

12-Step Meeting Format

Thursdays 6:00-7:30 pm

Welcome: "Welcome to The Sisterhood Thursday night meeting. My name is _____, and I will be your trusted servant for tonight."

Prayer: "Please join me in a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer."

This is a fellowship of women, who through shared experience, strength, and hope, are growing in our walk with God, living in the light of His word and truth. This group is committed to creating a safe place for sharing; however, we are not a therapy group, no one is here in a professional capacity. Our desire is to improve the quality of our lives

**by looking honestly at who we are,
by learning from listening to and sharing with each other,
by placing ourselves in the care of our God,
and by engaging in healthier behaviors.**

Readings:

"I have asked _____ to read The Twelve Steps." (Read with or without scripture-Group size/time)

"I have asked _____ to read (Group Promises or Recovery Principles or Group Participation Guidelines)"

"Are there any announcements/admin?" Dates....Locations....Time....Events.....Book Topic

Welcome to any newcomers! (Hand out newcomers' packet)

If you have any questions, please feel free to talk with me at the end of the meeting.

Sharing/Check-in: "As you share, please introduce yourself by giving your first name only. This respects the anonymity of those who are present."

Please share about your week, your experience, strength, and hope. Your day-to-day struggles, triumphs, how you're thriving, staying the same, or just not okay. Remember we are all at different places in life, you are right where you should be.

Please no cross talk. Cross talk is when two people enter a dialogue that excludes other group members.

Sharing is most valuable when you limit your comments or observations to your own personal 'experience, using the word "I."

Everyone is invited to share, but no one is obligated to do so.

Closing: "All of you are encouraged to make telephone or email contact or meet at other times during the week to discuss your writing, deepen group relationships, and encourage one another. You are also encouraged to attend other Twelve-Step meetings and read materials that will broaden your understanding of the steps and related Scriptures."

"Reminder! What you hear at this meeting is confidential. Leave it at this meeting. It is not for public disclosure or gossip. Please respect the privacy of those who shared with us tonight."

"Please join me in a moment of silence, followed by the serenity prayer."

12-Step Meetings -FAQ

1. **Are 12-Step meetings only for people struggling with addictions?** No, this 12-Step meeting is for anyone struggling with habits, hurts, or hang-ups, including problems with abuse, anger, grief, alcohol, drugs, depression, guilt and shame, financial loss, relationship/family issues, sexual problems, eating disorders, and much more!
2. **What can I expect at my first meeting?** The meetings are simple, formatted the same each week, reading the 12 Steps, Sharing Guidelines, Group Share, Reflect on Homework Share. Same time, same place, same format each week. Also, meetings always begin on time, and end on time...if you come in late or need to leave early, no worries, just sneak on or out quietly.
3. **Why would I go to a 12-Step meeting or work the program?** The 12-Steps are a useful tool in growing in our recovery, which leads to a deeper more personal walk with God, a foundation to work towards freedom from our struggles, toward a purposeful, meaningful life. The steps give us specific tools and actions we can take to begin this life long process.
4. **What makes 12-Step meetings different from just meeting with friends?** 12-Step meetings provide a safe place to find community and gain freedom from the issues that are controlling our lives. You will find both acceptance and accountability, providing a place to look at your struggles honestly and in the light.
5. **What makes this 12-Step meeting a safe place for open and honest sharing?** Our is guided by its Group Participant Guidelines, a few boundaries that keep the group a safe space of Anonymity and Confidentiality. "What is said here, stays here!"
6. **Is there a book or curriculum?** Yes, we will be using, *The Twelve Steps: A Spiritual Journey* by Friends in Recovery. This book will be available at the meeting with an option to pay it forward if you can. We will be going through the book briefly each week, working through it individually throughout the week. You will have the option of putting as much time or not into the book study as you prefer. It is okay to just go to the meetings, but the book study is pretty awesome!
7. **Is the meeting confidential?** Yes, we go by first names only and abide by a strict anonymity and confidentiality policy. What is said here, stays here!
8. **What if I miss meetings?** You are welcome to come whenever you can, we understand life is busy. However, as with anything, the more you put into this effort the more blessings you will receive for your own recovery.
9. **Do I have to share?** No one is ever required to share, you can pass, take as long as you need to feel comfortable in sharing.

THE TWELVE STEPS AND RELATED SCRIPTURE

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over the effects of our separation from God-that our lives had become unmanageable.

I know nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (Rom. 7:18)

Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. (Phil. 2:13)

Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-which is your spiritual worship. (Rom. 12:1)

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. (Lam. 3:40)

Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. (James 5:16a)

Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:10)

Step Seven

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Step Eight

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them **all**.

