

I recently heard about a website that actually suggests that new (and not so new) atheistic or agnostic AA members should try to get rid of the use of prayer at their AA meetings. The website then goes on to give guidelines on what to do & what to say in order to have prayer voted out. I was surprised that there was actually an organized attempt in this direction. I'm not sure why established AA meetings, with over 75 years of experience closing with the Lord's Prayer or using other prayers during their meetings, would give into newcomers' "sensitivities" so easily. These sensitivities are not new, they've been talked about since the founding of AA. But I learned pretty early on (20 years ago) that I needed to adapt myself to the Program instead of trying to get the Program to adapt to me. Prayer is a long standing practice at meetings & an essential part of AA's 12 Step Program.

Although GSO & the AA Grapevine seem to be suggesting otherwise, it's hard for me to imagine anyone, even at casual glance, not noticing the large emphasis of the 12 Steps being a transformative spiritual program. GSO is currently coming out with a booklet that will suggest that there is a way to work the Steps without a Higher Power & the AA Grapevine recently had an article that strongly trashed AA members for upholding the spiritual integrity of the Steps & for emphasizing the necessity of seeking a Higher Power. The Grapevine actually called these quality AA members "bigots".

Working the 12 Steps without a Higher Power is not AA and is a complete contradiction. I would even go so far as to say that working the 12 Steps without a Higher Power is absolutely impossible. You can't have a spiritual awakening as the result of a non-spiritual program. The AA 12 Step Program is not self-help, it's Divine Therapy.

I have learned from reading early AA literature and from my direct experience that the goal of the Steps is NOT recovery from alcoholism. Let me repeat that because I know that some of you may initially disagree - the goal of the Steps is NOT recovery from alcoholism. The goal of the Steps is "having had a spiritual awakening as THE result of these Steps" (as stated in the beginning of the Twelfth Step) & a BY-PRODUCT of the spiritual awakening is that we recover from the mental, emotional, psychological, & spiritual aspects of alcoholism as well as many other addictions.

In an attempt to speak out FOR prayer at meetings, I present the following overview of a prayer that closes most meetings that I have gone to. Please note that not one of these meetings did I suggest the meeting close this way. That practice started well before I got there. But I now WILL strongly encourage members of all 12 Step meetings to keep the practice of prayer at meetings going.

Just Love,
Barefoot Bill

The Lord's Prayer
(Is it in the Big Book?)

OUR FATHER

"I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all." - Big Book page 14; "If what we have learned and felt and seen means anything at all, it means that all of us, whatever our race, creed, or color are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship upon simple and understandable terms as soon as we are willing and honest enough to try." – Big Book page 28; "God is the Father, and we are His children." - Big Book page 62

WHO ART IN HEAVEN

"We have found much of Heaven" - Big Book page 25; "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God" - Big Book page 59 (Step 11)

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

All Powerful, Guiding, Creative Intelligence; Spirit of the Universe; our Director; the Principle; the Father; a new Employer; Sunlight of the Spirit; Spirit; A Power greater than myself; Power; A Higher Power; Power of God; God's Power; God; new-found Friend; God-consciousness within; unsuspected inner resource; The Great Reality deep down within us; Our Creator; Our Maker; All Powerful Creator; A living Creator; A Supreme Being; Infinite Power & Love - many references all over the Big Book

THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

"Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. 'How can I best serve Thee, Thy will (not mine) be done.' These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will." - Big Book page 85

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

"It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. - Big Book page 85

AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

"After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken." - Big Book page 86

AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

"We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies" - Big Book page 70

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

"Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances!" - Big Book page 100; "We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free. We cannot subscribe to the belief that this life is a vale of tears, though it once was just that for many of us. But it is clear that we made our own misery. God didn't do it." - Big Book page 133

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.
AMEN.

"As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction" - Big Book page 46

P.S. - If you research the Big Book I am sure you will find other relevant passages that resonate with the Lord's Prayer.

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