

Eleventh Step Guidance Meeting

“Big Book” Format

Introduction

Eleventh Step Guidance Meetings are for **“anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life.”** They are NOT Open Discussion meetings. We share only what we have written or captured on our fingertips prior to or during a ten minute “quiet time.”

Eleventh Step Guidance Meetings are non-smoking as were all Twelve-Step meetings during the early days of the fellowship. We are here to listen to the voice of the **“One who has all power”** to free us from our addictions; we are not here to talk about or feed our addictions.

Procedure for “Listening”

Be quiet and still.

Relax.

Listen.

Write down the thoughts that come.

Test each thought using the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love to separate the God thoughts from the self- thoughts.

Share the guidance that you believe passes the “test” with the other members of the group.

We share what we have written or captured on our fingertips to demonstrate that God does **“disclose Himself to us”** and because sometimes the guidance we receive isn’t for us but for someone else in the room.

Guidelines for the Guidance Meeting

Please identify yourself by your first name only. Do not identify yourself in terms of any addiction or affliction.

No cross talk.

Do not critique or comment on anyone else's guidance.

If you haven't written anything down or captured any thoughts on your fingertips, please "pass."

The typical guidance meeting has 8-14 attendees. Because there is no time limit, the size of the group is important. The meeting ends when everyone has had the opportunity to share his or her guidance

If the meeting consistently lasts more than an hour, you can split into two smaller groups to facilitate sharing.

Before the meeting, explain fingertip guidance.

"Fingertip guidance" came about in the 1930's when an Oxford Group team was in South Africa trying to solve racial problems through the use of two-way prayer. Upon their arrival, the team encountered a black population that could speak English but, because of the lack of education, they could not read or write English.

Faced with this dilemma, the team came up with "fingertip guidance." This is how it works:

As soon as a thought comes into your mind, touch your thumb to your first finger to capture it.

When another thought comes, capture it by touching your thumb to your second finger.

Keep recording until you either run out of thoughts or fingers.

Keep in mind that even if you only capture one or two thoughts, this is far better than letting all of them slip away.

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Good (morning) (afternoon) (evening) my name is _____ and I will be your facilitator for this Eleventh Step Guidance Meeting.

Let's open this meeting with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

(Serenity Prayer.)

I have asked _____ to read a portion of the "Big Book" on prayer and meditation:

(Read pages 86-88 from the "Big Book.")

We will now take a ten-minute "quiet time" for the purpose of listening to and recording guidance. You are free to leave the room, but please use this time to practice two-way prayer rather than for any other activity. (Optional: In other words, no smoking, or coffee drinking during the "quiet time.")

(Ten-minute "quiet time.")

If anyone needs more time, please raise your hand.

(After everyone is ready,)

Now, we will go around the room asking that you share only what you have written or captured on your fingertips without embellishment or explanation. If you haven't written anything down, please "pass."

(If a person starts to explain his or her guidance or starts talking about whatever is on his or her mind, please direct the person back to sharing guidance by saying something like, "I'm sorry to interrupt, but I must ask you to share only what you've written down or captured on your fingertips during your 'quiet time.' Thank you.")

(After everyone has had the opportunity to share,)

Is there anyone who heard something during the sharing session that he or she feels was directed towards them in addition to the person who shared it? If so, please tell the group, without identifying the person from whom you received the guidance, what it was that you heard. This is three-way prayer—God speaking to us through others. If this has happened to you, please raise your hand.

(Have those who raise their hands share their examples of three-way prayer.)

I would like to thank each of you for participating, either by sharing or by listening.

Please remain seated. We will close this meeting with the Lord's Prayer.

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Directions for Prayer and Meditation

Pp. 85-88

STEP ELEVEN suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.

WHEN WE RETIRE AT NIGHT, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

ON AWAKENING let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

IN THINKING ABOUT OUR DAY we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.

We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead."

Test for Self-will / God's Will

From the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous

Self-will

God's Will

Fourth Step Test

Selfish(ness)
Dishonest(y)
Self-seeking
Frightened

Unselfishness
Honesty
Purity
Love

“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?”
(*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 67, para. 2, lines 3-4)

Tenth Step Test

Selfishness
Dishonesty
Resentment
Fear

Unselfishness
Honesty
Purity
Love

“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.”
(*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 84, para. 2, lines 8-9)

Eleventh Step Test

Resentful
Selfish(ness)
Dishonest(y)
Afraid

Purity
Unselfishness
Honesty
Love

“Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?”
(*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 86, para. 1, lines 2-3)

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