



Alcoholics Anonymous Frequently Asked Questions

AA talks about God a lot. Is it a religion of some sort?

AA isn't a religious program; it's spiritual. In fact, there are actually quite a number of agnostics and atheists in AA. We simply believe that alcoholics need the help of a power greater than themselves in order to recover. Your higher power can be whatever you choose it to be. It might or might not be a traditional God. It could even stand for Group of Drunks, or Good Orderly Direction.

Why, then, are so many AA meetings held in a church?

A lot of AA meetings are held in a church because it's practical. There are many churches around town that are supportive of AA and have meeting rooms available. These rooms are less expensive to rent, compared to other locations. Since AA is a not-for-profit organization, this is a big help.

OK, but again, if AA isn't religious, why is the Lord's Prayer said at the meetings?

The early founders of AA started the practice of saying the Lord's Prayer at the end of meetings. While it has remained a tradition, each AA group has the option to substitute other sorts of prayers – or no prayers at all. And, if you happen to attend a meeting where prayers are recited, it's not a problem if you choose to not say the prayers. There are also meetings specifically made available for agnostics/atheists, where no religious prayers are recited. These meetings can be found in the meetings schedule provided at this website and in the printed schedule.

I've heard that AA members need to get a sponsor. What is a sponsor?

A sponsor is a sort of mentor or guide. This person helps you learn more about the AA program and the Twelve Steps, and who will answer any questions you might have. Your sponsor is someone you can trust and in whom you can confide.

How does one get a sponsor?

We suggest you get a sponsor soon after you come into the program. The best way to do this is to listen to people in the meetings that you attend. You'll likely notice someone in particular to whom you can relate, or whose level of sobriety you admire. After the meeting, just ask this person if he/she might be available to sponsor you.

I hear people talk about “working the program.” What does that mean?

Working the program means, among other things, regularly attending meetings, doing service work and applying the principles of the Twelve Steps to your everyday life, in order to stay sober. Your sponsor can help you with this.

What if I’m not sure that I’m an alcoholic?

That’s OK. You can still try out some meetings to help you decide. AA has both “open” and “closed” meetings. Open meetings are for anyone who wants to learn more about AA. Closed meetings are limited to those who have a desire to stop drinking. You can tell the difference between open vs. closed meetings by looking at the meeting schedule.

OK, I’m still not sure AA is for me.

You might find a number of reasons to not participate in AA, or think AA might not be for you. Many of us had the same reservations and will admit the last thing we ever wanted was to attend an AA meeting. But the truth for us is, without AA, life was unbearable and all of those around us. Come find out why recovery works for us - and so many others!