

From Marylou M, Group Services, WSO, Oct 30, 2008

Hello from the World Service Office. Thank you for writing regarding your group's discussions regarding the closing prayer options. I am happy to share some information with you.

For some history, Al-Anon groups picked up the custom of reciting the Lord's Prayer from AA groups. The AA groups in turn adopted the practice from the Oxford Groups, later called Moral Re-Armament. Because of the close and historical relationships Al-Anon has to AA, it was natural and expedient for our members to adopt the practice based upon their familiarity with open AA meetings. (See the book, *Lois Remembers*, B-7)

The Lord's Prayer is not "the Al-Anon prayer" and is not Conference-Approved. It is not printed or distributed by the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (WSO) in any of our literature or service materials. The selection of a group closing prayer is the option of the group and a matter of its autonomy. The only statement made in reference to the closing prayer appears on page 47 in the *2004-2006 Al Anon/Alateen Service Manual*: "It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience."

When a group chooses a prayer, it should be one that is inviting and universal to all so that the idea that our fellowship is spiritual rather than religious is upheld. This may vary from group to group according to its customs. The chairperson of the meeting states at the end of the closing, "Will all who care to, join me in the closing with the _____prayer?" This gives the members the option of remaining silent if they do not wish to recite the prayer.

Members contact the WSO frequently to request information about the closing prayer. Some groups open and close with the Serenity Prayer, then add the Al-Anon Declaration. Like any other group practice, a periodic review or group conscience decision is a healthy process for the group. The group's closing prayer should be the reflection of the will of the group. The group can discuss the matter in light of the Traditions so it is taking an informed group conscience.