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## 11 step prayer

Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace; that where there is hatred, I may bring love; that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness; that where there is discord, I may bring harmony; that where there is error, I may bring truth; that where there is doubt, I may bring faith; that where there is despair, I may bring hope; that where there are shadows, I may bring light. that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort, than to be comforted; to understand, than to be understood; to love, than to be loved. For it is by self forgetting, that one finds. It is by forgiving, that one is forgiven. It is by dying, that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.

"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out." In step 11, you discover the plan of your higher power. You also seek to better understand it and carry it out. AA is a spiritual organization that encourages participants to find their higher purpose. Whether this is through their relationship with God, another higher power, or AA itself, it is up to the individual participant. All people with a desire to remain sober are welcomed and encouraged to participate. It doesn't matter if they practice a particular religion, are inactive in religion, or are agnostic or atheist. Over 3 million people use BetterHelp. Their services are: Professional and effective Affordable and convenient Personalized and discreet Easy to start Find a Therapist Answer a few questions to get started "Lord, make me a channel of thy peace—that where there is hatred, I may bring love—that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness—that where there is discord, I may bring harmony—that where there is error, I may bring truth—that where there is despair, I may bring hope—that where there are shadows, I may bring light—that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted—to understand, than to be understood—to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to eternal life. Amen" Prayer, meditation, and quiet reflection are all part of step 11. Instead of seeking peace or solace in alcohol or other substances, you turn to AA or your higher power. Many AA participants have achieved some degree of spirituality by the time they reach this step. However, if this is not the case, step 11 is when you begin to gain a true understanding of your higher power through prayer and meditation. Some describe it as a spiritual awakening. The approach to prayer and meditation varies from person to person, but the goal is always the same: to connect with a higher power. Through participation in AA meetings, you learn that a power greater than yourself exists and is at work. You learn that nothing happens by mistake and that there is a plan for your life. Prayer and meditation help you raise the consciousness of your higher power and continue on your recovery journey. Yes. Although these practices might seem foreign or impossible to those who do not believe in or are unsure of their belief in God, it is possible to be still, quiet, and reflective. Listen to your thoughts, seek the right answers throughout the day, and ask for guidance when times are challenging. That guidance can come from an inner voice or something outside yourself. Regardless of whether you approach step 11 as asking God for guidance each day or by self-reflecting, the result is almost always the same. Meditation practitioners say to practice, they need: Quiet location without any distractions Comfortable posture Focus Open-mindedness People who pray believe the same is needed. Prayer and meditation help you focus your attention on a given task, whether that's being open to receiving a message or relaxing. If you struggle with the process of meditation or prayer, you can use audio or video recordings to help you focus. Prayer and meditation help minimize issues that lead to depression, anxiety, and other triggers that in the past, triggered a desire to drink. Knowing how to pray or meditate, and implementing these practices into everyday life, can vary from person to person. For some, the struggle is understanding how to pray or meditate. For others, it's making these practices a part of their recovery. If you're trying to make meditation a part of your daily life, try the following: Schedule time every day to pray or meditate. Intend to listen to your higher power and let it strengthen you. Ask other people in your life to respect your prayer and meditation time. You must be able to focus and not be distracted during this time. Consider rewarding yourself when you've implemented meditation or prayer for a set period. For example, you might plan a coffee date with a friend. You can also plan some time reading a favorite book or watching a TV show after a week of daily prayer or meditation sessions. Start a journal where you record thoughts you have during your prayer and meditation sessions. Make this recording part of your practice. For instance, you might spend five minutes preparing your prayer or meditation space, spend 15 minutes praying or meditating, and then another five minutes recording your thoughts. They'll connect you to an addiction and mental health counselor Find a Therapist Answer a few questions to get started AA members who do not have a habit of meditating or praying might find the following tips for working step 11 helpful: Avoiding getting hung up on the terms God or higher power. This is not about practicing a particular religion. Your goal is to find peace and acknowledge the plan for your life. Don't worry about your posture or position. There is no "right" way to pray or meditate. The important thing is that you be comfortable and not distracted by your body and