

## Group Spiritual Practice\* an essay by Ernest Holmes

When a group of people come together with one accord and with one thought, a greater Power is generated. Not because the Creative Principle responds to a number of people more than It does to one, but because the combined faith of a group reaches a higher level of acceptance. Therefore, group *spiritual practice* should be definitely performed with the purpose in mind of arriving at a deeper conviction.

One of the difficulties is to get a group of people to think alike and at the same time. In order to do this in the most effectual manner, the individual needs and desires of the group must be temporarily put aside. For the most effectual *practice* is not where each individual member is praying for himself or for some other person. There is not enough fusion of thought. There is not enough coming together in unity of purpose when everyone is *praying* for different individuals.

**The best results are gained from group *spiritual practice* when all members join in *practicing*, not for the purpose of acquiring any specific good, but for the purpose of reaching a higher state of consciousness. There will be less confusion because of a greater degree of unity.**

In such group *spiritual practice* you would probably meditate on such ideas as Peace, or Joy, or general Wholeness. You would meditate on the concept that there is One Presence which is God, One Perfect Life which is right here, One Divine Intelligence guiding and governing, not for any particular or specific purpose in this case but just to imbibe the Spirit of Wholeness Itself, to enter more largely into a complete acceptance of Peace and Poise and Power.

Another way in which group *spiritual practice* is effectual is when all agree to work for a specific purpose and, completely forgetting themselves and their personal desires, merge their whole attention for the common good.

We feel certain that in your *practice* and in dealing with people you will work out a method which will be right for you. If you will watch the performance you will see that a higher degree of consciousness is reached when there is a completely unified concept. For instance, a group of people could work together for an organization, or for a world purpose, or for their country, or for any public good; or they could work together for the purpose of acquiring a deeper consciousness of Reality. And since the greater must include the lesser, no doubt the whole group would be personally benefited during this process.

We are not giving any specific *practice* for this purpose because we feel that you should work out the definite method for yourself, following the inclinations of your own heart. Follow your own leadings, but in doing this you will discover that in such group *practices* the best results are obtained when each member surrenders every personal desire to the common good.

**Much of our field is still in the experimental stage, and you are likely to work out new techniques and perhaps better ways than have been discovered so far. If this were not true, your work would become static and heavy. You must depend upon a certain inspiration rising from your own soul, but always keep this inspiration controlled through purposiveness, because no matter how great a Power is generated it will not produce results unless it is tied to a purpose.**

We are now talking about group purposes rather than individual desires. Both are important and should be worked out under the inspiration of your own inward awareness.

\* This essay was originally written utilizing the term "treatment," which refers to a form of affirmative prayer that was developed by Ernest Holmes. In order to more effectively communicate the universal principles contained in this essay, the term "*spiritual practice*" has been substituted. These occurrences have been *italicized*.