

ORIENTATION TO A CHRISTIAN ASHRAM

WELCOME! We are happy to have you share in this Ashram. We hope it will be a healthy and happy adventure in corporate, disciplined Christian living. The Ashram seeks to balance devotional practice, study, worship and service in a committed life together. Our aim is to be the Kingdom of God in miniature--a quest for spiritual living. We presuppose a heart open to God. All of us can have an experience in which we, as sincere seekers, end up with a heart overflowing with love of God and our neighbors. Jesus Christ is the Center of the Ashram. From Him will flow into each of us newness of life, renewal of spirit and a desire to witness wherever we live and work and serve. In this spirit, we address one another as "Brother" or "Sister." To help during these hours together, the following information is important. During the Ashram announcements are held to a minimum.



Jesus Is Lord

1. **ASHRAM GREETING, MOTTO AND SIGN:** We believe the most ancient creed of the Church to be "Jesus is Lord!" The uplifted three fingers (with the tips of the little finger and thumb touching each other and with palm turned toward self) stand for this creed. With this sign we greet each other (silently or audibly) in the name of Jesus Christ, proclaiming that Jesus as Lord is the One around whom Christians gather to learn and receive power to do God's will.
2. **THE HOUR OF THE OPEN HEART:** Early in the Ashram, we enter into a sharing of our greatest needs. In an atmosphere of love and trust we are honest with ourselves and those present. Here we consider three questions: Why have I come? What do I want? What do I really need? The last is the important one, so we tell our needs. The Evangelist will lead this period and will have some concluding remarks.
3. **THE EVANGELIST'S TIMES:** The Evangelist is usually the leader most familiar with the disciplines of the Christian Ashram. He proclaims again the Good News that Jesus Christ is the "Word become flesh among us" and, through the inspiration of The Holy Spirit, leads the Ashram in experiencing the Kingdom of God in miniature. He also leads in the Open Heart Hour, the Healing Service and the Overflowing Heart Hour.
4. **THE BIBLE STUDY PERIODS:** In addition to the Evangelist, we have a Bible Teacher. The Bible is the basic curriculum of the Ashram, for it is through the scriptures that we are introduced to Christ, become His disciples and receive power to serve in His Kingdom. Come with open minds, questing spirits and an earnest desire to be fed from His word.
5. **EVENINGS OF SILENCE:** An essential part of the Ashram is the time of silence from bedtime until the Evangelist breaks the silence at morning devotions. The last thing we do before we go to bed is to listen to God in silence and in this same silence speak to Him in the morning as we greet the new day. Let us strictly keep these times of silence.
6. **MORNING DEVOTIONS:** The rising bell is early enough to give time to dress and prepare (in silence) for morning devotions. We gather at a designated place and continue in silence reading our Bibles or devotional books, praying, and meditating on a Scripture assigned the preceding evening. The Evangelist breaks the silence by sharing what scripture, insight, etc. he/she desires. Everyone is then free to speak, in turn, sharing as he/she feels led. At close of devotions, the Evangelist leads in the morning greeting. He lifts one hand and says, "The Lord is risen!" The people lift their hands and say, "The Lord is risen indeed." Everyone lifts the three fingers and says, "Jesus is Lord!"
7. **THE ASHRAM GRACE BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS:** Before leaving morning devotions, the song leader leads in singing the Ashram grace. The people then walk in line to breakfast, sometimes singing "I Will Not Be Afraid." There is a traditional grace before and at the close of all the meals, usually led by the song leader.

8. **THE PRAYER VIGIL:** You are invited to share in the Prayer Vigil where someone is at prayer around the clock. You are encouraged to pray and meditate rather than to spend the time in reading. The Prayer Vigil begins immediately after the Hour of the Open Heart and closes just before the Hour of the Overflowing Heart. A schedule is posted. Please sign up for a particular period of time to pray for the Ashram.
9. **THE PRAYER/SHARE GROUPS:** Every person attending the Ashram is assigned to a group led by a Prayer Group Leader. In these groups members can share and pray for more specific needs. After the Ashram is over groups often continue to pray for each other and keep in touch.
10. **THE WORK PERIOD:** In the Ashram, we all participate in planned work with our hands to break down the barriers of those who work with their hands and those who do not. We always seek to leave our meeting place in better condition than we have found it. The work period is directed by an appointed "Pharaoh" or "Pharaohess."
11. **THE FAMILY MEETING:** A Family Meeting is held after lunch each day to make announcements, receive suggestions, care for household tasks and to elect The Twelve and the officers for the next year.
12. **THE HEALING SERVICE:** Time is set aside for a healing service. We do not make the physical body the center of the Ashram, but we do recognize its importance. Brother Stanley Jones said, "If we make physical healing the center, this is making our bodies the center. Anything that leaves us at the center is off center. We do not believe all diseases must be healed in this life. Many of the saints were never healed. We emphasize wholeness. Some want to be well and not whole. "Wellness" is centered in the self. Wholeness is centered in Christ." The Evangelist will lead in this vital and important service—a healing of body, mind, spirit and relationships.
13. **THE LAY WITNESS:** This is an opportunity for a person to give his/her witness as to how Christ has transformed his or her life.
14. **THE CHURCH-IN-ACTION:** The Church-In-Action period provides an opportunity for persons to share their ministries through the church. One of the main ministries of the Christian Ashram is to equip the saints for ministry in the church.
15. **ASHRAM OFFERING(S):** A love offering is received in each Ashram for the following purposes:
 - a. to supplement registration fees for current Ashram expenses;
 - b. to provide scholarships to subsidize persons who could not otherwise attend the Ashram;
 - c. to carry out the Ashram's Overseas Mission and Outreach to all parts of the world;
 - d. to meet other approved needs and projects.
16. **THE BOOK TABLE:** A book table may be provided at each Ashram with books by Dr. E. Stanley Jones and other books in harmony with the Ashram policy.
17. **THE OVERFLOWING HEART AND CLOSING CEREMONY:** Brother Stanley Jones said: "The Open Heart and the Overflowing Heart are the two pillars upon which the Ashram rests spiritually. During the Open Heart, we told our needs. Now we tell our victories. Here we lay the tributes of our gratitude at the feet of Jesus for what has happened to us during the Ashram. We will all try to keep from exhorting." We are challenged to sign an Ashram covenant card and to keep a daily Ashram when we return home. The Ashram closes with worship in a fellowship circle and the final greeting, "Jesus is LORD!"
18. **OFFICIAL UNITED CHRISTIAN ASHRAM LOGO:** This logo was commissioned in 2014 to reflect the global yet personal reach of the Ashram movement. For digital files of this logo to use in your local Ashram setting, please contact the Central Office (318.232.0004).