other physical issues. Some people prefer traditional meditation or prayer postures, which is fine too. Make sure you are actively listening. Many people assume prayer is about asking God for things (and it can be). However, it's also important to listen. Meditation is nearly completely about listening. For some people, this simple distinction is the difference between prayer and meditation. Prayer is speaking to God, meditation is listening. Be patient. Understand that, even if it feels uncomfortable at first to pray or meditate, it will eventually become more comfortable. If you are praying or meditating for the first time, try the following: Find a quiet, comfortable environment Plan to sit comfortably for 5 minutes Allow thoughts to enter into your mind Let the thoughts that enter your mind flow in and flow out without holding onto anything Observe your breathing or concentrate on the flame of a candle, which lets you release your thoughts BetterHelp offers affordable mental health care via phone, video, or live-chat. Find a Therapist Answer a few questions to get started Questions to ask during step 11 include: Is there a time in my life when I was heading in the wrong direction? What brought me back? How would I describe my higher power or God to a child? Can this description help me connect better? What are my favorite sources of information about healthy values? Is there anything that I've ever read or seen that convinced me to change deeply? If I were stranded on a desert island, what one book would I want with me? If I only had one week to live, who would I spend time with? What would I do if money or other resources weren't an issue? What do I want my obituary to say? What is my belief about what happens when someone dies? What do I think it will be like to be dead for me? Step 11 is important in your addiction treatment and recovery from substance abuse because it provides such a significant change in how you view yourself and the world. You are experiencing deep personal change and connecting with something that did not have an active role in your life when you weren't sober. If you struggle with step 11, including the concept of a higher power or any aspect of your spiritual practice, your sponsor or your fellow AA participants can help. Updated on February 2, 2023 Step 11 is my continual reality check and compass. It keeps me grounded in the reality that I know has brought me out of my addictive behaviors. It keeps me in a safe place by keeping my conscious contact with God. Through prayer and meditation I maintain this conscious contact with God and continually try to carry out what God leads me to do. In that path, I find the sanity, serenity and joy that I have been seeking. From 12Step.org Those of us who have come to make regular use of prayer would no more do without it than we would refuse air, food or sunshine. And for the same reason. When we refuse air, light or food the body suffers. And when we turn away from meditation and prayer, we likewise deprive our minds, our emotions and our intuitions of vitally needed support. As the body can fail its purpose for lack of nourishment, so can the soul. We all need the light of God's reality, the nourishment of His strength, and the atmosphere of His grace. To an amazing extent the facts of A.A. life confirm this ageless truth. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 97-98 Step 11 provides daily spiritual maintenance. As recovering persons, we may use our support groups and recovery literature as springboards toward spiritual and emotional growth. We will probably reach a level, though, at which we hunger for an even deeper contact and communication with God... If we have had little or no experience with prayer, we should probably begin in a simple fashion. That means putting aside perfectionistic concerns about praying "the right way." We should pray simply and forthrightly to God as a loving Father, not worrying about what we should and should not say. Over time, as we become comfortable with God, we will talk with Him as with a trusted friend. He will be the Person with whom we can conduct our daily inventories of grief and confession issues. And we will begin to sense His answers to our prayers... Serenity, A Companion for Twelve Step Recovery, p. 72, 73 When we first come to the Program, we usually express a lot of things which seem to be important wants and needs. As we grow spiritually and find out about a Power greater than ourselves, we begin to realize that as long as our spiritual needs are truly met, our living problems are reduced to a point of comfort. When we forget where our real strength lies, we quickly become subject to the same patterns of thinking and action that got us to the Program in the first place. We eventually redefine our beliefs and understanding to the point where we see that our greatest need is for knowledge of God's will for us and the strength to carry that out. We are able to set aside some of our personal preference, if necessary, to do this because we learn that God's will consists of the very things we care most about. God's will for us becomes our own true will for ourselves. This happens in an intuitive manner which cannot be adequately explained in words. We become willing to let other people be what they are without having to pass judgment on them. The urgency to take care of things isn't there anymore. We couldn't comprehend acceptance in the beginning-now we can. Narcotics Anonymous Basic Text, Chapter 4/Step 11 Moving through the steps people report being increasingly in contact with someone - a "Person" rather than a philosophical Higher Power. When this change takes place, we often see miracles happening in their lives. After much fear of losing control, they discover insight, wisdom, power, and