Do to others as you would have them to do you. (Luke 6:31)

Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. (Matt. 5:23-24)

Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall. (1 Cor. 10:12)

Step Eleven

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.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. (Col. 3:16a)

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to *carry* this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. (Gal. 6:1)

Group Promises

(also known as AA Promises)

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

GROUP PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

- Recognize that the Holy Spirit is in charge.*
 - Gratefully acknowledge the Holy Spirit's presence and pray for his guidance and direction.
- Make a point of ministering love in an appropriate manner.*
 - Respect the needs of others by asking permission to express concern with a hug or a touch. Many are uncomfortable with physical contact.
- Focus individual sharing on the step being worked.*
 - Focus sharing on individual experience, strength, and hope in working the steps being discussed
 - Allow equal time for everyone in the group to share.
- Limit talking and allow others to share.*
 - Keep your comments brief. take turns talking, and don't interrupt others.
 - Respect each person's right to self-expression without comment.
- Encourage comfort and support by sharing from one's own experience.*
 - Do not attempt to advise or rescue them.
 - Accept what others say without comment, realizing it is true for them.
 - Assume responsibility only for your own feelings, thoughts, and actions.
- Refrain from "cross talk."*
 - Cross talk occurs when two or more people engage in dialogue that excludes others. It may also involve advice giving.
- Maintain confidentiality.*
 - Keep whatever is shared within the group to ensure an atmosphere of safety and openness.
- Avoid gossip.*
 - Share your own needs and refrain from talking about a person who is absent.
- Refrain from criticizing or defending others.*
 - Lovingly hold others accountable for their behavior only if they ask you to do so. Otherwise, recognize that we are all accountable to Christ, and it is not our place to defend or criticize others.
- Come to each meeting prepared and with a prayerful, attitude.*
 - Before each meeting, read designated materials and complete any written exercises.
 - Pray for guidance and a willingness to share openly and honestly when you communicate with at least one other group participant.

The Principles of RECOVERY

Realize I'm not God; I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable. (Step 1)

“Happy are those who know that they are spiritually poor.”
Matthew 5:3a TEV

Earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him and that He has the power to help me recover. (Step 2)

“Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”
Matthew 5:4 TEV, NIV

Consciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control. (Step 3)

“Happy are the meek.” Matthew 5:5a TEV

Openly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust. (Steps 4 and 5)

“Happy are the pure in heart.” Matthew 5:8a TEV

Voluntarily submit to any and all changes God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects. (Steps 6 and 7)

“Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires” Matthew 5:6a TEV

Evaluate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others when possible, except when to do so would harm them or others. (Steps 8 and 9)

“Happy are the merciful.” Matthew 5:7a TEV; “Happy are the peacemakers” Matthew 5:9 TEV

Reserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will. (Steps 10 and 11)

Yield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and my words. (Step 12)

“Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires.” Matthew 5:10 TEV

"PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI"

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace!

Where there is hatred-let me sow love

Where there is injury-pardon

Where there is doubt-faith

Where there is despair-hope

Where there is darkness-light

Where there is sadness-joy

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled-as to console

To be understood-as to understand

To be loved-as to love

for

It is in giving-that we receive

It is in pardoning-that we are pardoned

It is in dying-that

we are born to eternal life.

Amen

APPENDIX THREE

SERENITY PRAYER

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

Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it;
trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to your will;
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with you forever in the next.

Amen

Reinhold Niebuhr

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity

To accept the things I cannot change;

Courage to change the things I can;

And wisdom to know the difference.

Amen.

(attributed to Reinhold Neibuhr, 1892-1971)

find out more at http://www.living-prayers.com/topics/serenity_prayer.html

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a critical aspect of the 12-Step Recovery program. We have a unique opportunity within The Sisterhood; as our community has developed a base foundation of trust, we now have the space to learn to come alongside and sponsor one another. It is important that our group develop a culture of sponsoring and coaching one another as we continue to work the steps toward healthier lives. Here are a few main ideas that will help us understand sponsorship.

What Does a Sponsor Do?

1. Coach – come along side and encourage
 - Leads through the 12 Steps, walks through “The Twelve Steps – As Spiritual Journey” (up to the step they themselves have completed – you can only share what you have
2. Available in times of crisis – communicating on a regular basis by phone, text, offering encouragement, accountability, tools, listening
3. Go to meetings together weekly or bi-weekly
4. Gives literature reading suggestions, walk through steps together
5. Discuss issues too detailed for meetings (Listen to 5th step)
6. Willing to be honest, confront denial and procrastination

How do I get a Sponsor?

Simply, just ask...easier said than done!

Who do I ask to Sponsor me?

1. Look for someone who has what you want – Fruits of the Spirit – Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control
2. Be REALISTIC – No one will have everything you want, look for characteristics you admire and want in your own life.
3. Similar life experiences, struggles, relationships – this is helpful, but not necessary.
*example, if you have children, you might want a sponsor that has children
4. Know yourself – do you need gentleness, kind, loving, “kid gloves” or do you need someone who will be firm, direct, and call you on your stuff?
5. Group Effort – For The Sisterhood this next year of sponsoring will have to be a group effort as we are a new smaller group.

* I challenge you all to reach out, help coach one another. Just remember, this is not about advising or doing someone’s recovery for them, but just coming along side, being a good listener, walking through the steps with them. Jesus is the ultimate Sponsor and He is doing the work, giving the life and hope, and He has already won victory for each one of us!