wrong motives and do Your will throughout the day.”

Listen to your thoughts and cultivate awareness. As thoughts come into your mind, write them down. Guidance can take the form of images, thoughts, feelings or inspiration.

Stop writing when the flow of thoughts slows down.

Examine what you have written down. What is the voice of addiction and what is the voice of recovery?

Test each thought using the 4 Standards to separate God thoughts from self-thoughts.

- Are these thoughts completely **honest, pure unselfish** and **loving**?
- Are these thoughts in line with our duties, to our family, to our country?
- Are these thoughts in line with our understanding of the teachings found in our spiritual literature?

Discuss what you have written with another person.

Commit to acting on “God thoughts” and discard the “self-thoughts.

You can also read [How to Listen to God](#)

[How to Begin Practicing Quiet Time](#) by Father Bill W.

[How to Begin Practicing Quiet Tim1 with Shira's edits](#)

[HOW TO LISTEN TO GOD iofC version](#)

This is my version of a guided meditation for 2 Way Prayer:

[Written Guidance & Western Meditation](#)

For some reason I am a big fan of this more detailed explanation of [Step 10 & 11](#) because it includes room for the practice of 2 Way Prayer. [Here](#) it is without the How to Listen to God

Here is first [format](#), that I wrote on 12/24/2020. I now have an [updated](#) long and [shorter](#) one. The one above is also slightly different.

As I go along, I seem to make more edits, so there may be slight changes or additions, in particular, I am adding more references and links.

If anyone has any suggestions, recommendations or objections, please let me know.

Please note: *If any of the original sources of the documents above believe that this is in violation of copyright, please [contact me](#) directly through the blog or by email at: emotionalsobriety2013@gmail.com



The goal of the blog and of this format is to be a resource for other people in 12 Step recovery and to carry the message of recovery for fun and for

free. However, I do not want my altruistic spirit of generosity to violate other people's copyrights or exceed the legal boundaries of fair use.

In love & service,

Shira

Please also check out this [page](#) on the blog for more information on 2 Way Prayer

Quotes from the AA Big Book are taken from the [Original Manuscript](#) but the page numbers refer to the 4th edition.