courage that they didn't have at all two weeks before. At that point many say, "I surrender. I give up." They begin to communicate with God concerning what is happening to them. And that's when they are ready to receive the help of Step Eleven. Although these changes happen for many people, they do not happen for all. Many work the steps and stay sane in Twelve-Step programs yet somehow miss the whole thing about prayer and meditation. Most of the people who work good programs, however, are connected to God and do use prayer and meditation in some form. They use them as practical ways of learning who God is and what his will for them may be, as well as for learning useful truths about who they are and what they're to do in order to find happiness, guidance, peace and continued growth. But mostly they pray because they feel gratitude, love and a sense of awe that the One with whom they are in contact is using his power to heal them. A Hunger for Healing, by Keith Miller, p. 180 Step Eleven says that we already have a conscious contact with the God of our understanding, and that the task before us now is to improve that contact. We began to develop our conscious awareness of a Higher Power in Step Two, learned to trust that Power for guidance in Step Three, and relied on that Power many times for many other reasons in the process of working through the steps. Each time we called upon our Higher Power for help, we improved our relationship with our Higher Power. Step Eleven recognizes that reaching out to the God of our understanding, referred to most simply as prayer, is one of the most effective means for building a relationship with God. The other means put forth in this step is meditation. In this step, we will need to explore our own concepts of prayer and meditation, and make sure they reflect our spiritual path... Some of us get to this point, and we just don't know. The institutions we've been involved with in the past hold no answers, but we can't think of anything that sounds like a better idea. For those with this experience, this is the point at which we embark on one of the most important journeys in our lives: the search for a way to understand a Higher Power. In this process, we are likely to visit every place that has anything to do with spirituality that's available in our community. We're also likely to read a great number of books concerned with spirituality and personal growth, and talk to a great number of people. We may commit for a time to any number of practices before settling on one - or we may never really settle on any one practice permanently. It Works mentions that many of our members adopt an "eclectic approach" to spirituality. If this applies to us, it's important to know that doing this is okay and will serve the spiritual needs of recovery just fine. ... As we explore our spiritual path, and perhaps pick up and discard various spiritual practices, some of us are troubled by what seems to be inherent bias in NA's steps and traditions when God is referred to as having a male gender. Even more painful, some of us may feel that we don't have much support within our local NA community for our spiritual choices and exploration. It's important for us to understand that the language of NA's recovery literature is not meant to determine a member's spirituality. It's also important for us to understand that we as addicts have character defects, and sometimes some of our members will act on theirs by ridiculing someone else's spiritual path. They may even quote NA recovery literature to "support" such ridicule. Again, NA itself has no "official" or "approved" spiritual path, and any member who claims otherwise is, quite simply, wrong. We mention this here because we believe it's very important for all of our members to know what's true and not true about NA when working the Eleventh Step. It can be a dangerous time. If members follow a spiritual path, and feel unwelcome in NA because of it, their recovery can be in jeopardy. We as members have a duty to encourage the spiritual explorations of other members, and we who are exploring need to know that we can look wherever we want for our spirituality without threatening our membership in NA. ... To many of us, "conscious contact" sounds like something very mysterious, implying some kind of cosmic union with God. But it's really very simple. It just means that we have a conscious awareness of our link to a Higher Power. We notice the presence of that Power, and see some of the ways it works in our life. There are so many ways our members have experienced the presence fo a loving God: when we experience something in nature, such as a forest or an ocean; through the unconditional love of our sponsor or other NA members; through the feeling of being anchored during difficult times; through feelings of peace and warmth; through a coincidence that later on we see as having led to some great good; through the simple fact of our recovery in NA; through our ability to listen to others at a meeting; and countless other means. The point is that we are looking and we are willing to acknowledge that our Higher Power is active in our lives. Narcotics Anonymous Step Working Guides, 1998, p. 107, 108, 109, 111 It is clear from reading the Twelve and Twelve [Webmaster's note: this refers to the classic recovery book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] that the conception of meditation offered in this step is not the caricatured lotus position, nor any form of esoteric mysticism. Although there is certainly room for a more in-depth form of meditation, what Bill had in mind is more of a clear-minded self-reflection. In terms of prayer, although a more traditional sense of prayer is described, the purpose is also portrayed as prayer to one's