

Hello from Rev. Tiger at Church of the Angels. Today I would like to discuss what may be a gray area for some Spiritualists..... "Effective Prayer".

The dictionary defines "Prayer" as a specific request for help or an exclamation of gratitude. The definition does not refer to a God. Some Spiritualists feel speaking to a Collective "God" is prayer and completely different from speaking to a departed Loved One.

I never really thought about this until about fifteen years ago. I grew up going to a Spiritualist Church with my Father on Thursday evenings. Usually, we spoke politely to all Spirits openly in all the same manner as if they were still standing in front of us in conversation.

At my Mother's Christian Church they always silently sat in pews, bowed their heads, closed their eyes and clasped their hands together and only a Minister (the same one every week) offered prayer to one specific "God". Loved ones who had passed were only ever mentioned at funerals. Prayer was very formal and had to be prefaced and announced as a special ritual, inserted between bookends - first announcing "Let us Pray" and always closing with an "Amen". I just felt it was their preference to be extra serious and speak to Spirit in this guarded formal way. It even seemed to be reserved only for Sunday Church or special occasions which puzzled me - at funerals, when someone was crying, before eating or going to bed.

I have always been fascinated by various religious practices. As a young adult I visited as many places of worship as I could find (just because I'm nosy). When faced with a congregation that has mostly migrated from a variety of formal religions, I was forced to more thoroughly examine specific differences in greater detail since I had previous only been interested in shared values.

It was suggested to me once by one of our Ministers (who was not raised in the Spiritualist faith) that I was entirely too familiar with Spirit on a daily bases and perhaps even too flippant about God's reverence! I had always spoken with all Spirit candidly whenever I felt like it and I had always considered doing so to be the whole point of believing I was always in total

connection with Spirit - that it was my right actually not something I had to earn or be shy about or reserve. I have always lived in a peer group conversation with Spirit... "Good morning Spirit..." "Spirit, please help me find my keys?" "Thank you Spirit for your ongoing love and help and protection..." I never feel ever that I am alone because I am always filled with Spirit. I need not seek Spirit, I am already one with Spirit.

I was fascinated to discover from Rev. Bethany for instance that Catholics call upon certain Saintly Spirits concerning specific criteria like "Saint Anthony please come 'round, something's lost and must be found"! Wow! A lost-and-found Angel? How great is that? She showed me entire instructional books devoted to explaining which Saints to pray to and for what specific purpose - advertised post life job assignments for the Saints!

I think examining how we individually pray is a very interesting "Thought Exchange". I think the exact way in which we individually choose to pray is basically constructed upon traditions learned in our upbringing that we have retained simply because it still comforts us. Some kneel on a mat five times a day; others chant and ring bells; rock while silently meditating; progress through a sequence of beads; draw with sand; clap and dance to a chorus; cast tobacco to the elements... These rituals comfort us. They keep us physically connected to Spirit's presence.

Spiritualists are only expected to always incorporate four specific segments into their "Assembly" gatherings:

1. Exchange inspirational thought
2. Refocus the congregation on Collective Spirit
3. Healing
4. Inclusive Comradery

We add tons more segments to our service - Mediumship, conformation, invocation, song, announcements, food... We practice many aspects not specified in "Spiritualist Doctrine" simply because we want to, it makes us feel good, it's what makes us an "Independent Congregation". I know of no other Spiritualist Churches (outside of Elaine's graduates) with a "Statement of Principles" for instance.

I feel Prayer is a very personal aspect of one's relationship with Spirit, however you wish to define Spirit. If you are consoled by honoring the Collective Spirit differently than your departed Loved Ones I think you should continue to do that.

When leading an "Assembly" I use the actual word prayer, I offer an invocation, open my hands up to the Angels and sometimes end with Amen. I do this because the majority of you are most comfortable with that type of punctuation. I am being respectful to YOU, it is not about Spirit. At home I do not do any of those things but instead have conversations with Collective Spirit and specific Guides and Spirit Loved Ones in all the same manner. When speaking to a specific Spirit I call them by name. All others I simply address as Spirit...

Is a zebra black with white stripes or white with black stripes? Thank you Spirit for sharing this beautiful zebra.

I personally feel it is much more important to orchestrate the WAY I pray - how I mindfully preface what I ask. Actually, I only call upon the "Collective Spirit" about 20% of the time. I frequently begin a Spirit request with a thank you. It helps me remember to be mindful of how I intend to utilize that which I am asking.

I would never say "Dear God, let me win the lottery" for instance. I don't think Spirit just sits around waiting to rig the way those little balls pop up for the person who begs the nicest like "Queen for a Day"! Instead, as I'm going in to purchase my ticket, I ask "Spirit, please help me understand how best to share my abundance should I win the lottery". It just so happens I already have a plan for how to share those winnings that I have previously discussed with Spirit as manifestation...

My approach has nothing to do with my trying to be polite. It is about continually recentering my mind and physical momentum to stay in a positive balance as I interact on behalf of Collective Spirit (God, and universal energy I am interacting with). This connection is through my heart space. I personally wish to remain pleasantly bathed in Spirit's goodness and light instead of grabbing it in spurts. I believe "you are your intent". May

God be with us all...

That leads me to next week's topic: exploring "Personal Responsibility".

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Today's Invocation:

Dear God, thank you for watching over me and protecting me. Please help me better understand how and when to seek your guidance. Then help me to best implement my momentum with positive regard...

Safe Journey,

 Rev. Tiger