Higher Power for a sense of direction. The prayer "God's will, not mine, be done" is frequently added to the Serenity Prayer at the conclusion of 12-step meetings, and reflects a move away from the egocentric position of the active alcoholic or addict. A Clinician's Guide to 12 Step Recovery, 2009, p. 54-55 Page 2 This generic form of the 12 steps is adapted from the original 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous by the site administrator and is intended for general use for any addictive or dysfunctional behavior. We also have the 12 Steps for different fellowships and invite you to select the fellowship that addresses the behavior most important to you. For the steps below, click the More button to read comments from books and websites, or click the Working button to hear and read about people working their step, or click the Videos button to see videos about the given step. You can also view video overviews of 12 step programs in general or frequently asked questions that people have asked about the 12 step program or about this site in particular. For those new to the program and wanting to see how to start, please see the newcomers guide. We admitted we were powerless over our addiction - that our lives had become unmanageable. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. The 11th step is about placing the God of our understanding at the forefront of our lives. It is the full blooming of our spiritual awakening. Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. This is deep. From someone who has sought only their own self-gratification, we have become people who now seek a higher purpose. Our drinking problem has been replaced by a spiritual path. We now have a concept of a higher power that we may not have had before. There is a prayer that is often used. It is the Prayer of St. Francis: Lord, make me a channel of thy peace—that where there is hatred, I may bring love—that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness—that where there is discord, I may bring harmony—that where there is error, I may bring truth—that where there is doubt, I may bring faith—that where there are shadows, I may bring light—that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted—to understand, than to be understood—to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen. It can be found on page 99 of the book Twelve and Twelve. This is and always has been more than simply a prayer to me. The words are a meditation on what my daily life should be and, importantly, on what it was like. In the past, before I achieved the emotional balance that the 12-step program brought to me, I was anything but an instrument of peace. I'm laughing wryly as I write that because I think the best description of me from those days would have been chaos in search of a drink. It may be useful to attend an 11th-step meditation group. For someone like myself, I prefer it as part of my daily reflections, forming part of my spiritual practice. For others, joining an 11th-step meditation meeting with other AA members with whom they share a common problem is preferable. I will combine two definitions of the word offered by Merriam-Webster and define it as engaging in contemplation or reflection to reach a heightened level of spiritual awareness. The actual definitions are here. It also offers another definition- to focus one's thoughts on: reflect on or ponder over. We mull over things that were and things that are to be, asking questions such as how we can better serve the God of our understanding and how we can bring others into this fellowship of men and women. How can service become an intuitive thought and our primary purpose? It becomes a lovely, tranquil conversation with God. This step is the point where we begin to seek a continuous connection with the God we called on in step three when, as it is written in the big book, we "made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." This prayer contains much. Something that rides through the whole of it is the spirit of forgiveness. If we are to sow love, pardon, hope, and joy, we must be filled with this spirit. As we begin to carry this message to the still-suffering alcoholic, we need to commit to being a channel of our God's peace. Here, again, is another example of meditation: one word, channel, and the opportunity to pause and reflect on what it implies. I have been blessed to meet people in the A.A. membership who exemplify this. It seems that peace is at the very core of who they are. These folks may not always have the right answers at the right time, but they always have the right attitude. They are examples of the other meaning of A.A. - Altered Attitudes. They live with each of their actions as an advert for what sobriety can and should be. Writing this, I have not wanted to provide a series of points on which to meditate, but rather a guide on how to approach the meditation. Meditation is extraordinarily personal, and each conversation with our Higher Power takes place depending on our lives. For each of us, the flow of thought and responses as we absorb and reflect on the meaning and purpose of this step should stem from us and our understanding of our higher power. What point does this meditation bring me to? To me, it invokes humility and service. It ultimately defines who I want to become. We are now at a point where we approach the 12th step, which is "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." This 11th step and all that comes from this connection with God will give us serenity, wisdom, and strength as we move forward. May I end with a quote that expresses my wish for you as the future waits: The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26, King James Version)

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